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Tajikistan values relations with Pak, says Ambassador

Detailed News On Page-08

Araghchi says US war toll is 'far higher'

Detailed News On Page-08



Planning minister says with with Tajikistan good

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Briefs

Plague risk in Pakistan very low

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal has said the risk of plague spreading in Pakistan is currently very low following a suspected case in Siberia. In a statement, Kamal said the World Health Organisation was also not fully aware of the situation regarding the suspected plague case in the Russian city of Siberia. "The risk of plague spreading in Pakistan is currently very low," the minister said. He said Border Health Services had been alerted at all points of entry, while the National Institute of Health (NIH) had the capability to diagnose plague. Meanwhile, the director general of health said the Ministry of Health and the NIH were fully aware of the situation. The developments come after a laboratory worker at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East died on October 2, prompting precautionary measures by Russian authorities. Authorities initially quarantined around 200 people who had come into contact with the woman, identified as 28-year-old Darya Shipilova. Russian authorities have since said that 90% of those quarantined had been released following nearly 5,000 laboratory tests, with no plague cases detected among those who had been in contact with her.

PTI long march continues

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A convoy led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi entered Peshawar on Thursday evening as PTI continued its long march for a fifth consecutive day. The route plan for the march, being carried out to demand the release of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, has undergone multiple changes since its launch on Oct 4. While the party initially vowed to march towards Islamabad, its final destination seemingly remains tentative as the KP CM has yet to announce the plan for the trek after Oct 8. A post by the PTI's official X account shortly after 6pm said the Afridi-led convoy had reached Hayatabad Toll Plaza in Peshawar. It also shared pictures of hundreds of supporters gathered to welcome the KP CM. "God-willing, by the time it reaches Swabi, this caravan will become the largest long march in Pakistan's history," the PTI asserted.

US suspends IT companies

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The US government is suspending Microsoft, Adobe and several other large IT firms from a programme that allows skilled foreign workers to gain permanent residency, senior US officials announced on Thursday, citing alleged fraud and as part of an effort to push companies to hire more Americans. "Our message to Microsoft is: You're a great American company, but you've got to hire great American workers," US Vice President JD Vance said. "There has been no company in the United States, unfortunately, that has abused this system more than Microsoft." Secretary of Labour Keith Sonderling added that some of the largest IT firms in the world would also be suspended from that programme, including Cognizant, Infosys, Tata, Wipro, HCL and Capgemini.

Boost for economy

IMF reaches staff-level agreement with Pakistan

Deal follows talks on fiscal targets, energy reforms, economic stability; disbursement tied to IMF board nod

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the latest reviews of its economic programme, potentially unlocking about \$1.21 billion in fresh financing, subject to approval by the Fund's Executive Board, according to an official statement issued by the global lender. The agreement covers the fourth review of Pakistan's 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review of its 28-month Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), the IMF said on Wednesday. Upon approval, Pakistan will have access to about \$1 billion under the EFF and \$210 million under the RSF, bringing total disbursements under the two arrangements to about \$5.7 billion. An IMF team led by Iva Petrova held discussions with Pakistani authorities in Karachi and Islamabad from September 23 to October 7 under the latest programme reviews as well as the 2026 Article IV consultation. The Fund said Pakistan had maintained macroeconomic stability despite the impact of the Middle East conflict, with strong policies helping the economy withstand higher

energy prices and supply disruptions. Real GDP growth reached 4% during the first three quarters of FY26, while full-year growth is estimated at 3.6%. Headline inflation moderated to about 10.3% in September after peaking in May, while core inflation remained contained. The IMF said Pakistan's current account was broadly balanced in FY26, supported by strong remittances, while gross foreign exchange reserves rose to about \$21.5 billion by the end of September. However, the Fund warned that risks remained high, citing geopolitical tensions, volatile energy prices, tighter global financial conditions and disruptions to trade. The IMF said Pakistan's FY27 budget should be implemented firmly, with an underlying primary surplus target of 2% of GDP to help place public debt on a sustainable downward path. It also called for continued reforms in revenue administration, including risk-based audits, digital invoicing and greater use of third-party data, while urging Pakistan to develop a simpler and fairer tax system. The Fund stressed the need to strengthen public financial management, improve the efficiency of public investment and procurement, and reduce debt rollover risks amid

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Long march towards Islamabad

Fazl 'conveys' govt offer to PTI

Fazl contacted the PTI after meeting a government delegation on Thursday. The government had asked him to play a role in resolving the situation through dialogue and understanding instead of imposing governor's rule or an emergency

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has conveyed the government's offer to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), prompting the party to call an emergency meeting, sources said. The emergency meeting is being held via video link, with all PTI leaders participating, according to sources. Fazl contacted the PTI after meeting a government delegation on Thursday. The government had asked him to play a role in resolving the situation through dialogue and understanding instead of imposing governor's rule or an emergency. PTI leaders have said there has been no recent contact with the government or Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman regarding talks with the party. Speaking to Geo News, PTI leader Asad Qaiser said talks had been held with the government earlier, while a meeting with Fazlur Rehman was held regarding the proposed All Parties Conference (APC). PTI leader Akhunda Husain Yousafzai said there had been no meeting

FCC fixes KP CM disqualification case for hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has fixed for hearing a petition challenging the appointment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi. A bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan will hear the case on October 15. Advocate Sher Afzal Marwat has challenged the appointment of the KP chief minister, arguing that a convicted individual does not have the authority to nominate any public official.

called by PTI regarding talks, while Junaid Akbar also expressed unawareness of any

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Pakistan, Bahrain ties cordial

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a cordial meeting on Thursday with Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The talks came during Al Zayani's two-day visit to Islamabad, which began on Wednesday at Dar's invitation. The Bahraini foreign minister is co-chairing the third session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission. The two ministers reviewed Pakistan-Bahrain relations and expressed satisfaction at the positive momentum in high-level engagement between the two countries.

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Forces kill nine terrorists in Waziristan

IBOs conducted in Palangzai, Nadeem Kot and Kot Khazri areas of tribal district, say security sources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed nine Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) carried out in several areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district, security sources said on Thursday. The IBOs were conducted in Palangzai, Nadeem Kot and Kot Khazri areas of North Waziristan, said the security sources. Several hideouts were also destroyed, while a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the terrorists, they said.

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'No relief' for Imran if PTI tries to black-mail govt

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan would not receive relief if PTI sought to pressure the government through its long march. Speaking to Geo News at Parliament House in Islamabad, Asif said the government would not yield to pressure and accused PTI of acting in concert with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "PTI has declared war against Pakistan together with the TTP," the defence minister said, adding that it was the party's "wishful thinking"

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ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

'Fake and fabricated'

PAF jets not being used against Yemen's Houthis: Info Ministry

The development comes after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to the deployment of military forces and capabilities rapidly in the kingdom during an emergency meeting of the Makkah Defence Alliance in Riyadh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information dismissed on Thursday a news report claiming that Pakistan Air Force (PAF) aircraft were being used against the Yemen's Houthis as "fake and fabricated". A New York Times report published on Oct 7, a screenshot of which the ministry shared in an X post, cited an unnamed source as saying that PAF fighter jets were being employed against the group, amid the latter's escalating conflict with Saudi Arabia. But the information ministry denied the report, saying in a post on X that the NYT story "attributing the employment of PAF aircraft against Houthis is fake and fabricated". "International media houses are again asked to avoid speculative reporting with regards to employment of Pakistan's military forces under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. "Details of any deployment, if necessary, will be given by

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Iran envoy urges stronger trade ties with Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iran and Pakistan, as neighbours with deep historical, cultural and people-to-people ties, share an interest in strengthening cooperation across all areas, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam said on Thursday. Speaking at a roundtable at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), he said geographical proximity offered significant opportunities to expand trade, connectivity and regional economic cooperation. Dr. Moghadam said the two countries, which share a long border and maritime links, had a strong interest in closer bilateral relations. Proximity, he said, could lower transport and logistical costs and open room for trade. He described Iran as a potential gateway for Pakistan towards Central Asia, the Caucasus, Türkiye and European markets, and said Pakistan could



give Iran access to markets in South Asia and beyond. He identified road, maritime and railway links as important pillars of economic cooperation. Referring to possible cooperation among Karachi, Gwadar and Bandar Abbas, he called for more border crossings and better border infrastructure. He also pointed to scope for higher

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Talks remain the sensible option as protest calendar tightens

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



WITH a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf long march hanging over the capital, all sides appear to be buying time. The government has foreign dignitaries in the city until about 10 October and has little appetite for a street confrontation while those visits are under way. PTI, for its part, still wants a political settlement before events harden into an eventuality that neither side can easily reverse. In between sits the preference, widely shared even among rivals, that talks remain the sensible way to handle the crisis. The calendar is part of the calculation. Official Islamabad has been busy with high-level visitors, including the foreign minister of Bahrain, who arrived for the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission. The Vatican foreign minister will also be in town for next couple of days. As long as guests are in town, a decisive security or political move against a protest

carries diplomatic cost. Once those engagements end, the restraint may ease. Party and government sources alike expect that, after 10 October, the administration could move more firmly if a march materialises and talks have not produced a formula. That reading is speculative, but it fits a familiar pattern: manage the optics first, decide later. PTI's own posture is cautious as well as combative. Leaders outside jail continue to speak of a march and of demands that have not been met, yet the party line in recent days has also left room for a negotiated off-ramp. The argument inside PTI circles is that a settlement reached before a confrontation is better than a confrontation that forces a settlement on worse terms. Critics say that flexibility is less strategy than weakness. Supporters say it is realism. The weakness is structural. The figures who still command the party's street loyalty are in prison. Those outside are routinely accused, by their own rank and file as much as by opponents, of playing a double game: hard rhetoric for the workers, quieter channels for the establishment and the government. That split helps explain why recent PTI mobilisation has carried less sting than the party's numbers on paper would suggest. A movement whose real leadership cannot direct it day to day struggles to hold a single line on timing, demands and red lines. Mixed signals from the second tier

make allies hesitate and give the government confidence that a march, if it comes, may not hold. The government is not acting from a position of uncomplicated strength either. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan Peoples Party remain the pillars of the sitting arrangement, but they do not agree on new provinces, an issue that has returned to political argument alongside the protest threat. Creating new federating units would require constitutional amendment and a two-thirds majority. It would also cut across provincial interests that both parties have spent years defending. PML-N's base in Punjab and PPP's hold on Sindh make them natural sceptics of a map redrawn in the name of administrative efficiency or southern and other regional grievances. Agreement between them on this question is not in sight. The longer argument for new provinces is political as much as administrative. For decades, national politics has rotated around two family-centred parties. A larger map, advocates say, would break that duopoly by creating new assemblies, new cabinets and new routes into power. New leadership might emerge, or at least that is the idea. Whether new provinces would actually dilute dynastic politics, or simply reproduce it at a smaller scale, is untested. What is clear is that the two main governing parties have no incentive to run the experiment if it threat-

ens their provincial strongholds. Memory of 2014 hangs over the tactics on every side. PTI's sit-in that year ran for more than 120 days in an attempt to dislodge then prime minister Nawaz Sharif. It dominated television, froze parts of the capital and raised the temperature between the party and the establishment. It did not remove the government. Sharif stayed in office, and the dharma ended without the result its organisers had promised. The lesson drawn in government circles is that a long protest can be endured. The lesson drawn in PTI circles is more bitter: without a single chain of command and without institutional backing, street pressure alone has limits. That history is why talks keep resurfacing as the rational option. A march after 10 October could still draw crowds and force a choice. It could also dissipate, damaged by division at the top and by a government that has used the diplomatic calendar to prepare. New provinces will not be settled in the same conversation as protest demands, and the two governing parties are unlikely to treat them as a joint project. The immediate question is narrower. PTI wants a settlement before matters escalate. The government wants time, and then room to act. Both still describe dialogue as the sensible path. Whether that description survives the second week of October is the test now in front of Islamabad.

President for stronger Pak-Bahrain bilateral ties

The president appreciated Bahrain's warm welcome of the Islamabad MoU and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and its recognition of Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, security and stability.

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Bahrain and expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade, investment, economic engagement and security. The president said this during his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said. The two leaders first held a restricted meeting, which was followed by a delegation-level meeting. Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani is on a visit to Pakistan to attend the 3rd Session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC). Talking to him President Zardari said Pakistan is keen to translate strong bilateral political relations into deeper trade and investment ties. He highlight-

ed opportunities for cooperation in food security, IT and digital services, construction, mining, port handling, research and development, tourism and healthcare. He also encouraged greater business-to-business engagement between the two countries. The president appreciated Bahrain's warm welcome of the Islamabad MoU and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and its recognition of Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, security and stability. The president said Pakistan and Bahrain share a long-standing and trusted defence partnership, reflected in joint exercises, high-level exchanges and institutional cooperation. He expressed Pakistan's readiness to further strengthen cooperation in manpower, logistics, training and defence hardware. The president also appreciated Bahrain's support and opportunities for more than 134,000 Pakistanis residing in the Kingdom and welcomed continued cooperation on matters concerning the Pakistani diaspora. Talking about the regional situation, the president said Pakistan remains committed to constructive engagement with all parties to build trust, bridge gaps and promote lasting peace, security and stability in the region. Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani conveyed the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain, to the President. He said the Pakistan-Bahrain JMC meetings had remained highly productive, covering several important areas of cooperation, and noted that the President's visit to Bahrain has left a

significant and positive impact on bilateral relations. Discussing the regional situation, he commended Pakistan's courageous efforts to mediate and bring the warring parties to the table, saying that Pakistan's actions had helped save many lives. Referring to the Quranic teaching that saving one life is akin to saving all humanity, he appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace. He also congratulated Pakistan on its successful tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. During the delegation-level meeting, Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani was accompanied by Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan Mohammed Ibrahim Mohammed Abdulqader, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs Hamad Ali Al Manai, Major General Abdulaziz Mayoof Al-Rumaihi, Director-General of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science, Ministry of Interior, Shaikh Hamad bin Salman Al Khalifa, Assistant Undersecretary for Domestic and Foreign Trade, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Eng. Mohammed Mirza Al-Oraibi, Assistant Undersecretary for Agriculture Affairs, Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, and Yousif Salahuddin Ibrahim Salahuddin, First Vice Chairman, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry. From the Pakistani side, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Syed Naveed Qamar MNA, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and other senior officials were present.—DNA

Stronger climate-resilient social protection stressed

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday called for stronger international support to protect vulnerable communities from climate and economic shocks, highlighting Pakistan's experience of linking social protection with skills, employment and climate resilience. Addressing a panel at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Adaptive Social Protection Forum in Manila, she said Pakistan contributes very little to global carbon emissions, yet its vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate change. "The international community must step up support for Pakistan's most vulnerable families by strengthening climate resilience, expanding adaptive social protection and providing practical assistance to help communities withstand future climate shocks," she said. Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted BISP's response to climate-related emergencies, saying 2.7 million families affected by the 2022 floods received PKR 70 billion in emergency cash assistance. She said BISP's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) covers more than 40 million households and has been made dynamic, with climate-related questions incorporated into the survey to identify households exposed to climate risks.—APP

Pakistan reaffirms commitment to D-8 objectives



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Additional Secretary (SIFC & ED) Ambassador Abrar H. Hashmi hosted an informal exchange with Heads of Mission and representatives of D-8 member states at the Foreign Office, reaffirming Pakistan's strong commitment to advancing the ob-

jectives and programmes of the Developing Eight (D-8). The meeting focused on strengthening practical cooperation among member states, particularly in trade and investment, people-to-people and business-to-business exchanges, connectivity and greater visibility of the D-8 platform. The participants also dis-

cussed enhancing interaction between D-8 Centres of Excellence and reviewed the forthcoming calendar of D-8 meetings and activities. Ambassador Hashmi underscored the importance of translating the D-8 framework into tangible opportunities for economic cooperation and stronger engagement among member states.

Dengue situation improves sharply

RAWALPINDI: A high-level meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee for Dengue Control (DERC) on Tuesday reported a significant year-over-year improvement in vector management, revealing that confirmed dengue cases in Rawalpindi district fell sharply to just nine in September 2026 compared to 352 cases recorded during the same period in 2025. Co-chaired by Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir and Tahira Aurangzeb, MNA along with Fed-

eral Parliamentary Secretary for Information Danyal Chaudhry and Senator Nasir Butt, the committee reviewed ongoing vector control operations and field surveillance data. Briefing the forum, health officials attributed the dramatic reduction in seasonal transmission to proactive vector surveillance, revealing that field teams detected and destroyed mosquito larvae at 53,755 sites during September alone. The meeting emphasized that timely field responses, targeted larviciding, APP

Hamza assures RCCI delegation support for economic uplift

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), headed by newly elected President Noshervan Khalil Khan, along with RCCI Patron-in-Chief & Group Leader Sohail Altaf, called on former Chief Minister Punjab and MNA Hamza Shahbaz Sharif in Islamabad. The delegation comprised Former RCCI President and Chairman REDAMCO Zahid Latif Khan, Immediate Past President Usman Shaukat, Senior Vice President Waseem Aslam, and Vice President Ikram-ur-Rehman Abasi. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, the prevailing economic situation, upgradation of civic facilities and road access at Rawat Industrial Estate, and measures to provide relief to the business community were discussed in detail. The delegation emphasized the importance of im-

proving infrastructure and connectivity at Rawat Industrial Estate to facilitate businesses, attract new investment, promote industrialization, create employment opportunities, and support sustainable economic growth. President RCCI Noshervan Khalil Khan briefed Hamza Shahbaz Sharif on the Chamber's key initiatives, activities, and ongoing efforts for the business community. He also invited him to visit RCCI Chamber House. Hamza Shahbaz Sharif assured the RCCI delegation of his support for initiatives aimed at strengthening the business community and promoting economic development. He also congratulated President Noshervan Khalil Khan and the newly elected RCCI office bearers and extended his best wishes for a successful tenure.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Director China Culture Center in Pakistan, Chen Peng and Director Silk Road Culture Center, Jamal Shah along with children cutting the during an event to celebrate China National Day at Silk Road Culture Center, in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan, UK explore investment partnership

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) on Thursday discussed ways to further enhance trade and cooperation in priority sectors and deliver concrete outcomes through the next bilateral Trade Dialogue. During a meeting between Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott here at the Ministry of Commerce, the two sides focused on expanding trade and investment cooperation in healthcare and life sciences, information technology, agriculture and livestock, financial services, aviation and minerals-related services, said a news release. The British side outlined the possibility of a long-term, non-legally binding investment partnership, supported at ministerial level, to provide a framework for cooperation in mutually agreed sectors. Potential areas included regulatory reforms, trade facilitation, education and workforce skills, and investment financing. Jam Kamal Khan highlighted livestock as an important area for cooperation, noting the Prime Minister's keen interest in strengthening the sector, improving animal productivity and increasing value addition and meat exports. He underscored the opportunities for British expertise, technology and investment to support modern livestock practices and stronger commercial linkages. The High Commissioner highlighted the importance of incorporating food safety and regulatory requirements into sector development, enabling Pakistani producers to access UK and other international markets. The meeting also reviewed ongoing engagement through the healthcare and life sciences working group. The minister emphasised the need to strengthen the international branding of Pakistani products and help domestic businesses develop a stronger presence in overseas markets.—APP

Food security directly linked to national security: Tanveer

LAHORE: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain has said that food security is of paramount importance and that national security cannot be fully ensured without ensuring food availability in the country. Addressing the concluding ceremony of the National Rescue Challenge 2026 here on Thursday, he said, "Food security is directly linked to national security, stressing that ensuring the development of the agriculture sector is the government's top priority." He said Pakistan was an agricultural country and, by the grace of Allah, The Almighty, was not only meeting the food requirements of its population of around 260 million but also exporting various agricultural commodities, including rice, maize and potatoes. The minister said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was according special attention to the agriculture sector and that concerted efforts were being made for its development. He said modern technologies were being introduced in agriculture, livestock and other allied sectors, while work was also under way to develop improved APP

Muqam urges KP govt to focus on public issues

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam on Thursday urged the KP government to focus on resolving public issues instead of pursuing a long march. Addressing a press conference, he said terrorism incidents continued in the province while the provincial leadership was busy with political activities. He said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were facing serious hardships and questioned what practical change had been brought about despite the

PTI government being in power in the province for the third consecutive term. Amir Muqam said that the PTI had also governed at the federal level for three and a half years, adding that the people had witnessed its performance. He questioned what measures had been taken during that period to address the province's issues and provide funds. He said that the provincial government had the responsibility to address public problems and maintain law and order, adding that its focus should not be limited to political slogans and social media activities. Referring to the proposed

long march, the minister said its date kept changing while people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued to face difficulties due to blocked routes. He said that the government would not allow anyone to paralyze Islamabad, adding that the authorities would take the necessary decision if the march reached the federal capital. Regarding negotiations, Amir Muqam said that detailed discussions had been held between the two sides and views were exchanged on various issues. He said the terms of a joint agreement had been finalized, but the Chief Minister later backed out.—APP

Sindh plans \$3.5m shift to cleaner brick kilns

ISLAMABAD: The Sindh government has proposed a \$3.5 million project to convert more than 120 traditional brick kilns to zig-zag technology by 2029, aiming to cut harmful PM2.5 emissions by around 40 per cent, divert 20,000 tonnes of waste annually through circular-economy measures, and improve cleaner production, worker safety and environmental monitoring across the province.

According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, the project, titled "Decarbonizing Brick Kilns in Sindh through Modernization and Circular Economy Integration," will modernise conventional kilns, train kiln owners and workers, and introduce digital systems for environmental monitoring and carbon measurement. The initiative is expected to directly benefit around

3,000 people and indirectly benefit another 20,000, while promoting the use of industrial and agricultural waste in cleaner brick production. Under the proposed project, more than 120 traditional kilns would be retrofitted or replaced with zig-zag technology, alongside training in cleaner production and occupational safety. The project also envisages diverting 20,000 tonnes of waste each year through circular-economy interventions, including the use of fly ash and agricultural waste in compressed stabilised earth blocks (CSEBs). A key component would be the establishment of a carbon monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) and crediting platform to measure, document and verify the project's environmental outcomes and support carbon-credit aggregation.—APP

MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES NOTICE OF TENDER

- Applications alongwith all credentials are invited by the **GE (Navy) Maintenance Islamabad** upto **15 October 2026** for prequalification of firms / contractors for following work under GE (Navy) Maintenance at Isld in the light of Clause-13, 15 and 16 of PPRA Rules-2004:-

External DC Work of 256 x Men miscellaneous Barracks at Islamabad
Replacement of electric wiring, water supply & sui gas with fitting & fixture & external electric at A-17 Block Quarter No. 1,2,3,4,5 & 6 Street-35
Provision of furniture items in different locations under F&S Sub Division at Isld
Abnormal Works in Different location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division at Isld
Miscellaneous Repair/Maint Works in Different Location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division at Isld
Repair/Replacement / Minor Works of Different locations at Isld
DC Works of different locations under B&R-I & B&R-II Sub Divisions
Repair/Maint of U/S Furniture Items in Different Locations under F&S Sub Division at Isld
Miscellaneous Minor Works in Different Location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division at Isld
Term Contracts of Different Zone in Different Location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division

- Firms / contractors who are enlisted with MES in category 'E' or higher OR with other Govt. Departments, having experience of this type of work; may only apply.
- Applicants not providing the following information / documents will not be considered for prequalification / issue of tenders:

Ser.	Description of Similar nature of works executed during last two years and in hand	Sponsoring agency/ client	Amount of work (Rs. in Millions)	Completion Period (Months)	Date of physical completion	Percentage Progress of work in hand	Performance report on each work by the sponsoring agency / client
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- The contractors will also furnish List of Moveable & Immoveable assets, Personnel (skilled/unskilled), Machinery/equipments, Bank Statement, General Sales Tax (GST) Registration, NTN Certificate etc.
- Firms / contractors not registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (Renewal of Registration for the year 2026-27) will not be considered for issuance of tender documents.
- Pre-qualification documents can be obtained from GE (Navy) Maintenance Sector E-8 Islamabad.
- The applications will be scrutinized and tenders will be issued to the pre-qualified firms / contractors. The tenders are required to be received in GE (Navy) Maint Sector E-8, Islamabad by **1130 hours on 23 Oct 2026** and will be opened on the same date at 1200 hours.
- Contractors who desire; may witness the opening of tenders.
- The Accepting Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the applications in the light of para-33 of PPRA rules-2004. Incomplete application shall not be entertained.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea National Day

Oct 03/Germany Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain National Day

Oct 23/Hungary National Day

October 24/United Nations United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic National Day

Oct 29/Turkey Republic Day

Enquiry

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PIA Flight Info.....114

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CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Canntt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQT.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a progress review meeting on implementation of Digital Nation Pakistan initiative.

Talal discusses plastic-free Islamabad plan with traders

The Islamabad district administration has seized 218 kilograms of polythene bags in ongoing enforcement operations against the use of plastic shopping bags, as part of efforts to make the federal capital plastic-free

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Thursday met a delegation from the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Traders Association to discuss key measures for making Islamabad a plastic-free city. During the meeting, participants exchanged views on steps being taken to eliminate plastic use in the federal capital and promote environmentally friendly alternatives. Talal Chaudhry said Islamabad would become Pakistan's first plastic-free city. He stated that eliminating plastic would help improve the city's environment and reduce pollution. The minister urged citizens to avoid using plastic shopping bags and adopt environmentally friendly alternatives. He said public participation would play an important role in achieving the objective of a plastic-free Islamabad. Talal Chaudhry further said that the campaign would be made successful through the cooperation, suggestions and support of both the business community and residents of the city.

Representatives of the Traders Association assured the government of their full support for measures aimed at making Islamabad plastic-free. They expressed their commitment to assisting official efforts and encouraging compliance within the business community. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, representatives of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Traders Association, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and officials of the Capital Development Authority (CDA). Participants discussed coordination among stakeholders and the role of public awareness in advancing the government's plastic-free Islamabad initiative. It is pertinent to mention that the Islamabad district administration has seized 218 kilograms of polythene bags in ongoing enforcement operations against the use

of plastic shopping bags, as part of efforts to make the federal capital plastic-free. The administration said daily actions are being carried out across the city, while awareness campaigns are also continuing to encourage citizens and traders to stop using plastic bags. According to the district administration, assistant commissioners conducted operations in different areas against violations of the ban on plastic bags. During these actions, 218 kilograms of polythene bags were confiscated, and several shopkeepers found violating the ban were shifted to police stations for further legal action. Officials said the enforcement campaign is being carried out on a daily basis without discrimination. The administration reiterated its commitment to implementing the ban and ensuring compliance by businesses operating in the capital. Alongside enforcement measures, the district administration is also running an awareness campaign to inform the public and traders

about the harmful effects of plastic pollution. Officials stated that plastic pollution can lead to various health problems for citizens and also poses risks to the environment. The administration said shopkeepers are being directed to completely stop the use of plastic shopping bags and adopt permitted alternatives. Traders are being encouraged to cooperate with the authorities and comply with the regulations aimed at reducing plastic waste in the city. The district administration also called on citizens to support the campaign by identifying and reporting shopkeepers who continue to use plastic bags despite the ban. Officials said public cooperation is important for the successful implementation of the policy. Citizens have been urged to use cloth bags and other environmentally friendly alternatives while shopping. The administration said replacing plastic bags with reusable alternatives will help reduce plastic waste and support efforts to keep Islamabad free from plastic pollution.—DNA

EOBI pension requires 15 years of contributions

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has ruled that a person who does not fulfil the mandatory legal requirements for pension cannot be directed to receive pension, while a dispute over a legal entitlement cannot be brought within the jurisdiction of the Federal Ombudsman merely by labeling it as maladministration. The court allowed an appeal filed by the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution

(EOBI) and set aside the Islamabad High Court judgment as well as the orders passed by the Federal Ombudsman and the President of Pakistan. Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan authored the 12-page written order of a three-member bench. Umar Ejaz Gilani appeared on behalf of the petitioner. The court held that the Federal Ombudsman could not bypass the specific statutory procedure for determining eligibility for pension. Rejection of a pension claim, by itself, did not constitute maladministration. Maladministration required elements such as arbitrariness, discrimination, negligence or unjustified delay. The written order said that causing loss to an applicant as a result of compliance with mandatory legal requirements did not amount to maladministration. A mandatory condition for legal eligibility could not be waived on the basis of compassion or general notions of justice. The court observed that, under the EOBI law, pension generally requires at least 15 years of contributions, while the special five-year concession does not apply to insured employees covered on or after July 1, 2008.—APP

IRSA releases 130,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 130,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 96,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1519.39 feet, which was 117.39 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 54,100 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

NBF publishes book Fitrat ki Ranaiyan

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF), under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, has published 'Fitrat ki Ranaiyan', a book by Ali Zaheer Babar. The 506-page book is priced at Rs. 3,310 and is available to readers at a 50 percent discount at NBF bookshops and outlets across the country. The book comprises ten chapters covering a wide range of subjects, including natural beauty and ways to appreciate nature, trees and forests, mountains and high plateaus, seas and coastlines, grasslands and pastures, lakes and rivers, deserts and barren lands, weather and astronomy, geology and the history of the Earth. The final chapter explores the idea that active engagement with nature is an essential source of happiness and a positive life experience. 'Fitrat ki Ranaiyan' presents different aspects of the natural world in an informative and engaging manner. The book also brings together statements and experiences of various writers and storytellers from all five continents, providing readers with insights into diverse natural landscapes and human experiences.—APP

Attock refinery limited honoured with Game Changer award

ISLAMABAD: Attock Refinery Limited (ARL) has been honoured with the prestigious "Game Changer Icon of Pakistan" Award by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) in recognition of its meaningful contributions to Pakistan's economic, social, workplace and sustainability landscape. The award was presented during the EFP Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, a high-level ceremony held at Governor House, Karachi, in the presence of Syed Muhammad Nehal, Governor of Sindh, and Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO). The recognition holds particular significance as the awards covered eight major sectors of Pakistan's industry, with ARL being adjudged the best in the Energy, Oil & Utilities sector by an independent jury, a distinction that underscores the Company's enduring contribution and leadership in the sector. M. Adil Khattak, Chief Executive Officer – ARL, received the award on behalf of the organization, marking a proud moment for ARL and its employees. He expressed that being recognized as the Game Changer Icon in the whole Energy & Utilities sector of Pakistan is indeed a big honour made possible by the sheer hard work and the belief in and practice of our Organizational Core Values by Team ARL.—APP

Asadullah appointed Chairman FST

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice on Thursday issued a notification regarding the appointment of former Additional Attorney General Rana Asadullah Khan as Chairman of the Federal Service Tribunal (FST). The notification said that Rana Asadullah Khan, ASC, has been appointed Chairman of the Federal Service Tribunal for a non-extendable term of three years with effect from the date he assumes charge of the post. He will be entitled to such pay, allowances and other perks and privileges as may be prescribed from time to time. Meanwhile, following his appointment, Rana Asadullah Khan expressed gratitude for the confidence reposed in him by Prime Minister and said he would discharge his responsibilities with honesty, impartiality and responsibility in accordance with the Constitution and law. He said that the confidence shown by the Prime Minister was an honour for him and he would use all his abilities to live up to it.—APP

IGP announces free Hajj, Umrah for 3 cops

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry on Thursday announced a major welfare initiative under which three police officers will be sent for Hajj every year, while one officer will perform Umrah every three months, with all expenses covered by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police. A police official told on Thursday that the IGP announced the decision during a meeting with officers of the Logistics Division, where he reviewed welfare measures for police personnel. Under the initiative, police personnel from the rank of Constable to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) will be eligible to apply for Hajj every year. Three officers will be selected through a lucky draw and sent for Hajj at the expense of ICT Police. Similarly, one police officer will be selected through a lucky draw every three months for Umrah, with all expenses paid by ICT Police.—APP

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Briefs

FIA recovers
Rs 450,000
from agents

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Islamabad has recovered Rs450,000 from three agents who allegedly cheated a citizen on the promise of a job in Saudi Arabia and returned the full amount to the complainant. An FIA official told APP on Thursday that the action was taken under inquiry No. RE-546/26 following a complaint filed by a citizen, Binyamin, against three agents associated with overseas employment promoter Hafza and Company. The official said the agents had promised to arrange a job in Saudi Arabia for the complainant's son, Umar Binyamin, and received Rs450,000 for the purpose. However, when Umar Binyamin reached Saudi Arabia, he found that neither a job contract nor the promised company was available. He was forced to return to Pakistan without employment, while his family also had to bear additional travel and other expenses. Following the complaint, the FIA conducted an inquiry and issued notices to all three agents. The official said the agents were directed to return the money through a mutual settlement. As a result, the full amount of Rs450,000 was recovered and handed over to the complainant. Binyamin thanked the Director FIA Islamabad Zone, Deputy Director and Investigating Officer Inspector Danish Masood for their timely action and efforts in recovering his money. The official said FIA Islamabad Zone would continue taking action against agents involved in cheating citizens on the promise of overseas employment. He added that protecting citizens from job fraud and ensuring justice for affected people remained among the agency's top priorities.—APP

Air University
students visit
ICT Police
HQ, meet IGP

ISLAMABAD: Students of the Department of Communication and Media Studies at Air University visited the Central Police Office Islamabad, where they met Inspector General of Police (IGP) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry and learned about modern policing and public services in the federal capital. A police official told on Thursday that the visiting students were given a detailed briefing on Islamabad Police's modern initiatives, public-friendly policing, community policing, improved facilities for citizens and the Safe City Project. During the meeting, IGP Sohail spoke to the students about the importance of modern technology, effective communication, and strong public relations in improving police performance. He highlighted the role of modern policing methods and better communication between police and citizens in providing effective public services. The students showed keen interest in the various initiatives taken by Islamabad Police and the use of modern technology in policing. The visit also provided the students with an opportunity to learn about the working of Islamabad Police and its efforts to improve public services through technology and community policing.—APP

Weather
forecast

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast predominantly dry weather across the country on Thursday, with isolated rain and thunderstorms expected in Kashmir and adjoining hilly areas in Islamabad and adjoining areas, dry weather is expected, with partly cloudy conditions likely during the afternoon. Most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are expected to remain dry; however, rain/wind/thunderstorm is likely in Kohistan, Mansehra, Battagram and Abbottabad during the afternoon. Most parts of Punjab are also likely to experience dry weather, while Murree, Galyat and adjoining areas are expected to remain partly cloudy. Hot and dry weather is likely to prevail over most districts of Sindh and Balochistan.—APP

92 premises sealed over
fire safety violations

As emphasized by the Capital Development Authority's core campaign message, continued enforcement action remains absolutely essential for life safety: "Compliance Today Safety Tomorrow"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, Capital Emergency Services (CES) has comprehensively audited and sealed 92 premises across the capital during an intensive September 2026 enforcement drive. Spearheaded by the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) Building Emergency Audit & Prevention Wing, the inspection operations were executed under the strict guidelines of the Islamabad Fire Prevention & Life Safety Regulations to ensure "Safer Buildings, Safer People, A Safer Islamabad". Comprehensive Audit & Enforcement Report of September 2026, field inspections rigorously targeted commercial, healthcare, residential, and government sectors, resulting in detailed regulatory actions and financial penal-

ties: Extensive Auditing: Authorities conducted numerous FLS-Audits across different sectors, including 115 in hospitals, 29 in government facilities, 6 in commercial properties, and 4 in residential buildings. The government sector audits also yielded 6 finalized audit reports. Premises Sealed: A total of 92 non-compliant properties were successfully sealed. This targeted operation encompassed 78 commercial shops, 8 high-rise structures, 4 residential buildings, and 3 government facilities. Challans & Detailed Financial Recoveries: The concerned wing issued 288 total challans during the month. This aggressive enforcement led to the recovery of PKR 2,400,000 across 9 specific cases: PKR 1,700,000 recovered from 5 commercial cases and PKR 700,000 recovered from 4 hospital cases. Additionally, 102 commercial FLS-Plans fees generated PKR 510,000. An additional 41 specific challans were issued directly to hospitals.

Warnings and Notices: A total of 99 final notices, shown cause notices, and advisories were served to commercial properties. A specific advisory was also issued to PIMS Hospital. Furthermore, 15 commercial cases currently remain pending. Critical Findings in Healthcare and Commercial Sectors: A major priority for the September audits was the healthcare sector, which yielded alarming compliance statistics alongside widespread commercial violations. Hospital Non-Compliance: Of the 161 total enforcement actions directed at hospitals, individual CES data reports revealed that 150 hospitals currently have not sufficient fire and safety equipment. These facilities demonstrated excessive non compliance with the mandatory IFP&LS 2010 and BCP 2016 safety frameworks. High levels of non-compliance remain broadly prevalent across both hospital and commercial categories. Sealing and Desealing Sta-

tus: While active desealing efforts are also ongoing for properties that achieve compliance, all properties. To reinforce structural and regulatory compliance, the CES, CDA is accelerating the strict enforcement of fire safety regulations under IFP&LS 2010 and BCP 2016. Capital Emergency Services (CES) will prioritize the timely issuance of notices and challans, alongside the strict recovery of dues. Immediate follow ups will be conducted on the pending commercial cases to finalize their audit reports. The Wing maintains an uncompromising sealing and de sealing policy based on verified compliance status. Proactive coordination will be enhanced with building owners, management, and relevant agencies to guarantee sustained compliance. As emphasized by the Capital Development Authority's core campaign message, continued enforcement action remains absolutely essential for life safety: "Compliance Today | Safety Tomorrow".

Traffic
diversions on
major roads

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Thursday issued a traffic advisory, announcing diversions at different times on Srinagar Highway, Faisal Avenue and other major roads due to the movement of foreign delegations in the federal capital. An ITP official told that traffic diversions would be placed at different points between the Red Zone and Koral. Citizens were advised to use alternative routes and allow an extra 20 to 25 minutes for their journeys to avoid inconvenience. Srinagar Highway: Traffic diversions will be placed at different locations between the Red Zone and Koral. Motorists using Srinagar Highway can take Suhrawardy Road, G-8 Service Road and Ninth Avenue as alternative routes. Zero Point to Koral: Motorists travelling from Zero Point towards Koral can use Ninth Avenue. Koral to Islamabad: Motorists coming from Koral towards Islamabad can use Old Airport Road, Rawlee Road, Rawalpindi Murree Road, I.J. Principal Road and Faqir Aipee Road. Koral Expressway, Murree Road and Club Road: In case these roads are closed, motorists can use Lehrtr Road and Park Road as alternative routes. Travelling Out of Islamabad: Motorists leaving Islamabad can use Jinnah Avenue and Margalla Road. Bhara Kahu to Islamabad: Motorists coming from Bhara Kahu towards Islamabad can use Bani Gala and Park Road. The official said traffic pressure was likely to increase on major roads during the movement of foreign delegations.—APP

Sherry hails
security forces

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman Thursday paid tribute to the security forces for killing nine terrorists, including four key commanders, during a successful operation in North Waziristan. In a statement, Sherry Rehman said the successful operation was a testament to the professional capabilities and operational expertise of the security forces. She said there was no place for terrorists on Pakistani soil and vowed that they would be eliminated. "The brave people of Pakistan stand with their security forces for the achievement of a greater national objective," she said. The PPP leader said the sacrifices rendered by the security forces in the fight against terrorism reflected the nation's resolve to eradicate the menace. She reiterated that the nation would continue to stand by the security forces until the last terrorist was eliminated.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Head of Mission of Tajikistan, Maruf Abdurahmon, and Chairman of Al-Sadaat Group, Syed Sadat Hussain Shah at a reception held to mark the National Day of Tajikistan.

Zong first 5G fixed
wireless broadband

Through Z HomeFi, Zong is bringing its brand promise of 'Aisa Hai Future' to life, taking advanced 5G technology into homes and contributing to a more connected, inclusive and future-ready Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's Leading Technology Services Enterprise, is taking 5G beyond the smartphone and into the Pakistani home with the launch of Z HomeFi – Pakistan's first 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) home broadband service, ushering a new era of future-ready, technology-led connectivity. Z HomeFi marks another milestone in Zong's journey to transform connectivity into technology-led services, translating next-generation 5G innovation into a simple, accessible and customer-centric home broadband experience. By removing the need for fibre installation, fixed-line infrastructure and complex installations, Z HomeFi gives households greater flexibility and convenience while delivering high-speed, reliable connectivity designed around the evolving needs of today's digitally connected consumers. Z HomeFi is available across Pakistan's top 10 cities, bringing next-generation home broadband within reach of more customers. The service is available exclusively through Zong's Customer Service Centres, with plans to extend availability to franchises in the future. Z HomeFi brings flexible home broadband options to households through 12 prepaid bundles, offering speeds ranging from 10 Mbps to 50 Mbps and monthly data allowances of 100 GB to 500 GB. Priced between PKR 4,500

and Rs. 11,000 per month, inclusive of taxes, the bundles cater to varying household budgets and connectivity needs, from everyday browsing to streaming, remote working and online learning. The service's 5G indoor Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), priced at PKR 22,000, supports a simple plug-and-connect setup.

The launch reinforces Zong's role as a technology enabler of Digital Pakistan, harnessing its network, digital platforms and intelligent capabilities into developing solutions that create meaningful customer value today while enabling what comes next. Commenting on the launch, Zong Head of Marketing Sajid Munir said: "The true value of technology is measured by how it improves people's everyday lives. With Z HomeFi, we are bringing 5G technology directly into Pakistani homes, giving customers a reliable and convenient broadband experience without the complexity of fibre installation or fixed-line infrastructure. Whether it is learning, working, streaming, creating or staying connected, Z HomeFi gives households greater flexibility and seamless access to the digital experiences that matter most."

Through Z HomeFi, Zong is bringing its brand promise of 'Aisa Hai Future' to life, taking advanced 5G technology into homes and contributing to a more connected, inclusive and future-ready Pakistan. Pakistan's first 5G FWA home broadband is here, and Zong is leading the way.

Stakeholders call for stronger
tobacco control steps

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Parliamentary Secretary Naz Akbar said tobacco control should remain a national priority and stressed collective efforts to protect children and young people from tobacco addiction.

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentarians, government officials, health experts and civil society representatives have called for higher tobacco taxes, larger graphic health warnings and stricter enforcement of tobacco advertising restrictions to protect young people. The call was made at a stakeholders' meeting organized by Aurat Foundation to discuss strengthening graphic health warnings and increasing tobacco taxation. Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage Farrah Naz Akbar said tobacco control should remain a national priority and stressed collective efforts to protect children and young people from tobacco addiction. She said Parliament had a key role in translating public health evidence into effective legislation and policies, adding that higher tobacco taxes could reduce consumption by making tobac-

co products less affordable, particularly for young people, while generating additional government revenue. Farrah Naz Akbar also called for larger and more prominent graphic health warnings on cigarette packs to highlight the health consequences of tobacco use and deter young and first-time users. She stressed the need for stronger implementation of restrictions on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS), particularly on digital and social media platforms, to prevent tobacco companies from targeting children and young people. MNA Huma Chughtai emphasized the need for joint societal action on tobacco control and said legislators would support efforts to strengthen graphic health warnings on cigarette packs, including through a resolution in Parliament. Director Tobacco Control Cell Dr Arsalan Haider highlighted the role of the Tobacco Control Cell in promoting effective tobacco control policies and implementing Pakistan's commitments related to tobacco control. Director General PEMRA Rahat Ali highlighted the responsibility of regulatory authorities in preventing tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and ensuring compliance with existing restrictions. Earlier, Aurat Foundation Team Lead Syed Safdar Raza welcomed the participants and highlighted the organisation's efforts to strengthen parliamentary and public awareness on effective tobacco control. Tobacco Control Cell official Aftab Ahmed gave an overview of Pakistan's tobacco control measures and the WHO MPOWER framework, stressing effective implementation, particularly stronger graphic health warnings.—DNA

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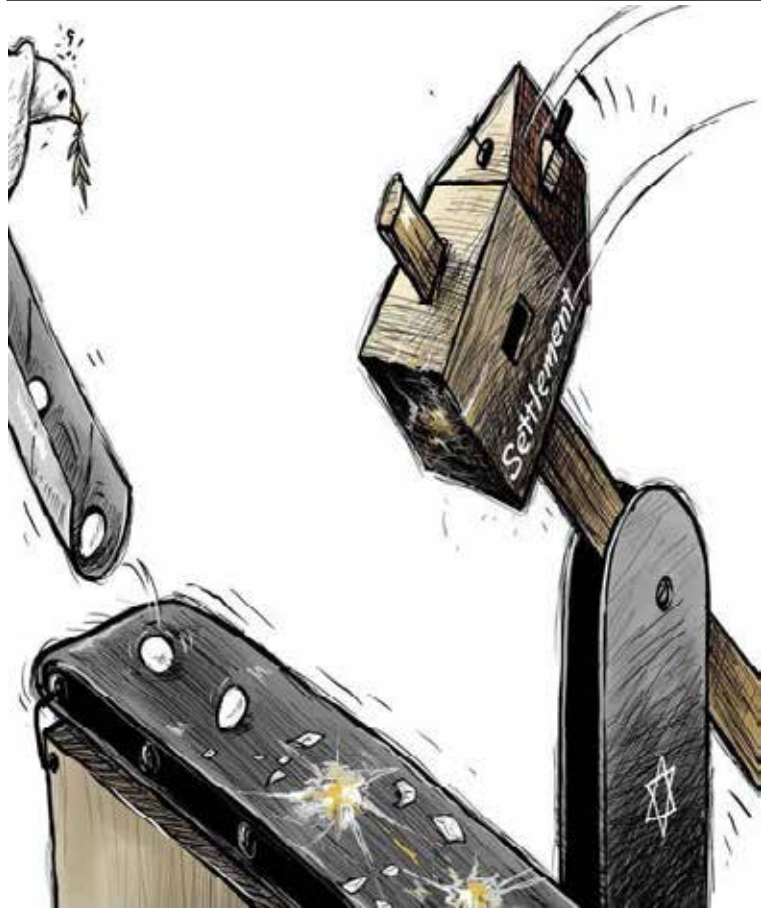
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The politics of long marches and dharnas

THE long march is one of the oldest tools in Pakistani politics. Parties out of power have used it for decades to force the capital's attention, to bargain with governments, and sometimes to test whether the establishment will let a protest become a crisis. What is being discussed now around Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is not a new method. It is an old method being attempted under conditions that leave it weaker than the marches that came before it. PTI's posture is cautious as well as combative. Leaders outside jail continue to speak of a march and of demands that have not been met, yet the party line has also left room for a negotiated off-ramp. Inside PTI circles, the argument is that a settlement reached before a confrontation is better than a confrontation that forces a settlement on worse terms. Critics call that flexibility weakness rather than strategy. Supporters call it realism. Either way, a march announced with an exit already half-open does not carry the single-mindedness that street politics usually requires. The weakness is structural. The figures who still command the party's street loyalty are in prison. Those outside are routinely accused, by their own rank and file as much as by opponents, of playing a double game: hard rhetoric for the workers, quieter channels for the establishment and the government. That split helps explain why recent mobilisation has carried less sting than PTI's numbers on paper would suggest. A movement whose real leadership cannot direct it day to day struggles to hold one line on timing, demands and red lines. Mixed signals from the second tier make allies hesitate and give the government confidence that a march, if it comes, may not hold. Earlier long marches in Pakistan drew strength from leaders who were present, visible and able to change course in public. This one does not. The gap



between the imprisoned leadership and the politicians managing the message is the clearest way in which the current plan falls short. Without that chain of command, crowd size alone cannot supply direction. The government is not acting from uncomplicated strength either. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan Peoples Party remain the pillars of the sitting arrangement, but they do not agree on new provinces, an issue that has returned to political argument alongside the protest threat. New federating units would require a constitutional amendment and a two-thirds majority. They would also cut across provincial interests both parties have spent years defending. PML-N's base in Punjab and PPP's hold on Sindh make them natural sceptics of a map redrawn in the name of administrative efficiency or regional grievance. Agreement on that question is not in sight. The longer case for new provinces is political as much as administrative. For decades, national politics has rotated around two family-centred parties. A larger map, advocates say, would break that duopoly by creating new assemblies, new cabinets and new routes into power. New leadership might emerge, or at least that is the idea. Whether new provinces would dilute dynastic politics, or simply reproduce it on a smaller scale, is untested. The two main governing parties have no incentive to run the experiment if it threatens their strongholds. Memory of the 2014 sit-in hangs over every side. PTI's dharna that year ran for more than 120 days in an attempt to dislodge then prime minister Nawaz Sharif. It dominated television, froze parts of the capital and raised the temperature with the establishment. It did not remove the government. Sharif stayed in office, and the protest ended without the result its organisers had promised. That history is why talks keep returning as the rational option. A march could still draw crowds and force a choice. It could also dissipate, damaged by division at the top and by a government using time and the diplomatic calendar to prepare.

Moscow's Diplomatic Tightrope

Dr Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Moscow used the UN Security Council, offered mediation and presented itself as a potential intermediary. This approach allows Russia to remain visible in a crisis without committing large military resources. The strategy is familiar. Russia seeks to project the image of an indispensable international actor even when its material footprint is limited. Its decade-long effort to maintain relations with Iran, Israel and the Arab Gulf states has given Moscow access to several competing camps. During the 2026 crisis, Putin spoke with Iranian and Gulf leaders and offered to mediate between Washington and Tehran

THE 2026 Iran war has exposed an important feature of Russian foreign policy in the Middle East: Moscow wants influence without becoming trapped in another war. Russia has maintained political and diplomatic support for Tehran, criticized Israeli and American actions and used its position at the United Nations to defend Iran. Yet it has stopped short of entering the conflict directly. At first glance, this may appear contradictory. Russia and Iran have moved closer in recent years, particularly since the Ukraine war. In January 2025, the two countries formalized a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership covering security, trade and energy. The agreement also envisaged military-technical cooperation, intelligence exchanges and joint exercises. Yet significantly, it does not contain a mutual defense commitment. Russia and Iran have developed what analysts describe as a form of "dynamic alignment". They have learned to compartmentalize areas of disagreement while cooperating where their interests overlap. Their relationship has included cooperation in Afghanistan and Central Asia, military-technical ties and nuclear energy. Russia helped negotiate the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and took custody of Iranian enriched uranium at the time. The Ukraine war accelerated this relationship. Iran supplied Russia with Shahed drones, while Moscow expanded military and technological cooperation with Tehran. The relationship consequently became more important for both sides, but it never became a conventional alliance. That limitation matters. Russia may have obligations to exchange information and cooperate against common threats, but Moscow has no treaty requirement to fight a war on Iran's behalf. Its objective is therefore not necessarily to defeat Iran's opponents, but to protect Russian interests while retaining room for maneuver. The war in Ukraine has reduced Russia's ability to project military power across the Middle East. Moscow has also developed

important relationships with Israel and the Gulf Arab states. For years, Russia pursued a policy of maintaining working relations with competing regional actors rather than choosing one camp. Moscow strongly criticized Washington and Tel Aviv for the strikes against Iran and used the UN Security Council to pursue diplomatic initiatives. It also offered mediation between Iran and the United States. But Russia simultaneously tried to reassure the Gulf States that their security and territorial integrity mattered. The United Arab Emirates, in particular, has become economically important to Moscow under Western sanctions. Russian banks have developed financial channels through the UAE, while bilateral trade has expanded significantly. Trade between Russia and the UAE exceeded \$12 billion in 2025. Moscow therefore cannot afford to treat the Gulf States simply as extensions of American policy. Their economic importance has grown precisely because Russia needs alternative financial and commercial channels. Moscow used the UN Security Council, offered mediation and presented itself as a potential intermediary. This approach allows Russia to remain visible in a crisis without committing large military resources. The strategy is familiar. Russia seeks to project the image of an indispensable international actor even when its material footprint is limited. Its decade-long effort to maintain relations with Iran, Israel and the Arab Gulf states has given Moscow access to several competing camps. During the 2026 crisis, Putin spoke with Iranian and Gulf leaders and offered to mediate between Washington and Tehran. Pakistan, rather than Russia, emerged as an important mediator during the conflict. Islamabad hosted talks involving American and Iranian representatives and helped relay messages between the two sides. Russia's offer to host Iranian enriched uranium also failed to generate the response Moscow had hoped for. This is significant. It suggests that influence in the Middle

East is no longer the exclusive preserve of the major powers. Regional states can also acquire diplomatic importance when they maintain working relations with opposing sides. The two countries have common interests, but they do not have identical interests. Russia has cooperated with Iran while also maintaining relations with Israel and the Gulf monarchies. Iran wants Russian political and military support, but it cannot assume that Moscow will automatically enter every confrontation on its behalf. Even the 2025 strategic partnership treaty reflects this reality. It provides a framework for broader cooperation but stops short of a mutual defense arrangement. The 2026 war has consequently demonstrated the limits of Russia's partnership with Iran as much as its strengths. Moscow can provide diplomatic backing, intelligence cooperation and political support. It can use its veto at the UN and offer mediation. But it is reluctant to cross the threshold into direct military confrontation with the United States or Israel. Islamabad's diplomatic role during the crisis demonstrates the value of maintaining relations with competing powers. Pakistan has close ties with the Gulf States, a long-standing relationship with Turkey, geographical proximity to Iran and important relations with the United States, China and Russia. Rather than becoming part of a rigid regional bloc, Pakistan can use this position to support dialogue and de-escalation. Russia's policy during the Iran war was therefore less about choosing Tehran over Washington or the Gulf and more about preserving room for maneuver. Its central calculation appears straightforward: support Iran enough to preserve the strategic partnership, maintain relations with the Gulf, avoid direct war with the United States and keep Russia relevant as a diplomatic actor.

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Region's crises must not be allowed to merge

Dr. Abdellatif El-Menawy

The summit should not be mistaken for a treaty or a military alliance. Its declaration does not bind Ethiopia and it does not create an enforcement mechanism. Nor does it establish a general legal veto for downstream states over every development project upstream. Its importance is political: It shows that Egypt is seeking partners, common language and regular coordination instead of allowing Ethiopia to define the argument as a bilateral contest between development and historical rights

FOR years, the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was presented as a contest between two countries: Egypt, fearful for the security of its most vital water source, and Ethiopia, determined to exercise what it calls its sovereign right to development. That frame is now breaking down. The Nile dispute is becoming entangled with the security of the Horn of Africa, the war inside Ethiopia, relations with Eritrea and Sudan, and the argument over access to the Red Sea. The shift is visible in the language of the two governments. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi last month said Egypt was still allowing diplomacy and peaceful solutions to work but that this would not come at the expense of the country's existence or the welfare of its people. The statement was deliberately stark. It was not a declaration of military action but it moved the warning to the presidential level and made clear that Cairo regards water security as a national red line. The diplomatic temperature rose further after Ethiopia accused Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea of supporting an armed opposition alliance. All three denied the allegation. Ethiopia and Eritrea severed diplomatic relations, while Cairo and Addis Ababa expelled diplomats in a tit-for-tat move. Egypt's foreign minister said Cairo had no role in Ethiopia's internal conflict and rejected attempts to shift responsibility for domestic crises onto outside governments. The African Union called for restraint and dialogue. The temperature rose after Ethiopia accused Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea of supporting an armed opposition alliance. That sequence matters because it connects the Nile dispute to a conflict that is not about water. Once accusations of backing armed groups are exchanged, every regional meeting and military movement can be interpreted through a more dangerous lens. The risk is not simply a breakdown in negotiations over the dam – it is that separate crises begin reinforcing one another. Egypt's response has been to widen the diplomatic

frame. On Sunday, the leaders of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia met in El-Alamein and issued a joint declaration. On the Nile, they reaffirmed the principles of international law, including avoiding harm, prior notification and consultation, and rejected unilateral measures that could affect the existing water uses of Egypt and Sudan. They also agreed to establish a follow-up mechanism and hold periodic consultations. This is a significant change in Egypt's approach. Cairo is no longer relying only on direct appeals to Addis Ababa. It is trying to build a regional network in which water, trade, security and the stability of the Red Sea are treated as connected interests. The declaration also states that governance of the Red Sea belongs to its littoral states – a position that touches a separate and increasingly contentious question, since landlocked Ethiopia has repeatedly argued that access to the sea is vital to its future. The summit should not be mistaken for a treaty or a military alliance. Its declaration does not bind Ethiopia and it does not create an enforcement mechanism. Nor does it establish a general legal veto for downstream states over every development project upstream. Its importance is political: It shows that Egypt is seeking partners, common language and regular coordination instead of allowing Ethiopia to define the argument as a bilateral contest between development and historical rights. Addis Ababa's response came the next day. Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry said that any discussion of the Blue Nile and the Red Sea must take account of Ethiopia's geographic realities and legitimate national interests. It invoked the river's Ethiopian origins and contribution to Nile flows, rejected what it called coercive pressure and destabilization, and said the country was ready to defend its sovereignty and core interests while calling for dialogue and good neighborliness. The Nile question should be distinct from Ethiopia's demand for sea access: one cannot be used as leverage against the other. Where, then, is the situation

heading? The likeliest near-term path is a harder diplomatic standoff: sharper public statements, reciprocal expulsions, competing regional partnerships and little progress on binding rules for the dam. The danger is not that war over the Nile is inevitable. It is that the Ethiopian conflict and the Red Sea dispute could create a wider security crisis in which the dam becomes one more source of suspicion and pressure. Egypt is right to move beyond a narrow bilateral exchange. But regional diplomacy will matter only if it produces sustained coordination and practical proposals. The follow-up mechanism should not remain a line in a communique. It could support shared technical data, advance notification of new projects, agreed procedures during droughts and floods, and regular communication between the Nile states. It should also keep the Nile question distinct from Ethiopia's demand for sea access: one cannot be used as leverage against the other. Cairo's strongest position is not to oppose Ethiopia's development but to insist that development on a shared river must be conducted with transparency, consultation and rules that protect all those downstream. That argument is more persuasive internationally than claims of ownership or blanket vetoes and it leaves room for Ethiopia to benefit from cooperation. The new regional approach gives Egypt greater diplomatic weight. Its test will be whether it can turn that weight into a workable framework without becoming an anti-Ethiopian bloc. The next phase will be shaped not by the warnings alone but by whether the governments involved can prevent separate disputes from merging – and replace mutual suspicion with verifiable rules for managing a river they cannot afford to share irresponsibly.

– Dr. Abdellatif El-Menawy has covered conflicts worldwide. He is the author of "The Copts: An Investigation into the Rift between Muslims and Copts in Egypt"

Briefs

IMF reaches staff-level agreement with Pakistan

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high financing requirements. On social spending, the IMF noted that health and education expenditure had increased from 2.2% of GDP in FY24 to 2.5% in FY26. The authorities plan to raise it further to 2.8% of GDP in FY27. The Fund also called for timely energy tariff adjustments and cost-reduction measures to prevent a renewed build-up of circular debt, while improving efficiency in the power and gas sectors. On monetary policy, the IMF said the State Bank of Pakistan should maintain an appropriately tight stance to ensure inflation returns sustainably to its target range. It also backed continued exchange-rate flexibility and further accumulation of foreign exchange reserves. The IMF's Article IV assessment also called for structural reforms aimed at moving Pakistan's economy towards higher-value activities and narrowing productivity gaps with peer countries. The Fund highlighted the need to strengthen competition, reduce regulatory and trade barriers, advance privatisation, improve governance of state-owned enterprises and strengthen governance and anti-corruption institutions. It said such reforms, along with a fairer tax system, greater investment in human and physical capital, a more efficient energy sector and deeper financial markets, would be important for boosting productivity, employment, private investment and exports. Under the RSF, the IMF said Pakistan had also made progress in incorporating climate considerations into public investment planning and strengthening disaster-risk financing.

PAF jets not being used...

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the necessary measures to provide the agreed military forces and capabilities and ensure their rapid deployment in the kingdom, in accordance with the approved arrangements and the national legislation of the parties, thereby enhancing readiness, military integration, and the collective capacity to confront and counter threats". Separately, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, who was part of Pakistan's delegation in the meeting, joined Geo News programme 'Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Saath' via telephone the same day and said Saudi Arabia had made "gains and recovered some areas" in Yemen in the on-going fighting with the Houthis. Asked about a possible operational role by Pakistan and Turkey, the defence minister replied that both nations had a "presence in theatre", but only Saudi troops were involved in combat operations.

Iran envoy urges stronger...

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Pakistani food exports to Iran and greater transit activity through Pakistan. On railways, the ambassador said Iran had developed infrastructure towards Zahedan and the Pakistani border. Further work on the Pakistani side, he said, would be needed for an effective rail connection linking Pakistan with Central Asia and European markets. Turning to regional security, he appreciated the solidarity shown by the government and people of Pakistan during hostilities between the United States and Iran. He acknowledged the diplomatic efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Asim Munir and Pakistan's senior leadership in seeking de-escalation and facilitating dialogue. Iran, he said, remained committed to negotiations and a peaceful, sustainable solution, while keeping its readiness to respond to security challenges if needed. Referring to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, he said credible commitments and their implementation were essential for future diplomatic processes.

PSL 12 to commence in March 2027, announces PCB

Countdown to country's biggest cricket event begins with player auction, direct signings and trade window to follow

DNA

LAHORE: The 12th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) will be played from March 18 to May 2, 2027, with all eight franchises returning to compete for the title, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Thursday. The eight-team format will return for the second successive season following a record-breaking PSL 11.

The playing window was finalised after extensive consultations with key stakeholders following the PSL Governing Council meet-

ing held in London on September 1, 2026. Owners and representatives of all eight PSL franchises attended the meeting. The last season of the league cricket marked several milestones, with eight teams competing for the first time and a first-ever player auction replacing the draft system. The final at Gaddafi Stadium attracted a record crowd of 32,461. Peshawar Zalmi were crowned champions after defeating debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen by five wickets on May 3, 2026, ending a nine-year hiatus for the title. With the PSL 12 window now confirmed, the PCB said a series of key milestones

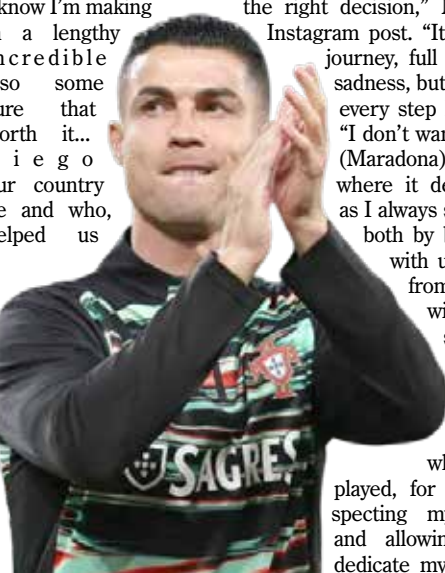
would follow, including direct signings, retention announcements, the trade window and the player auction. In a statement, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said PSL 11 had demonstrated what the league was capable of, with thrilling moments, record crowds and record broadcasts. "PSL 12 will raise the bar further," Naqvi said, adding that the PCB was committed to delivering another outstanding season and looked forward to seeing all eight franchises compete once again for the title. PSL CEO Salman Naseer said the previous season had changed expectations of the

league and the organisers intended to meet those expectations in 2027. "Today's announcement is only the first step," Naseer said, adding that direct signings, retentions, the trade window and the auction would each bring excitement in the months ahead. "Eight teams, eight squads hungry to go one better and millions of fans across Pakistan and the world already counting down the days. Naye Daur ka Aghaaz Ho Chuka Hai (a new era has begun)," he said. The PCB said full details regarding the schedule, venues, player auction and ticketing arrangements would be announced in due course.

Cristiano Ronaldo sets aside rivalry to honour Messi's remarkable Argentina career

Cristiano Ronaldo pays tribute to Lionel Messi after the Argentine announced his emotional international retirement

PORTUGAL captain Cristiano Ronaldo has set aside one of football's fiercest rivalries to salute Lionel Messi after the Argentina captain signed off from international football following a 21-year career. Messi, 39, delivered one final masterclass in Argentina's blue and white on Tuesday, scoring once and setting up two goals in a 3-0 friendly win over Benin before more than 85,000 fans at Buenos Aires' Monumental Stadium, where his farewell became a celebration of an extraordinary 21-year international career. "Yesterday was my last game, and I already miss wearing the blue and white. I know I'm making the right decision," Messi said in a lengthy Instagram post. "It's been an incredible journey, full of joy and sadness, but I know for every step I took was worth it... I don't want to forget (Maradona), who put where it deserved to as I always say, I know both by being here with us and also from heaven, with every step we took. Thank you to the clubs where I played, for always respecting my feelings and allowing me to dedicate myself to my



country whenever it was time to put on the national team shirt..." Messi captained Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title and Copa America triumphs in 2021 and 2024, while also helping them win the 2022 Finalissima. "I am grateful. I love you all very much; I'm going to miss you, and I will always thank you for having been by our side, by my side," the Inter Miami playmaker added. Messi and Ronaldo have died for recognition as the greatest player of their generation throughout their illustrious careers, with the 41-year-old Portuguese forward among those to respond to the post. "Leo, after so many years of defending your country, you've made history that will last forever. I have the utmost respect for what you've accomplished with Argentina. A hug," Ronaldo said. Messi, meanwhile, is embroiled in a dispute with Portugal coach Jorge Jesus following his abrupt departure from the national team's training camp. - APP



Alcaraz feeling 'mentally fresh' ahead of Shanghai return

DNA

SHANGHAI: Carlos Alcaraz said he was feeling "mentally fresh" on Thursday ahead of the Shanghai Masters, after the Spanish star won his first title since returning from a months-long injury. The world number three said his body was still adjusting to playing demanding matches after coming back from a wrist injury that sidelined him from April until the US Open in August. But he comes into Shanghai having won the Japan Open on Tuesday, beating Jiri Lehecka 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in the final. "I'm feeling very good. Physically I'm well, I'm feeling mentally fresh," the 23-year-old told reporters in the Chinese city. "I'm training very well, so we'll see." Alcaraz has never gone beyond the quarterfinals in Shanghai, and missed last year's tournament due to fitness issues. The former world number one has previously criticized the packed tennis schedule, particularly the autumn "Asian swing" that follows the US Open. "If we see a couple years back, you know, probably this swing or this part of the season, it's never been my best one," Alcaraz said. But he added that he was "ready to take on the challenge" in Shanghai, where he will kick off his campaign against either Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo or qualifier Nicolas Mejia of Colombia in the second round.

Zong Launches Pakistan's First 5G Fixed Wireless Home Broadband Service

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's Leading Technology Services Enterprise, is taking 5G beyond the smartphone and into the Pakistani home with the launch of Z HomeFi - Pakistan's first 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) home broadband service, ushering a new era of future-ready, technology-led connectivity. Z HomeFi marks another milestone in Zong's journey to transform connectivity into technology-led services, translating next-generation 5G innovation into a simple, accessible and customer-centric home broadband experience. By removing the need for fibre installation, fixed-line infrastructure and complex installations, Z HomeFi gives households greater flexibility and convenience while delivering high-speed, reliable connectivity designed around the evolving needs of today's digitally connected consumers. Z HomeFi is available across Pakistan's top 10 cities, bringing next-generation home broadband within reach of more customers. The service is available exclusively through Zong's Customer Service Centres, with plans to extend availability to franchises in the future. Z HomeFi brings flexible home broadband options to households through 12 prepaid bundles, offering speeds ranging from 10 Mbps to 50 Mbps and monthly data allowances of 100 GB to 500 GB. Priced between PKR 4,500

and PKR 11,000 per month, inclusive of taxes, the bundles cater to varying household budgets and connectivity needs, from everyday browsing to streaming, remote working and online learning. The service's 5G indoor Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), priced at PKR 22,000, supports a simple plug-and-connect setup. The launch reinforces Zong's role as a technology enabler of Digital Pakistan, harnessing its network, digital platforms and intelligent capabilities into developing solutions that create meaningful customer value today while enabling what comes next. Commenting on the launch, Zong Head of Marketing Sajid Munir said: "The true value of technology is measured by how it improves people's everyday lives. With Z HomeFi, we are bringing 5G technology directly into Pakistani homes, giving customers a reliable and convenient broadband experience without the complexity of fibre installation or fixed-line infrastructure. Whether it is learning, working, streaming, creating or staying connected, Z HomeFi gives households greater flexibility and seamless access to the digital experiences that matter most." Through Z HomeFi, Zong is bringing its brand promise of 'Aisa Hai Future' to life, taking advanced 5G technology into homes and contributing to a more connected, inclusive and future-ready Pakistan. DNA

Sahibzada Farhan confident of leading Pakistan on home soil

Farhan also praised former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed's leadership, saying he had been greatly influenced by his captaincy

ANSAR BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan will begin a new chapter in their T20I campaign on Friday (today) when Sahibzada Farhan leads the national side for the first time in the opening match of a three-game series against Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The series opener will also mark the 250th international cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, adding another milestone to one of the region's longest-running cricket rivalries. Pakistan hold the upper hand in the T20I head-to-head record, winning 18 of their 30 meetings against Sri Lanka, while the Islanders have claimed 12 victories. In eight bilateral T20I series, Pakistan have won four and three have ended in draws. Sri Lanka's only series victory came in 2019, when they swept Pakistan 3-0 in Lahore. Farhan, taking charge of Pakistan for the first time, said he was excited by the responsibility and confident about his own performance and that of the team. "It is a great honour to lead Pakistan. There is definitely additional pressure on a captain, but I will try to play a leading role and set an example through my own performance," Farhan said during the pre-series press conference. The 29-year-old said he had never imagined becoming Pakistan captain, revealing that his father had always told him he would one day lead the national team. "After becoming captain, I realised how much impact parents' prayers can have," he said. Farhan said Pakistan would have to play fearless cricket and hoped the top order would adopt the aggressive mindset required in modern T20 cricket. He also expressed full confidence in the 15-member squad. The Pakistan captain backed former regulars Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan to make strong comebacks, de-



scribing both as world-class players. "Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan can come back into T20 cricket at any time. They are world-class players," he said. Farhan also praised former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed's leadership, saying he had been greatly influenced by his captaincy. He added that his focus was on making the most of his current opportunity rather than thinking about whether he would continue as captain in the future.

Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis, meanwhile, said his young side was confident of putting up a strong challenge against Pakistan. "We are hopeful of beating Pakistan. I have complete confidence in my players and we are building up well for this three-match series," Mendis said. Mendis acknowledged the threat posed by Pakistan's fast bowlers, saying facing their pace attack would be challenging, while describing Sri Lanka's own bowling unit as strong and experienced. He also praised coach Gary Kirsten, describing him as a coach with a different approach who understands player management well. "He is preparing us for the World Cup and T20 World Cup. He knows how to manage players and is helping us prepare for the challenges ahead," Mendis said. Speaking about Babar Azam, Mendis said the Pakistan batter was among the best players across all formats and recalled playing alongside him in the Pakistan Super League. "Babar is one of the best players in every format. I have also played with him in the PSL," he said, added that the Rawalpindi pitch appeared favourable for batting, setting the stage for an intriguing contest between Pakistan's aggressive batting line-up and Sri Lanka's experienced bowling attack. **Pakistan squad:** Sahibzada Farhan (captain), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Arafat Minhas, Fakhar Zaman, Hasan Nawaz, Muhammad Imran Randhawa, Khawaja Nafay (wk), Maaz Sadaqat, Naseem Shah, Razaullah, Saim Ayub, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Shadab Khan and Sufiyan Moqim. **Sri Lanka squad:** Kusal Mendis (captain), Arachchi, Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Duniith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana, Vijayakanth Viyakanth, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando, Nuwan Thushara and Eshan Malinga.

Fazl 'conveys' govt offer...

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meeting or Zoom session regarding this. Yousafzai said Barrister Gohar was in Charsadda while the party's central leadership was participating in the long march. He added that the authority for negotiations rested with Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Allama Nasir Abbas.

Pakistan, Bahrain ties cordial

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They discussed ways to further expand bilateral cooperation across areas of mutual interest, particularly in trade, economic and investment relations, as well as through engagement at multilateral fora. They also exchanged views on regional and international developments of mutual interest and underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the most viable means of addressing challenges and resolving disputes. Pakistan and Bahrain describe their ties as close and brotherly, rooted in shared faith, common values and longstanding people-to-people links. The two sides maintain regular high-level contact; Dar and Al Zayani last met in September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, where they reviewed preparations for the Joint Ministerial Commission.

Forces kill nine terrorists...

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Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the security forces for killing nine terrorists in North Waziristan. The latest operation comes a day after forces killed 18 India-backed terrorists in multiple operations conducted in KP and Balochistan, security sources said. Security forces targeted militant hideouts in KP's North Waziristan district and adjoining areas, killing 13 militants, they added. Separately, security forces conducted an operation against Fitna al-Hindustan in Mastung, killing five militants, according to the sources. Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly in KP and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021. Pakistan recorded its highest monthly number of militant attacks in 12 years during September 2026.

'No relief for Imran if PTI tries...

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that it could blackmail the government by holding a long march. "The government cannot be blackmailed by them under any circumstances," he said, adding that it had become a practice for PTI to "attack Islamabad" every two or three months. Asif also questioned PTI's position on the TTP and its Afghan patrons. "Show me a statement of theirs against the TTP or those who sponsor them," he said, referring to the Afghan Taliban leadership. "The rulers of Kabul are patrons of the TTP. Show me one statement of theirs against them." He alleged that terrorists were being financed and said they were operating openly in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Terrorists roam freely in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Asif said, adding that the provincial government had no writ in those areas.

Court Notice

In the Court of Shama Yasin Civil Judge Family Court Rawalpindi. Suit for Recovery of Maintenance etc. Mst Fiza Kiani Versus Raja Muhammad Shehwar Ali Kiani S/o Raja Farhat Abbas Kiani R/o Dhoke Madad Khan Dakhli Bashond P.O Sagri Tehsil Kallar Syedan District Rawalpindi. Whereas respondent cannot be served in ordinary manner so you are inform to attend the Court personally through counsel or attorney on 10-10-2026 at 8 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings.

Briefs

Coordinated regulatory framework for medicinal sector

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority (CCRA) have established a coordinated regulatory framework for companies operating in Pakistan's emerging medicinal and industrial cannabis sector.

Under the framework, companies seeking to include cannabis-related business objects in their memorandum of association will require a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from CCRA before incorporation, said a press release issued by the SECP here on Thursday.

The framework has been formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by Mr. Muzafar Ahmed Mirza, Commissioner, SECP, and Mr. Asif Haroon, Director (Operations/Licensing/Vigilance), CCRA. Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chairman, SECP, and Major General (Retd.) Zafarullah Khan, HI(M), Director General, CCRA, were present at the signing ceremony, along with senior officials of both organizations.

Under the arrangement, companies may reserve their proposed name with SECP; however, incorporation will be subject to obtaining a NOC from CCRA where cannabis-related objects are proposed. The requirement will also apply throughout the company's subsequent operations. Any change in the company's principal business objects, directors or shareholding will require a fresh NOC from CCRA.

Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chairman SECP, said, "The framework establishes a clear regulatory pathway for companies entering the medicinal and industrial cannabis sector, while ensuring that incorporation remains aligned with the sector-specific requirements of CCRA. This coordinated approach will help bring greater clarity to businesses operating in this emerging sector."—APP

Syria calls for probe into sinking of ship in Black Sea

DAMASCUS: Syria called on the International Maritime Organization and Bulgarian authorities on Thursday to conduct an independent investigation into the sinking of a cargo ship in the Black Sea, whose 10 crew members including nine Syrians were missing. The investigation should look into why search and rescue operations stopped before the fate of the missing crew was determined, said Mazen Aloush, director for international relations of the Syrian General Authority for Ports and Customs. The ship, the Alfa Watan, was attacked early Tuesday in Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone, Aloush said.—APP

Pakistani business delegation visits Save Dogs in Cernavodă

During the visit, discussions focused on the potential transfer of Romanian experience and best practices to Pakistan, particularly in humane stray dog population management, sterilization and vaccination programs, veterinary infrastructure, responsible adoption and public awareness.

DNA

CERNAVODĂ, ROMANIA :A delegation from the Pakistan-Romania Business Council (PRBC), representing Karachi, visited Urme de Bucurie (Footprints of Joy) in Cernavodă (Constanța county), the main center of excellence operated by Save the Dogs and Other Animals, one of Romania's leading animal protection organizations.

The delegation, headed by Mr. Atif Farooqi, Honorary Consul Designate of Romania in Sindh, Pakistan, and Advisor and Chief Operating Officer of PRBC, was warmly welcomed by Ms. Adriana Susmă, Director General of Save the Dogs and Other Animals, who presented the organization's activities, achievements and extensive experience in animal rescue, rehabilitation, veterinary care and humane stray



animal population management. The visit provided an opportunity for the Pakistani delegation to learn from Romania's experience in addressing the challenges associated with stray animals and to explore how successful Romanian practices could be adapted and implemented in Sindh province, particularly in Karachi. Over the past two decades,

Romania has made important progress in developing more responsible approaches to animal welfare. Historically confronted with large populations of stray dogs, abandonment, uncontrolled breeding and inadequate animal protection infrastructure, the country has witnessed the emergence of successful initiatives based on sterilization,

vaccination, microchipping, veterinary treatment, responsible adoption and cooperation between public authorities and civil society. Although challenges remain, organizations such as Save the Dogs have demonstrated that sustained investment in prevention, veterinary infrastructure, public education and humane

population management can deliver meaningful and lasting results. Save the Dogs: A Romanian Success Story with International Recognition Founded by Italian animal welfare activist Sara Turetta, Save the Dogs began its activities in Cernavodă in 2002, promoting humane alternatives to the killing of stray dogs. Over more than two decades, the organization has helped thousands of abandoned, neglected and abused animals, developing a comprehensive animal welfare model combining rescue operations, sterilization campaigns, veterinary services, rehabilitation, adoption and community education. Its Urme de Bucurie center includes modern veterinary facilities, dedicated shelters for dogs and cats, and specialized accommodation for rescued horses and donkeys. The organization also operates adoption and volunteering programs, providing animals with

opportunities for recovery and permanent homes. The center has become an important example of how cooperation between animal welfare professionals, volunteers, local communities and international supporters can contribute to sustainable solutions. During the visit, discussions focused on the potential transfer of Romanian experience and best practices to Pakistan, particularly in humane stray dog population management, sterilization and vaccination programs, veterinary infrastructure, responsible adoption and public awareness. The delegation expressed interest in exploring how lessons learned from Cernavodă could contribute to addressing similar challenges in Karachi and other urban communities in Sindh. The visit also highlighted the importance of integrating animal welfare with public health considerations, community safety and responsible urban management.

Rice moot offers platform to deepen research, trade

MANILA: The International World Rice Conference in Manila has brought together key stakeholders from across the global rice value chain, providing a valuable platform to explore emerging trends in rice trade, research, innovation, production and sustainability, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines Dr Asima Rabbani said here on Thursday. Addressing the conference in Manila organized by rice exporters, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines Dr Asima Rabbani said the gathering provided an important opportunity for rice-producing and consuming countries, researchers, traders, importers, exporters and other stakeholders to exchange knowledge and develop stronger partnerships. The Ambassador said that the conference offered participants an opportunity to understand the rapidly evolving global rice trade, learn about new research and technological innovations, and engage with institutions and researchers working to improve rice production, productivity and sustainability. "The conference brings together the entire rice value chain, from research and technology to farmers, traders, importers and exporters," Dr Rabbani said. She expressed the hope that the platform would help promote greater cooperation in research and knowledge-sharing while creating opportunities for stronger commercial partnerships and expanded international rice trade. "I believe this platform can facilitate not only greater engagement in research and knowledge-sharing, but also stronger commercial partnerships and trade opportunities," she said. The ambassador highlighted the importance of closer cooperation between Pakistan and the Philippines in the rice sector, describing rice as not only a major commodity in bilateral trade but also a symbol of a longstanding connection between the two countries. Dr Rabbani recalled that Pakistan's association with the Philippine rice sector dates back to the 1960s, when the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in the Philippines, played a pioneering role in rice research and development. She said Pakistan benefited from the cooperation, including through the introduction of the IRRI-6 rice variety. The ambassador noted that the longstanding connection had now taken a new dimension, as Pakistan was exporting IRRI-6 rice back to the Philippines.

"In a way, this is your rice coming back to you cultivated, produced and exported by Pakistan," she said, highlighting the unique link between research cooperation, agricultural development and international trade. Dr Rabbani said Pakistan was prepared to further strengthen its partnership with the Philippines in the rice sector and was ready to supply at least one million metric tonnes of rice annually, subject to mutually agreed commercial and policy arrangements. She said Pakistan could serve as a reliable and competitive partner for meeting the Philippines' growing rice requirements while offering quality, diversity and supply security.—APP

WB reclassification of Pak purely administrative

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad on Thursday said the World Bank's decision to include Pakistan in its Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAAP) reporting region is merely an administrative and statistical reclassification and does not affect the country's geographical identity or income classification. This distinction was important as regional statistics changed whenever the composition of a statistical group changed, he said in his official X handle.

Once Pakistan's large population is added to MENAAP, indicators relating to poverty, population and per-capita income will naturally look different from those of the traditional Middle East and North Africa region. Regional averages are usually population-weighted. A large country therefore pulls the regional figure strongly toward its own values. Pakistan's population is large relative to most MENA economies, so its inclusion will noticeably shift any regional average it joins. Giving an illustration, he said if a region of 100 million people has a 10% poverty rate (10 million poor). Add a country of 100 million with a 30% rate (30 million poor). The regional rate becomes 20%. Nobody in either country became poorer. The regional rate doubled purely because the group changed. Therefore, the statements suggesting that a large proportion of "MENA poor" now live in Pakistan creates a misleading impression, he said. Pakistan has been added to the statistical region itself; consequently, its population.—APP

Pakistan, Bangladesh agree to boost eco coop

ARUSHA: Chairman Senate of Pakistan and Head of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 153rd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, H.E. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, held a bilateral meeting with the Honourable Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament on the sidelines of the 153rd IPU Assembly at the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), Tanzania. Chairman Senate congratulated the Bangladesh delegation on the election of Ms. Jasharat Adib Chowdhury as a Member of the IPU Executive Committee. He noted that Pakistan had extended its full support to her candidature during the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group on 5 October 2026, reflecting Pakistan's commitment to regional cooperation and stronger representation of the Asia-Pacific region within the IPU. "Pakistan attaches great importance to its historic ties with Bangladesh, and we were pleased to support Bangladesh's candidature. Ms. Chowdhury's election strengthens the voice of our region within the IPU," Chairman Gilani said. During the meeting, the two sides expressed their shared resolve to inject fresh momentum into Pakistan-Bangladesh relations through sustained parliamentary engagement and practical cooperation. Chairman Gilani emphasized greater interaction between the Parliaments, civil service academies, universities and policy institutions of the two countries. He recalled Pakistan's recent hosting of a delegation of Bangladesh civil servants at the Civil Services Academy and the National School of Public Policy and proposed institutionalizing such exchanges on a regular basis. Both sides agreed on the importance of further activating the Pakistan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Groups and increasing exchanges between parliamentarians of the two countries. Chairman Senate also called for deeper economic engagement, particularly through stronger trade, investment and connectivity. He noted the opportunities created by improving maritime connectivity between Karachi and Chattogram and stressed the considerable untapped potential for cooperation in textiles, pharmaceuticals, jute, agriculture and other sectors of mutual interest. The two sides also discussed expanding cooperation in education and climate resilience, as well as closer coordination at regional and international parliamentary forums. The Honourable Speaker of Bangladesh thanked Chairman Gilani for Pakistan's support at the IPU and appreciated his warm sentiments. Both sides underscored the important role of parliamentary diplomacy in building mutual understanding and advancing cooperation on shared regional and global challenges.

Chairman Senate extended a cordial invitation to the Honourable Speaker of Bangladesh to visit Pakistan along with a parliamentary delegation.

The meeting concluded in a warm and brotherly atmosphere, reflecting the shared desire of both countries to strengthen bilateral relations through dialogue, parliamentary diplomacy and practical cooperation. Members of Pakistan's parliamentary delegation to the 153rd IPU Assembly were also present. DNA

Palestinian factions move to delay first polls in 20 years

BEIRUT: Palestinian factions are discussing postponing legislative elections that had been planned for November, officials said Thursday.

A top official with the Hamas-allied Islamic Jihad group said the factions had reached an agreement to delay the vote, which is facing huge logistical issues in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem and war-ravaged Gaza, as well as the long history of internal feuding among the Palestinians. A spokesperson for Fatah, the party of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, stopped short of confirming that a final decision had been reached. But he said the election timing will be part of a "dialogue and national consensus" among the factions and that the potential postponement will be discussed by the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization Abbas has set Nov. 28 as the date of parliamentary elections in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. If the elections proceeded on schedule, they would be the first polls in 20 Islamic Jihad deputy secretary-general Mohammad Al-Hindi said in a statement to The Associated Press that after meeting in Cairo, the factions "have reached understandings regarding the resumption of Palestinian national dialogue.—APP

Women eco empowerment vital for growth: Zikiria

ICCI-Uzbek Women's Association agree to establish working group for business cooperation

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of the International Business Women's Association (IBWA) Uzbekistan, led by its Chairwoman Ms. Gulnora Makhmudova, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Thursday and held discussions on promoting women-led entrepreneurship, trade and investment between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The delegation comprised Ms. Nodira Begim Mukhamadaliyeva, Head

of the International Department, Ms. Dilyafuz Tashmukhamedova, Chairwoman of the Tashkent City Branch, Ms. Anjelika Ogay, Project Manager, and Khalid Taimour Akram Advisor to Chairman Habib Rafiq Group.

Welcoming the delegation, ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia said that women's economic empowerment was essential for achieving sustainable economic growth, prosperity and inclusive development. He said Pakistan and Uzbekistan had considerable potential to expand business-to-business linkages and assured ICCI's fullest cooperation in facilitating B2B meetings between women entrepreneurs of the two countries. He emphasized that regular exchange of business delegations and greater interaction among

women entrepreneurs could help transform the existing bilateral goodwill into tangible trade and investment opportunities. Ms. Gulnora Makhmudova, Chairwoman of IBWA Uzbekistan, highlighted the measures being taken by the Uzbek government to promote women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. She said women constituted 40 percent of the total number of entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan and were benefiting from a range of supportive programmes and initiatives. She invited Pakistani women entrepreneurs to participate in the B2B Women Conference being organized by IBWA Uzbekistan in Tashkent in April next year, saying the event would provide an important platform for networking, business matchmaking and exploring joint ventures.

ICCI Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan emphasized the need for sustained institutional cooperation to promote business relations between the two countries. Executive Members Ms. Nageena Khaleque, Abrar ul Haq and ICCI member Prof. Dr. Johria Azhar also shared their views and identified several untapped areas of cooperation between Pakistani and Uzbek women entrepreneurs. They also proposed establishing a joint working group to maintain regular contact, identify business opportunities and facilitate practical business linkages.—DNA



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Briefs

Indian
opposition
leader
detained

NEW DELHI: Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi was detained by police Wednesday during a protest against the country's election chief, as opposition parties intensified their campaign over a contentious revision of voter lists. Gandhi and other opposition lawmakers were stopped by police as they marched toward Jantar Mantar, a designated protest site in India's capital New Delhi. A live feed on the YouTube channel of Gandhi's Congress party showed police taking him into a vehicle and driving him away. Authorities also detained several other opposition lawmakers and protesters. The opposition is demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, accusing the poll body he heads of manipulating voter registrations to benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. The commission and government deny the allegations. The protests are part of a widening campaign by opposition parties, student groups and India's youth "Cockroach" movement against the nationwide voter list revision known as the Special Intensive Revision. It began last year in the eastern state of Bihar ahead of local elections and has since expanded to most of India's states and federally administered territories. India's Election Commission has so far removed more than 130 million names from the voter lists. Millions have appealed the removals. — APP

El Nino will
intensify,
then peak in
Dec: UN

GENEVA: El Nino will intensify even more before peaking in December, the United Nations said Thursday, warning it could be among the strongest witnessed since at least 1950. The naturally occurring weather phenomenon is set to bring higher temperatures to much of the planet, the UN's weather and climate agency said, with its impact compounding the effects of man-made climate change. "El Nino will continue to intensify ahead of its forecast peak in December," the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said in its monthly Global Seasonal Climate Update. "It is likely to bring above-average temperatures to much of the globe and shift rainfall patterns, increasing the risk of drought and floods in different regions." El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns. It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months. Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between. — APP

Ahsan Iqbal says Pakistan
values ties with Tajikistan

Ambassador Sharifzoda also addressed the gathering. He thanked the Pakistani side for its participation and spoke of the friendly relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan, underlining the importance of continued high-level contact and practical cooperation



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan deeply values its ties with Tajikistan and hoped the relationship would grow further in the days ahead, as he joined the Tajik embassy and Pakistani guests in marking the 35th anniversary of the Republic of Tajikistan's Independence Day. Speaking as chief guest, Iqbal conveyed

greetings from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the leadership of Tajikistan. He described the two countries as close partners linked by shared history, culture and regional interests, and said Islamabad remained committed to expanding cooperation with Dushanbe across political, economic and people-to-people fields. The reception brought together senior Pakistani figures and members of the diplomatic community. Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan

and Senator Talah Mahmood attended alongside Ambassador of Tajikistan Yusuf Sharifzoda and other guests. The minister, the ambassador and other dignitaries later cut a cake to mark the occasion. Ambassador Sharifzoda also addressed the gathering. He thanked the Pakistani side for its participation and spoke of the friendly relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan, underlining the importance of continued high-level contact and practical cooperation.

Pakistan and Tajikistan maintain regular diplomatic engagement and cooperate in regional forums. Officials on both sides have repeatedly pointed to trade, connectivity, energy, tourism and cultural exchanges as areas with room to expand. Thursday's event was presented as a reflection of that goodwill, with the Pakistani minister using the independence anniversary to restate Islamabad's support for stronger bilateral ties. — Detailed coverage in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine.

India sponsoring
terrorism thru proxies
in Afghanistan, UN told

Envoy Ajmal says India's growing ties with Afghanistan's Taliban govt are linked to attacks against Pakistan

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has said that India is providing material and logistical support to the Taliban government in Afghanistan to facilitate terrorist attacks against Pakistan, saying Islamabad is fully aware of the cost of India-sponsored terrorism. Muhammad Jawad Ajmal, counsellor at Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, said this while exercising Pakistan's right of reply to remarks by the Indian representative at the UN on October 7. Ajmal said India's "newfound love" for the Taliban regime was not accidental, saying that New Delhi was supporting the Afghan authorities under the cover of humanitarian assistance. "Under the garb of humanitarian aid, they have been actively supporting the Taliban regime with material and logistical support for carrying out terrorist attacks

against Pakistan," he noted. He further stressed that India was using proxies in Afghanistan to support militant groups, including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which Pakistan refers to as Fitna al Khawarij and Fitna al Hindustan respectively. "Their newfound love for the Taliban regime is no accident," Ajmal said, saying that India was providing material and logistical support for attacks against Pakistan. Ajmal said Pakistan had repeatedly warned the international community about Indian attempts to "sow discord and create mischief" in the region. He also said that India was involved in human rights violations, saying New Delhi had mainstreamed Islamophobia and extremist ideologies and was seeking to engineer demographic changes in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) "in gross violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions".

Pakistan waging 'global
war' against terrorism,
Naqvi tells UN chief

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said Pakistan was waging a global war against terrorism during a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The two, along with Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, discussed global and regional issues and matters relating to peacekeeping missions. Naqvi told the UN chief that 25 terrorist organisations were operating in Afghanistan,

posing a threat to global peace. "The international community needs to work together to tackle this threat," he said. Naqvi reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to play its role in UN peacekeeping missions, adding that Pakistani personnel were also serving in the UN police. He added that 181 Pakistanis had sacrificed their lives in peacekeeping missions. The UN chief recognised Pakistan's participation in peacekeeping missions, saying it had always been "prominent". "Pakistan's role in world peace is commendable," Guterres said.

Hormuz
transits at
lowest in
over two
months

SINGAPORE: The number of vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz fell to the lowest in more than two months after attacks on tankers in the key waterway reached their highest last week since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran, shipping data showed. Seven commodity vessels passed through the strait on Tuesday, for the lowest figure since July 23, data from analytics firm Kpler showed. "Crude crossing the strait fell 27 percent from a wartime high the week before, to at least 10.1 million barrels a day," Kpler analysts Emmanuel Belostrino and Yui Torikata wrote in a note on October 6. "That is back to its September average, but 74 percent of its pre-war level." Most of the fall was in ship-to-ship (STS) transfers in the Gulf of Oman, where cargoes move between tankers, they added. However, exports from the Gulf of Oman coast and the Red Sea rose to 6.7 million bpd, more than twice pre-war levels, analysts said, making up for lost supply from Hormuz. This helped keep overall exports of Middle East crude at the pre-war level, they said. The number of vessels transiting the strait edged up to 10 on Wednesday, but was well short of the daily tally of more than 20 on Sunday and Monday, the data showed. More vessels entered the strait than exited in the past two days. The figures exclude vessels crossing with their Automatic Identification System transponders turned off to avoid detection. LSEG data of all vessels crossing the strait showed eight on Tuesday, evenly divided between entries and exits, down from the previous day's 14. These included five oil tankers and the liquefied natural gas tanker Al-Mafyar which loaded at Ras Laffan in Qatar and was set to head for Port Qasim in Pakistan, LSEG added. Attacks on tankers sailing through Hormuz hit their highest last week of any week since the Iran war began, maritime security sources tracking incidents said, as Gulf producers made a bigger export push. In the latest incident, projectiles struck a tanker 51 nautical miles north of Qatar's Madinat ash Shamal, with casualties reported, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency said on Wednesday. — APP

Pakistan to receive Qatari
LNG cargo within 3-5 days

Officials fear country may face not only LNG supply crisis but also sharp increase in LPG demand and prices

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expected to receive a Qatari LNG cargo within the next three to five days, as a vessel carrying the shipment has crossed the Strait of Hormuz and reached Omani waters. The LNG vessel, Al Mafyar, arrived in Omani waters on Tuesday after successfully crossing the Strait of Hormuz. As the vessel is a large Q-Max carrier, the LNG is expected to be transferred somewhere en route to a relatively smaller vessel, one possibly named as Ejan, which could then arrive in Pakistan within the next three to five days, top officials privy to the development have said. "This is the first LNG cargo that Pakistan has arranged from Qatar with the reported assistance of Iranian authorities. Pakistan is likely to arrange two smaller LNG vessels through ship-to-ship transfers from the Q-Max carrier. And one LNG cargo that will be the third one is expected to be arranged for Pakistan soon." QatarEnergy has already extended its force majeure until November. However, Pakistani authorities managed to arrange the cargo at a price equivalent to 13.37% of Brent after contacting Iran's senior leadership. If Pakistan manages to secure two more cargoes for October, there will be no immediate need to procure additional spot LNG during the month. Spot LNG is currently available in the range of \$28-30 per MMBtu, meaning a single cargo could cost around \$100 million — an exceptionally high burden for a country like Pakistan. In September, Pakistan arranged two LNG cargoes from Qatar. One arrived on September 10, while the second reached the country on September 23. The possibility of a prolonged force majeure by QatarEnergy has nevertheless raised serious concerns over whether Pakistan will be able to secure the required number of LNG cargoes during the critical winter months. — DNA

Araghchi says US war toll 'far
higher' than official figures

DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi says the actual death toll among US soldiers and the destruction of US military assets is "far higher" than publicly disclosed, adding that "CENTCOM won't let a sitting Senator inspect bases it claims are fine." Meanwhile, Gulf stock

markets fell in early trade as attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz reached their highest levels of the war, cutting traffic through the vital waterway and deepening fears over supply, Reuters reports. The latest attack came on Wednesday, when a tanker was hit by multiple projectiles 51 nautical miles north of Qatar's Madinat ash Shamal, causing casualties, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO). The surge in attacks came just as Gulf producers were pushing to export more. Saudi Arabia's benchmark index dropped 0.9 per cent, with the country's biggest lender by assets, Saudi National Bank, declining 2.6pc. Shipping traffic quickly took the hit. The number of vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz fell to its lowest in more than two months, shipping data showed. In another development, Syria may deploy troops to help Saudi Arabia fight Yemen's Houthis, a US official and a Syrian defence official said, as the Iran-aligned group steps up its missile and drone attacks on the kingdom, killing three people at Saudi airports this week, Reuters reports. The possible entry of Syrian forces into the battle, an overspill of the US-Iran conflict, shows how Yemen's reignited civil war has added new chaos to a region already aflame, and risks drawing regional states into gruelling mountain fighting. Saudi Arabia has pushed for support from allied nations, including Turkey and Pakistan, even if only in a logistical or purely defensive capacity, an effort made more urgent by the Houthi strikes on its infrastructure such as this week's deadly airport attack.





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