



Islamabad POST

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Prime Minister says Pak fully supports KSA in difficult time

Detailed News On Page-01

Kundi urges KP CM to focus on governance

Detailed News On Page-02

Ethiopia keen to enhance ties with Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-08



DG ISPR SAYS

Mediator Pakistan doesn't want Mideast conflict to widen further

Lt Gen Chaudhry says Pakistani actions demonstrated that it is an "honest broker" in Middle East conflict

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said that Pakistan remains committed to a negotiated and peaceful outcome to the Middle East conflict and does not want it to widen further. "We want that this conflict should not expand horizontally or vertically," the chief military spokesperson said in an interview with CNN, adding that Pakistan was doing and would continue to do whatever was possible and necessary to narrow differences and gaps between the parties. Asked whether Pakistan could remain a neutral broker given Iran's attacks on Saudi Arabia and the involvement of the Iran-aligned Houthis, Lt Gen Chaudhry said Pakistan had demonstrated that it was an "honest broker".

"I think what Pakistan has been doing is exhibiting that we have been a very honest broker," he said, adding that neutrality stemmed from honesty and that Pakistan had been clear about its position with all its partners and friends.

The ISPR DG further said Pakistan had openly condemned attacks on Iran by Israel and the United States. He added that Pakistan had also openly condemned Iran's attacks on Arab and Gulf countries. "We do not mince our words. Why? Because we have a stake in regional peace and stability," he said. "We tell all that nobody benefits from expanding this war," the ISPR chief added.

While replying to a question on the Makkah pact, the ISPR DG said: "Pakistan is delving into the operationalisation of forces, adding that the Makkah Accord will be purely defensive and its implementation will be determined by operational commanders amid numerous security challenges and emerging threats in the region." Asked by CNN whether Pakistani troops or personnel were already on the ground in Saudi Arabia as part of the Makkah alliance, the ISPR DG said the forces had been there for decades. "Pakistani troops have been there for decades [...] in Saudi Arabia," Lt Gen Chaudhry said. He said the Makkah alliance had not emerged "in a vacuum", pointing to the longstanding diplomatic, political, military and

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan pledges 'resolute' commitment to Saudi Arabia's security

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's "resolute" commitment to Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and security under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MDJA), amid repeated Houthi attacks on the kingdom. In a post on X, the prime minister condemned the targeting of Saudi Arabia's King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and Abha International Airport by Houthis, which resulted in loss of life and injuries to civilians. At least three people were killed in attacks on Saudi airports, the country's civil aviation authorities said on October 7, as fighting intensified in Yemen between the Houthis and government forces.

One person was killed and eight wounded in an attack on King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital Riyadh, and two were killed and 28 wounded in an attack on facilities at Abha airport, it said in a statement. One of the attacks was on October 6 and the other on October 7, the civil aviation authorities said, without saying which attack had occurred on which day. Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz commented the "vigilance and professionalism of the Saudi armed forces" and the coalition in intercepting multiple ballistic missiles and "their tireless efforts to protect innocent lives and safeguard" the kingdom. He reiterated that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the leadership and people of Saudi Arabia. "In line with the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, and recent decisions taken by its Strategic Political and Defence Committee, our commitment to the Kingdom's sovereignty,

Continued on Page 06

HOLY SEE-PAKISTAN RELATIONS



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Holy See, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Yousaf, H.E. Archbishop Germano Penemote, Apostolic Nuncio to Pakistan, Allama Tahir Ashrafi Chairman Pakistani Ulema Council and others cutting cake to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Holy See and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. – DNA

Pilot among 3 Saudi nationals killed

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's civil aviation authority said on Friday that three Saudi nationals were killed and several people were injured in two attacks on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh on Thursday.

In a statement on X, the General Authority of Civil Aviation said the first attack targeted airport facilities, while the second struck an aircraft belonging to Saudi state carrier Saudia. The injuries ranged from minor to severe, and the attacks caused material damage, it said, adding that airport operations had resumed and air traffic had returned to normal.

Continued on Page 06

PIA flights to Riyadh suspended

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Friday temporarily suspended its flight operations to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, citing the "situation in the Middle East", according to a spokesperson. The suspension comes amid regular drone and ballistic missile attacks on Riyadh and other airports in Saudi Arabia by Yemen's Houthi militia, as fighting between Saudi and Houthi forces intensifies. PIA asked passengers to contact its call centre to check the latest status of their flights before leaving for the airport.

Continued on Page 06

Pak has 'substantial number of forces in Riyadh, says FO

The FO spokesperson remarks came in response to a query about the "active support" being offered by Pakistan to Saudi Arabia under the Makkah Defence Alliance amid an escalating conflict between the kingdom and Yemen-based Houthis

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said on Friday that Pakistan already had "substantial number" of forces and resources in Riyadh and it was now up to the Makkah Defence Alliance to assess the threat in Saudi Arabia and make decisions accordingly. The FO spokesperson remarks came in response to a query about the "active support" being offered by Pakistan to Saudi Arabia under the Makkah Defence Alliance amid an escalating conflict between the kingdom and Yemen-based Houthis.

Continued on Page 06

Iran Guards say struck tanker transiting Hormuz

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said that they had struck a tanker attempting to take an "illegal route" through the Strait of Hormuz, which Tehran has sought to blockade since the outset of the Middle East war.

Continued on Page 06

India in talks with Saudi Arabia for investment

Developing the ports in Vadhavan and Galathea Bay is key to some of India's strategic interests, said Vanshika Saraf, research analyst for the geostrategy program at the Takshashila Institution

DNA

NEW DELHI: India is in talks with Saudi Arabia for investment in its strategic port

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Kundi challenges PTI cross Swabi

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi challenged PTI protesters on Friday to dare and cross Swabi, a KP district that borders Punjab's Attock and which the opposition party in the Centre has announced as the eventual destination of its long march. 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 Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has yet to announce the plan for the trek beyond Swabi. So far, the march has remained within KP, where the PTI is in power.

Ex-prince Andrew gets £300,000

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Britain's disgraced former prince Andrew received compensation of 302,000 pounds (\$400,000) for giving up his lease on a mansion on the royal family's Windsor estate, the body that manages royal property said Friday. Andrew, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, was forced out of his long-term residence, the Royal Lodge, last year by his brother King Charles III. He has since moved to a house on the monarch's Sandringham Estate in eastern England. The Crown Estate, an independent, commercial business that oversees the royals' property and hands proceeds to the government, said in a statement sent to AFP that Andrew's lease "has been surrendered."

PTI long march

Bilawal Bhutto urges PTI to shun 'extremist' politics

PTI pressing on with its march to Islamabad; high-level govt meeting takes place tomorrow, say sources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to abandon "extremist" politics as sources said that the federal government was weighing imposing an emergency or governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The developments have come as PTI presses on with its long march towards Islamabad, demanding the release of its founder, Imran Khan. Bilawal, in a speech during an event in Karachi, said Pakistan's political history showed that those in prison today could be in power tomorrow, but stressed that the PTI would have to give up what he described as extremist politics. "History shows that those

Continued on Page 06

Ali Amin Gandapur targets KP CM Afridi

DNA

PESHAWAR: Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur has criticised incumbent CM Sohail Afridi in an alleged leaked audio message, accusing him of compromising on key matters and restricting meetings involving PTI founder Imran Khan. araz Mughal, spokesperson for the former chief minister, confirmed the authenticity of the audio recording. In the recording, Gandapur can be heard using harsh language against CM Afridi, and warning him against making "irresponsible statements". "Stop this nonsense, or I will expose how you came into

Continued on Page 06

South Africa's 'Navi' Pillay wins 2026 Nobel Peace Prize

Pillay honoured with prize "for her efforts to promote peace and international law", says Nobel committee

DNA

OSLO: South African judge Navanethem "Navi" Pillay, 85, won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday "for her efforts to promote peace and international law", the Norwegian Nobel Committee said. Pillay held states and national leaders accountable and brought hope to victims of violence and conflict, and demonstrated a firm moral compass in her long career, the committee said. "A common thread runs from her early work defending Nelson Mandela and others who stood up against apartheid to her service as a judge in some of the key international court cases of our time," the committee said. Navi Pillay was chair of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory that concluded last year that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza.



Continued on Page 06

US imposes curbs on criminal court

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday imposed sanctions on the International Criminal Court, vowing to cripple the tribunal's operations just hours after the Nobel Peace Prize went to a former ICC judge who warned of mounting political attacks on the court. The move came on the same day the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the peace prize to South Africa's Navi Pillay, an 85-year-old jurist who headed the Rwanda genocide tribunal, served on the ICC and later led a UN commission that accused Israel of genocide in Gaza. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington would ban transactions with what he called a "rogue court," escalating a long-running campaign by President Donald Trump's administration against the

Continued on Page 06

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Kundi slams KP govt over bad governance, terrorism issues

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday criticized the provincial government, saying that it was ignoring governance, terrorism and public issues while remaining engaged in political activities. Addressing a press conference at the Governor House, he said that terrorism was the biggest challenge facing the province and the government should focus on improving law and order, eliminating terrorism and resolving problems of the people instead of political shows.

The Governor thanked the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for turning the march into a "lucky Irani circus," adding that political leaders returned to their homes while leaving workers on the roads. He questioned the provincial government's performance regarding implementation of the National Action Plan and asked what practical steps had been taken to eliminate terrorism from the province.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that terrorists were targeting innocent people, police, armed forces and other security personnel, adding that sacrifices of law enforcement agencies could not be ignored. He stressed that a clear and firm stance against terrorism was necessary. He said that the government supported dialogue, but terrorism was a red line and no compromise could be made on it. He added that preventing military operations against terrorists was an anti-state narrative and serious measures

were required to eliminate the menace. Talking about the police force, the Governor said that around 17,000 posts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police were vacant and urged the provincial government to take immediate steps to fill them and enhance police strength. He said that the Counter Terrorism Department's capacity needed to be enhanced, adding that the police required Rs 42 billion while only Rs1.2 billion had been provided. He also expressed concern over lack of progress on construction of police lines and stations in merged districts and absence of Safe City projects in sensitive areas.

The Governor said that he had raised the issues of police salaries and welfare and urged the provincial government to provide necessary resources to the police for effectively combating terrorism. Regarding the march, he urged the participants to follow the law and cooperate with relevant institutions. He said effective measures should be taken to prevent illegal movement of weapons and narcotics, adding that no one could be allowed to violate the law in the name of political activities. He warned that any attempt to repeat incidents like May 9 would be dealt with according to law. He said Pakistan Peoples Party was the party that created the Constitution and political parties should work for national stability and peace.

Faisal Karim Kundi said after the

martyrdom of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the PPP raised the slogan of "Pakistan Khappay" instead of launching protests, adding that national security and unity were above political interests.

He said that if the provincial government could not protect its own ministers, it could not safeguard the rights and resources of the people. He called upon the Chief Minister to resign if he had "even a little moral courage."

Responding to questions regarding his constitutional powers, the Governor said the provincial government should study the Constitution to understand the responsibilities and authority of the Governor's office. He said he would continue to call the Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police whenever required to discuss provincial issues.

He said that the provincial government had sought his cooperation during the CNG and flour crises and he had always played his role in resolving issues of the province with the federal government. The Governor urged the government to address protests by doctors, teachers and TMA employees through negotiations and provide relief to people facing rising flour prices, terrorism and other problems. Responding to a question about Governor's Rule, Faisal Karim Kundi said that it would be imposed whenever the President and Prime Minister deemed appropriate.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with a delegation of the Presidents/CEOs of high performing banks regarding Prime Minister's loan schemes for SMEs, Apna Ghar and Agriculture sector.. DNA

Weekly inflation rises 0.57pc

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI)-based weekly inflation increased by 0.57 percent during the week ended on October 08, 2026, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported here on Friday. According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review rose to 372.58 points from 370.46 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 11.97 percent. The weekly SPI, with base year 2015-16=100, covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up to Rs 17,732) increased by 0.52 percent to 356.56 points from 354.73.—APP

Mental health fundamental to human well-being: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has emphasised that mental health is fundamental to human well-being and the development of a healthy, harmonious and stable society. He stressed that raising public awareness about mental health and eliminating the social stigma associated with psychological issues are pressing needs of the time. Ayaz Sadiq expressed these views in his message on the occasion of World Mental Health Day, observed annually on October 10. The Speaker said that mental health challenges were not confined to any particular age group or segment of society, but could affect individuals across all ages and backgrounds. He said that growing awareness of mental health issues,

timely diagnosis and effective treatment had become increasingly important in the present era. The Speaker emphasised that mental health conditions should be recognised as significant health concerns rather than perceived as a sign of weakness. Ayaz Sadiq underscored the need to treat individuals experiencing psychological distress with compassion, respect and understanding rather than subjecting them to discrimination or social exclusion. He called for creating a supportive environment in which individuals could openly discuss their concerns and feel safe in seeking timely medical and psychological assistance. The Speaker emphasised the importance of giving special attention to the mental health of children

and young people, noting that their intellectual, emotional and social development was directly linked to the well-being of society. He urged families, educational institutions and communities to promote positive attitudes towards mental health and play an active role in supporting individuals facing psychological challenges. Ayaz Sadiq stressed that effective measures to address mental health challenges required coordinated efforts among the government, Parliament, relevant institutions, healthcare professionals and civil society. He highlighted the need for collective action to promote public awareness, improve access to quality medical and psychological services, and establish effective support systems for those in need.—APP

IRSA releases 128,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 128,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 96,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbella Dam stood at 1519.22 feet, which was 117.22 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 56,300 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1203.40 feet, which was 153.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 9,000 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs, respectively.—APP

IIOJK's Muslim majority status under serious threat

ISLAMABAD, Oct 9 (AP-P): The Modi regime has intensified its efforts to change the demography of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) since August 5, 2019. India is systematically paving the way for settler colonialism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir as it is granting domiciles to non-Kashmiris to turn the Muslim majority territory into a minority. One of the main motives behind the revocation of Article 370 was to engineer demographic change in IIOJK and granting domicile certificates to non-locals is part of India's sinister plan to snatch Kashmiris' identity. Kashmiris are being killed and evicted from their homes and land under a vicious plan to change demography of the occupied territory.—APP

Awareness campaign in KP to prevent child abuse

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC) launched a province-wide awareness campaign against child sexual abuse and exploitation. The campaign focuses on prevention, timely identification of risks, and the responsible reporting of suspected incidents. The initiative aims to raise awareness among families and communities, promote protective measures, and enhance coordination among relevant institutions to ensure effective child protection and a timely response. Sharif Hussain, Secretary Department of Zakat, Ushr, Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment, formally inaugurated the campaign at a ceremony.

The event was attended by

government representatives, development partners, civil society organizations, religious scholars, media representatives, and delegates from child protection agencies.

KPCPWC Chief Ejaz Muhammad Khan stated that the campaign would focus on fostering awareness at the family and societal levels, identifying risks early, and encouraging the responsible reporting of suspected cases. He emphasized the need for joint and coordinated efforts by families, society, schools, government institutions, civil society, and the media to provide a safe environment for children.

Religious scholar Gul Muhammad highlighted the importance of ensuring the dignity, safety, and well-being of children, noting that protecting children from harm

is a shared moral and social responsibility of families, society, and institutions. Qamar Naseem, Program Manager at Blue Veins, also emphasized the need for collective efforts to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, stating that the safety and best interests of children must remain central to all initiatives. Adolescent girls associated with the Rise and Shine Girls Leadership Network participated in various segments of the event, highlighting the importance of providing safe platforms for children and adolescents to express their views and play an active role in measures concerning their safety and rights. Participants also visited stalls featuring information, educational resources, and communication materials focused on child protection, prevention strategies, and reporting mechanisms. Reaffirming their commitment to child protection, the participants signed the campaign's pledge. According to the KPCPWC, this campaign will continue across the province with the collaboration of government departments, development partners, civil society, local communities, the media, religious leaders.—DNA

VCs sign charter for Tobacco Free universities

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Heads of higher education institutions have signed a landmark Charter for Tobacco and Nicotine-Free Campuses to protect Pakistani youth from tobacco and nicotine addiction. The Charter was adopted during the Fifth Monthly Meeting of the Vice Chancellors and Rectors Forum, hosted by COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) at its Islamabad Campus. The meeting held at CUI Central Library brought together university leaders and representatives of higher education institutions from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to deliberate on pressing challenges facing the higher education sector. The Charter establishes a collective framework for achieving 100 percent tobacco, smoke, vape and recreational nicotine-free university campuses, covering conventional tobacco products as well as emerging products including electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches. Under the Charter, participating universities have committed to progressively eliminating tobacco and recreational nicotine use from their campuses and promote student-led awareness campaigns, research, institutional monitoring and annual assessment of progress. The Forum further agreed that a joint letter along with the signed Charter would be forwarded to the Prime Minister through the Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) seeking national-level policy intervention. Welcoming the participants, Rector COMSATS University Islamabad Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar emphasized the responsibilities of university leadership in responding to rapidly changing societal and technological challenges. He highlighted the transformative implications of artificial intelligence and its convergence with emerging technologies including quantum computing for scientific discovery and future of higher education. The Forum also held extensive deliberations on major academic, regulatory and financial challenges confronting universities. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to institutional cooperation, evidence-based policymaking and collective advocacy for higher education reforms.—DNA

12-year-old Maimoona found dead in uncle's sitting room

MUHAMMAD UMAIR

RAWALPINDI: A 12-year-old girl, Maimoona, who had left home to attend a madrassa, was found dead beneath a charpoy in a sitting room reportedly belonging to her maternal uncle in Dhoke Najju, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Rawalpindi. The tragic incident has raised serious concerns about child safety, while police are investigating the case. According to reports, Maimoona left home at around 2 p.m. carrying her Noorani Qaida to attend her religious lessons. However, she did not return home. Her family searched for her desperately, and her father reportedly went from street to street calling her name. When the girl could not be found, a kidnapping case was registered at Pirwadhai Police Station under Section 365-B of the Pakistan Penal Code. According to the reported account, her maternal uncle, iden-

tified as Mumraiz, was also involved in the search for the missing girl. CCTV footage reportedly became an important part of the investigation, and



police suspicion intensified following developments during the inquiry. During the investigation, Maimoona's

body was reportedly recovered from beneath a charpoy in the sitting room. Reports further stated that a piece of cloth had been stuffed into the child's mouth. Police took custody of the body and shifted it to Holy Family Hospital for a post-mortem examination. According to the available account, authorities were also considering adding Section 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code, relating to murder, to the case. Further investigation and efforts to establish the facts were reportedly underway. The death of the young girl has left her family devastated and raised troubling questions about the protection of children in society. The case now awaits a thorough investigation, and any accused person must be dealt with in accordance with the law if the allegations are proven. Maimoona's tragic death leaves society with a painful question: How can children be kept safe when even trusted relationships come under suspicion?

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES,
REGULATION AND COORDINATION
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Manager Contract Management (JMC-04)	01	45	Qualification: LLB required; LLM/corporate legal training preferred; Barrister-at-Law or Advocate of High Court. Experience: Minimum 4-6 years' relevant experience in corporate/commercial law and contract management. Key Skills: Contract drafting/negotiation, contract lifecycle management, risk/compliance, dispute resolution and knowledge of PPRA/PEC contractual frameworks.
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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	
Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..	5555489
CAA.....	9281092

Hospitals	
CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	561116
Cantt Hospital..	9270907-11
DHQ.....	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

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CDA begins handing over developed plots in C-14

He directed officials to accelerate work and ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe, stressing that construction quality and compliance with approved standards would not be compromised

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Sohail Ashraf on Friday reviewed development work in Sector C-14 and at Sangjani Interchange, directing officials to expedite pending work and ensure timely completion of the projects. During his visit to Sector C-14, officials briefed him that basic infrastructure had been completed, while arrangements for electricity supply were in the final stages. Installation of streetlights and signboards on main roads and streets had also been completed, while landscaping and horticulture work was under way. The CDA has begun handing over possession of developed plots to allottees following completion of the basic infrastructure. Sohail Ashraf directed officials to expedite the process and ensure that eligible allottees received possession without unnecessary delay. He said meeting Islamabad's residential needs and ensuring the timely development of new sectors were among the authority's priorities. He



directed the relevant departments to remove administrative and technical bottlenecks and complete the remaining development work on a priority basis. Later, the CDA chairman visited Sangjani Interchange and reviewed construction progress, quality standards and completion targets. He directed officials to accelerate work and ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe, stressing that construction quality and compliance with approved standards would not be compromised. He also called for regular monitoring of the projects, prompt resolution of on-site issues and effective coordination among the departments concerned.

Danyal slams KP govt for prioritizing protests

RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry criticized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government on Thursday, saying that the provincial leadership was prioritizing political protests over public safety despite a surge in deadly militant attacks targeting law enforcement personnel. During a press conference at Rawalpindi Press Club, Danyal cited recent violence in the province, including the killing of four customs officers, a police official and an SHO, and condemned the provincial chief executive for participating in long marches rather than address-

ing law and order or visiting the families of fallen officers. "Already facing terrorism, the KP province is required to ensure safety of security officials", he said adding the provincial government instead is arranging sit ins and rallies. Danyal also questioned that to what extent the provincial government has harmonized its policies with the unanimously adopted national policies against militancy. Danyal criticized that KP government had not yet come up with the clear stance against recent terrorism acts committed by Finta al Khawarij. He questioned KP's 15-year

counter-terrorism framework, urged the immediate implementation of the National Action Plan and called for providing police personnel with modern weaponry and protective equipment to neutralize cross-border threats originating from Afghanistan. Danyal warned that political sit-ins and rallies organized by opposition parties risk heightening domestic instability, disrupting public order and damaging Pakistan's international image at a time when the country is hosting foreign diplomatic delegations and international sports teams including the visiting Sri Lankan cricket squad.—APP

NBF launches children's books catalogue 2026

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) inaugurated its comprehensive Children's Books Catalogue 2026 at the conference room of its headquarters in Islamabad. The initiative is part of the efforts being undertaken in line with the vision and directives of NBF Managing Director Dr. Kamran Jahangir to promote reading habits among children, improve access to quality books, and present children's publications in a comprehensive and well-organised

format. The catalogue was inaugurated by Director Headquarters Murad Ali Mohmand. The ceremony was attended by Nazia Rehman (In-charge General Books), Syed Owais Wasiti (In-charge Stock), Taskeen Qureshi (In-charge Bookshop), Asad Rasool Nagra (In-charge IT Section), Muhammad Adnan Rajab, Gulfam Ashraf Mughal, Dua Batool, Hajira Nawazish, Raja Aftab Ahmed, and Muhammad Shahid Dhareja (Media Focal Person), along with other

relevant officers and staff members of the Foundation. Featuring 235 titles, the catalogue brings together a diverse collection of children's books published by NBF in a comprehensive and accessible format. By consolidating information about these publications in one place, it will facilitate parents, teachers, students, book lovers, schools, colleges, universities and libraries in selecting books according to their interests and requirements. Each page of the catalogue provides essential information about the respective book, including its cover image, title, author's name, number of pages, price, International Standard Book Number (ISBN), and year of publication. This organised presentation enables readers and educational institutions to review available titles, obtain relevant publication details, and make informed selections with greater ease.—DNA

ICG F-6/2 celebrates World Teachers' Day

Addressing the gathering,Javed Mirza paid tribute to teachers, describing teaching not merely as a profession but as a noble mission of developing character, values, and responsible citizens.

ISLAMABAD :The Federal Directorate of Education organized a ceremony to commemorate World Teachers' Day at Islamabad College for Girls (ICG), F-6/2, under the theme My Teacher, My Pride The event was held to acknowledge and celebrate the dedication, commitment, and invaluable contribution of teachers towards the education and character-building of generations. Invitation card- world teachers... The ceremony was attended by Director General, FDE, Javed Iqbal Mirza, as Chief Guest, while Principal Prof Shazia Rizvi presided the ceremony. A particularly moving segment of the ceremony was the screening of a testimonial video featuring ICG alumni, including professionals from diverse fields, who expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the teachers and mentors who had influenced their lives. The celebration also included a cake-cutting ceremony symbolizing the affection, respect, and enduring bond between students and their teachers. Addressing the gathering,Javed Mirza paid tribute to teachers, describing teaching not merely as a profession but as a noble mission of developing character, values, and responsible citizens. He emphasized that a teacher does much more than impart knowledge; teachers inspire curiosity, nurture confidence, inculcate discipline, and help young people discover their potential. The ceremony ended with the slogan that "Teachers do not simply impart knowledge; they shape lives, build character and prepare the nation for its future. They do not merely teach the future—they shape it.—APP

Al-Shifa hosts UK ophthalmology exams

ISLAMABAD: Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital has hosted the Fellowship of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (FRCOphth), United Kingdom, examinations for the third consecutive year, with 71 candidates appearing in the prestigious international assessments. The examinations which were held from September 26 to October 2, 2026 brought together five examiners from Al-Shifa and 15 international examiners from different parts of the world. International candidates also participated, highlighting the hospital's growing role in global ophthalmic education and professional development. The continued selection of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital as an examination centre reflects the Royal College of Ophthalmologists' confidence in the institution's clinical facilities, academic standards and ability to provide a high-quality environment for internationally recognized professional assessments. The participation of local and international examiners provided opportunities for professional interaction, knowledge exchange and mutual learning, further strengthening academic ties between Al-Shifa and the international ophthalmology community.—APP

HSA, POS hold World Sight Day symposium

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA), in collaboration with the Pakistan Optometric Society (POS), organized a national symposium and awareness walk to highlight the importance of preventing avoidable blindness in Pakistan. The event was held in connection with World Sight Day under the global theme "Love Your Eyes". HSA Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan stressed the need to integrate preventive eye care into the primary healthcare network to improve access to eye health services. Prof. Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig highlighted strategies for addressing inherited eye diseases through family genetic counselling, while Prof. Dr. Matiur-Rehman discussed early diagnosis and surgical protocols for cataracts and retinal diseases. Head of the Optometry Department and President of the Federal Pakistan Optometric Society (POS) highlighted global trends in visual impairment, the burden of uncorrected refractive errors and the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based diagnostic devices to strengthen the role of optometrists as frontline primary healthcare providers. Head of Rehabilitation Sciences Dr. Nusrat Naseem presented data on spectacle compliance among school-going children.—APP

IHRA assesses private hospital for licensing compliance

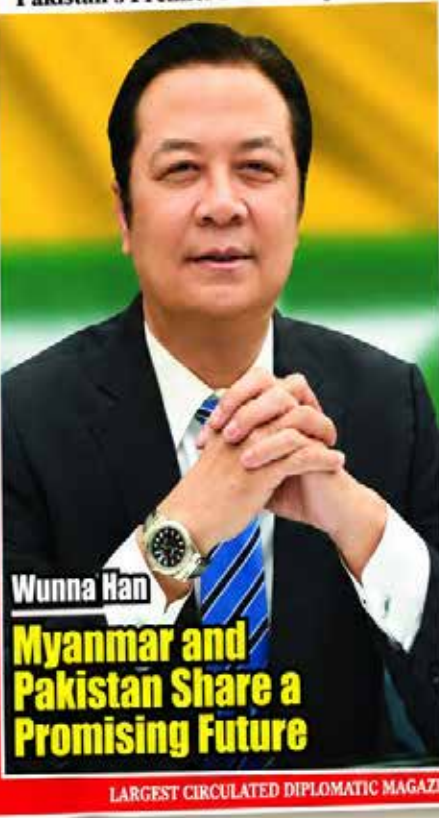
ISLAMABAD:The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) has conducted a licensing assessment at Prof. Dr. Humera Zafar Hospital to evaluate its compliance with the Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) and ensure the provision of safe and quality healthcare services.According to official sources, during the assessment, IHRA's evaluation team examined the hospital against prescribed MSDS indicators and prepared a comprehensive report documenting the findings. The exercise is part of IHRA's ongoing licensing process, aimed at ensuring that healthcare establishments meet the required standards of patient safety, quality of care and public health before being granted a licence. The authority carries out such assessments to evaluate healthcare facilities against established regulatory requirements and promote improvements in service delivery, they added. They said the initiative reflects IHRA's commitment to strengthening healthcare regulation, safeguarding patients' interests and ensuring that healthcare establishments operating in Islamabad adhere to the prescribed standards.—APP

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Briefs

Fire put out
at F-10/4
restaurant

ISLAMABAD: Capital Emergency Services (CES) extinguished fire at a local restaurant in Sector F-10/4 on Friday, with no casualties or injuries reported. According to the Capital Development Authority (CDA), fire tenders FS-01 and FS-05, along with a rescue team and an ambulance, were dispatched after the emergency call was received. The firefighting team reached the site within 12 minutes, and 14 personnel took part in the operation. The fire was brought under control through prompt action by the firefighters. No casualties, injuries or missing persons were reported, and no one required hospitalisation. The CDA said the response reflected Capital Emergency Services' commitment to protecting lives and property during emergencies. It urged citizens to observe fire safety precautions and comply with relevant fire safety regulations to prevent such incidents. —APP

Citizens
asked to avail
free hepatitis
screening
facility

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad has urged citizens to avail free hepatitis screening, diagnosis and treatment services available at government health facilities in the federal capital. According to official sources, the initiative aims to promote early detection, ensure timely treatment and raise public awareness about hepatitis prevention under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the prevention and control of disease. They added free screening, diagnostic and treatment facilities are available at the Rural Health Centres (RHCs) in Tarlai, Bhara Kahu and Sihala, the Community Health Centres (CHCs) in Rawat and Shah Allah Ditta, and the Basic Health Units (BHUs) in Sohan and Golra Sharif. In addition, free medical consultation, hepatitis screening and other available healthcare services are being provided at government health facilities across Islamabad. Health officials have emphasized that timely screening, preventive measures and appropriate medical care are essential to controlling hepatitis and reducing the risk of serious complications. They asked the citizens to visit their nearest government health facility to access available services and take preventive steps to protect themselves and their families. They said that the initiative is part of broader efforts to strengthen primary healthcare, improve public awareness and advance the goal of a hepatitis-free Pakistan. —APP

WHO trains
doctors in
dengue case
management

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization (WHO) has trained doctors and healthcare professionals from public hospitals and treatment facilities on dengue case management. The focus of the training is on updated clinical guidance, early detection and timely treatment to prevent severe complications and save lives. The training aimed to strengthen healthcare professionals' capacity to identify dengue symptoms, monitor warning signs and provide appropriate clinical care in line with updated recommendations and global best practices. Emphasizing the importance of preparedness and early intervention, WHO highlighted that timely diagnosis, close monitoring of patients and prompt management of warning signs were essential to reducing the risk of severe dengue and improving patient outcomes. The initiative underscores the importance of strengthening clinical capacity and ensuring effective management of dengue cases, particularly during periods of increased transmission. —APP

Police hold Flag March, tighten security across Islamabad

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have arrested 88 suspects belonging to 19 criminal gangs during the last three months and recovered stolen and looted vehicles, motorcycles, cash, gold jewellery and other valuables worth over Rs160 million

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Friday conducted a flag march across the federal capital and increased security at entry and exit points to maintain peace and law and order in the city. A police spokesperson told APP that the flag march was conducted on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Capt (Retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry as part of increased security measures across the city. The spokesperson said police personnel had been deployed at important locations, while checking at entry and exit points had been tightened to prevent any untoward incident. DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem said Islamabad Police were taking all possible steps to maintain peace and ensure the safety of citizens. He said police personnel had been directed to remain fully alert and ready to deal with any emergency situation. The DIG Ali said the Capital Patrol Squad was carrying out regular patrolling in different areas, while senior police officers had been directed to remain present in their respective areas and personally check security arrangements at duty points. He said police were also continuing action against one-wheeling, vehicles with tinted windows, violations of pillion-riding re-



strictions and vehicles and motorcycles without number plates. DIG Ali urged citizens to cooperate with police during checking and immediately report any suspicious person or activity through the Pucar-15 emergency helpline. —DNA

TPL insurance
rebrands as JazzSure

ISLAMABAD: JazzWorld has announced that TPL Insurance Limited has been renamed JazzSure Insurance Limited, strengthening the insurance business within its digital services platform. JazzSure is the underwriting engine powering insurance offerings across JazzWorld, including those available through JazzCash and FikrFree, while continuing to serve its existing customers. For households and small businesses, an unexpected illness, accident or loss can wipe out savings and disrupt years of progress. Yet insurance remains out of reach for many Pakistanis because of affordability, limited awareness and access. JazzSure aims to address these barriers by making protection easier to understand, more relevant to everyday needs and simpler to access. Aamir Ibrahim, CEO, JazzWorld and Chairman, JazzSure Insurance Limited, said: "JazzWorld is a digital services platform, and expanding access to financial protection is an important part of our continued evolution. JazzSure brings together our underwriting expertise and digital reach to make insurance accessible to millions of Pakistanis. Jazz connected the unconnected, and JazzCash brought banking to the unbanked. With JazzSure, we want to extend that progress to the uninsured, helping families and businesses protect what they have worked hard to build." By connecting insurance underwriting with digital distribution, JazzWorld aims to make it easier for customers to find suitable cover, purchase policies and manage their protection. JazzSure's established insurance business will continue alongside this role, serving customers within and beyond JazzWorld's digital platforms. Muhammad Aminuddin, CEO, JazzSure Insurance Limited, said: "Our existing customers remain central to JazzSure. We will continue serving them while using our underwriting expertise to support insurance offerings across JazzWorld. The opportunity is to combine that expertise with digital access, so more people can find cover that suits their needs. Whatever the channel, our focus is on clear products and dependable service." The new identity follows Jazz International Holding Limited's acquisition of a 76.33% controlling stake in TPL Insurance in July 2026 and marks the next phase of the insurer's integration into JazzWorld. —DNA

Meezan bank
okays Rs 49b
in financing
for housing
scheme

ISLAMABAD: Meezan Bank has approved 6,880 housing finance cases worth approximately Rs49 billion under the Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Program – Ghar Ho Tu Apna (GHTA) Scheme, with 1,000 families receiving financing totalling Rs7.34 billion as of September 30, 2026. The bank has received more than 27,800 applications worth approximately Rs179 billion through its

own network and the PHA portal, reflecting demand for affordable housing finance. Of these, 13,474 applications amounting to Rs100.7 billion were received through the bank's network, while another 14,397 applications worth Rs78.65 billion came through the PHA network. The scheme provides Pakistani families access to Shariah-compliant housing financing as part of the Government's affordable housing agenda. Meezan Bank's participation supports the objective of expanding affordable home ownership while bringing Islamic housing finance to the general public. "At Meezan Bank, we believe that Islamic finance can play a meaningful role in making home ownership accessible to a much larger segment of society. Through Ghar Ho Tu Apna, we are committed to working with the Government to transform the aspiration of home ownership into a reality for thousands of Pakistani families," said Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, Group Head Consumer Finance, Meezan Bank. The bank said it remained committed to expanding affordable home ownership and contributing to Pakistan's housing sector through its extensive network, Islamic finance expertise and growing housing-finance capabilities. —DNA

IESCO notifies power
suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued a power suspension programme for Saturday and Sunday on several feeders due to ongoing development works being carried out by the district administration.

According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in GSO Circle from 06:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Pindi Point, Barriyan, Public Health, Ghariyal, PAF, Upper Topa, Lora, Patriata, Company Bagh, Cecil Resotor, Lora-2, MCM, TDCP, Kohala, Sunny Bank, Kuldana, PC, Dheer Kot, Chaman Kot, Dana Express, Dahla, Komi Kot, Chhattar Kallas-I, Chhattar Kallas-II, Desto, PAEC, from 08:30 AM to 12:30 PM, Power Transformer T-1 at 132kv GSS Tarnawa, from 12:30 PM to 04:30 PM, Power Transformer T-2 at 132kv GSS Tarnawa, feeders. On Sunday, power supply will remain suspended in Islamabad Circle from 07:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Chatta Bakhtawar,

Taramri, CM Pak Zong, Kurri, Rehara, Park Enclave-1, Kund Rajgan, Scheme-1, King Hammad, PHA-1, Isolation Hospital, IT Park, ISI, feeders. In GSO Circle electricity supply will remain suspended from 06:00 AM to 09:00 AM, O/G Behkari, Line Park, Mangon, Millat Chowk, Keryala, Jamalwal, Alqaim Mill, Sarkal, KSM-II, Alqadier Mill, KSM-I, Bhone, PAF, KSM-3, Alrizwan Mill, Hasil, Neela, Pipli, Kot Chaudhrian, Balkasar, Kasral, Dullah, from 06:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Pindi Point, Barriyan, Public Health, Ghariyal, PAF, Upper Topa, Lora, Patriata, Company Bagh, Cecil Resotor, Lora-2, MCM, TDCP, Kohala, Sunny Bank, Kuldana, PC, Dheer Kot, Chaman Kot, Dana Express, Dahla, Komi Kot, Chhattar Kallas-I, Chhattar Kallas-II, Desto, PAEC, from 09:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Power Transformer T-1 at 132 KV GSS NDC-II, feeders. IESCO management apologized to its valued consumers for this temporary interruption in electricity supply. —APP

SC inaugurates call center
for legal aid and advice

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan inaugurated the 1818 Legal Call Centre to provide citizens with a dedicated telephone facility for court-related information, free legal guidance and assistance in accessing legal aid. The facility was inaugurated in the presence of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, with the first caller, Mr. Muhammad Saleem, formally marking the commencement of the service. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Justice emphasised that any person requiring legal advice may simply dial 1818 to seek free legal guidance without having to visit the Court or incur consultation expenses. The initiative is intended to make assistance more readily available to citizens, particularly those who face financial difficulties, live in remote areas or are unfamiliar with court procedures. The Call Centre will serve as a point of contact for lawyers, litigants and members of the public seeking information about the Supreme Court's services and procedures. It will address queries concerning the status of cases, hearing dates, cause lists and case fixation, as well as the relevant offices or service channels through which callers may obtain further information or pursue their requests. Callers will also be able to seek guidance on filing cases and applications, understanding procedural requirements, addressing filing objections and obtaining certified copies of judgments, orders and other court documents. Queries relating to early hearing applications and the procedure for seeking information about pending

matters will also be addressed. The purpose is to help citizens understand the steps they need to take and approach the appropriate office with the necessary information and documents.

The facility will further guide callers on accessing the Public Facilitation Centre and the Supreme Court's online services, including the use of the Court's website, online case information and available electronic application facilities. Citizens requiring help in locating a service, understanding how to submit a request or identifying the appropriate channel for a service-related concern will be guided accordingly. This telephone support will complement the assistance available through the Court's physical and digital facilitation channels. An expert legal adviser will also be available to address queries relating to litigation and legal cases. The adviser will provide free legal guidance, help callers understand the nature of their legal concerns and explain the appropriate procedural steps or avenues through which they may seek assistance.

This will be particularly useful for individuals who need initial advice before approaching a lawyer or a court, as well as litigants who require clarification about how to proceed with a legal matter. For litigants who require free legal assistance, the legal adviser will also forward their names and applications to the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) for consideration and further action through the relevant legal aid arrangements. —DNA

Maroof
launches
cancer
support
initiative

ISLAMABAD :Maroof International Hospital (MIH) has launched a Cancer Support Group initiative alongside a three-month breast cancer awareness campaign to promote early detection, preventive healthcare and emotional support for cancer patients and their families. The campaign, launched under the Maroof Community Support Program, focuses on women's health, breast cancer screening and mental well-being. Addressing the launching ceremony as chief guest, Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan, Rita Dhital, called for greater awareness, early detection and timely treatment of breast cancer. She appreciated the hospital's efforts to promote breast cancer awareness and stressed the importance of preventive healthcare, informed health choices and access to appropriate medical services for women.

On the occasion, Haroon Naseer, Chief Executive Officer of MIH, announced the Cancer Support Group project, reaffirming the hospital's commitment to expanding cancer care services and providing comprehensive support to patients and their families. Dr. Mir Abdul Waheed, Medical Director of MIH, highlighted the importance of cancer prevention, early diagnosis and timely treatment, emphasizing that awareness and prompt medical consultation were essential for appropriate care.

Dr. Saira Mahmood, Consultant Breast Surgeon, briefed participants on breast cancer risk factors and warning signs, urging women to seek medical assessment if they notice unusual changes in their breasts. Dr. Ayesha Amin, Consultant Radiologist, highlighted the role of mammography and appropriate screening in identifying breast abnormalities and supporting early diagnosis. Psychologist Zubia Zubair emphasized the importance of emotional and mental health support for cancer patients and their families throughout diagnosis and treatment.

As part of the campaign, MIH is offering a 50 per cent discount on mammography and screening services during the three-month initiative to encourage women to prioritize their breast health and seek screening in accordance with medical advice. The Cancer Support Group aims to provide a supportive environment for patients and their families, recognizing that comprehensive cancer care extends beyond medical treatment to include emotional well-being, compassionate support and guidance. —APP

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Why the Surge in Anti-Immigrant Hatred Across America and Europe?

QAMAR BASHIR

WHEN does an immigrant stop being an immigrant? For some British citizens, apparently never. They may have been born in Britain, educated in British schools, worked, paid taxes and raised families there. Their parents and grandparents may have done the same. Yet racial nationalists still describe them as outsiders. Behind arguments about integration lies a disturbing proposition: however deeply they belong, their appearance disqualifies them. Citizenship becomes conditional, while whiteness becomes an imagined passport to permanent acceptance. Debating immigration levels, asylum procedures, housing or public services is legitimate. Demanding that citizens leave because of their ancestry is racial exclusion. A British Muslim, Hindu, Christian or atheist does not become less British because their family originated in Somalia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Iraq. For someone whose home and life are British, being told to return to an ancestral country denies their actual belonging. The supremacist narrative insists that ancestry outranks citizenship, that minority success threatens rightful white ownership, and that assimilation can never overcome colour. Its opponents answer that Britain belongs equally to its citizens: belonging rests on shared civic rights, responsibilities and institutions, while peaceful resistance rejects racial hierarchy and defends everyone's right to call Britain their home. The consequences extend beyond offensive speech. In England and Wales, excluding the Metropolitan Police, police recorded 115,990 hate crimes in the year ending March 2025, up 2%. Racial hate crimes increased 6%, religious hate crimes 3%, and religious hate crimes targeting Muslims 19%. Reporting and recording practices affect these figures, but they document substantial harm. Social media compounds the danger when individual crimes become accusations against communities and religious differences become supposed evidence of disloyalty. Britain's imperial history makes racial exclusion particularly contradictory. Britain, France, Portugal and the Netherlands established overseas empires that extracted wealth, reorganized economies and imposed authority. They also spread their languages, institutions and cultural practices. Connections between Europe and formerly colonized societies were neither accidental nor created solely by recent migrants. Imperial powers helped construct the relationships and inequalities along which later migration developed. The military contribution deserves recognition. More than 2.5 million people served in the British Indian Army during the Second World War, helping defeat the Axis powers. Colonial service occurred within unequal systems and reflected varied motivations. Nevertheless, remembering these soldiers as in-

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dispensable while imagining their descendants as permanently foreign exposes a profound contradiction. Postwar migrants likewise helped rebuild Britain, often encountering discrimination while supplying labour its economy needed. Iran illustrates this danger with particular force. Since the United States reimposed sweeping sanctions in 2018, Iranians have faced eight years of renewed economic restrictions, intensified by further measures in 2026. Alongside this pressure, United Nations reporting has documented airstrikes causing civilian casualties, displacement and damage to homes, schools and health facilities. For a population of roughly 90 million, the combination threatens both physical security and the means of earning a living. When economic coercion deprives ordinary families of livelihoods and essential goods, it becomes collective punishment in its human consequences, whatever justification governments offer. Families unable to find safety, work or food may seek opportunities abroad; migration then becomes a response to deprivation, rather than simply a preference. Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq offer different histories of conflict, repression and displacement. Colonial legacies also shape opportunities across South Asia and Africa, alongside domestic governance, inequality and other pressures. These countries cannot be reduced to one explanation or described as uniformly destitute. Nevertheless, governments whose interventions contribute to destruction must confront the consequences. Condemning migration while helping destroy the possibility of remaining safely at home is a morally indefensible contradiction. Governments whose military actions and economic restrictions contribute to that desperation should bear a corresponding responsibility: protect those displaced, share the costs of receiving them, and help restore the homes, institutions and productive economy that make remaining—or voluntarily returning—possible. They cannot credibly condemn migration while disregarding their own contribution to the conditions that drive it. The long-term solution is to invest where people already live: rebuild schools and hospitals, train teachers and technicians, support universities, create reliable infrastructure and expand productive employment. Political stability must rest on accountable institutions and public participation, alongside economic opportunity and cultural freedom. The Gulf's development, including Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, illustrates how investment and expanding industries can attract workers internationally. Its circumstances are distinctive, but opportunity clearly influences migration. This is also a practical answer to public anxiety in destination countries. Money spent restoring livelihoods can address displacement more constructively than rhetoric promising racial exclusion. Partnerships should be designed with the people affected, offer fair trading opportunities, and support businesses that retain value locally. Their purpose should be to expand people's choices, so that staying becomes viable and leaving remains a decision rather than a necessity. Such cooperation must respect sovereignty, empower local communities and prevent reconstruction from becoming another system of dependency. The test of Western commitment is whether it supports prosperity and independence even when these strengthen competitors. No development programme will end migration, which also reflects choice and aspiration. It can, however, reduce the desperation that forces departure. A just response combines equal citizenship, peaceful resistance to racism and sustained investment in people's ability to build secure, dignified lives at home.

The New Great Game: Why Central Asia Matters Again

T.M.Awan



Pakistan's predicament is particularly instructive because repeated recourse to the Fund has not produced lasting independence from it. Narrow exports, weak revenue collection, persistent fiscal deficits, expensive energy and insufficient investment have contributed to a recurring cycle. Whenever foreign exchange becomes scarce, the government seeks assistance; once immediate pressures ease...

ACCORDING to media reports, Afghanistan has formally inaugurated a 121-kilometre road connecting the country with China through the Wakhan Corridor. On the map, it may look like another road through a difficult mountain region. In geopolitical terms, however, it represents something much bigger. Wakhan once served a very different purpose. In the nineteenth century, it became a buffer between the Russian Empire and British India, separating two expanding empires that were competing for influence across Central Asia. More than a century later, the same narrow corridor is beginning to acquire a very different significance. China is expanding its economic reach, Afghanistan is looking for new avenues of connectivity, and Central Asia is once again becoming a region where geography, economics and great-power interests intersect. The old Great Game was largely about territory and imperial expansion. The new competition is about roads, railways, energy, trade, investment, technology and strategic influence. The five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Independence, however, did not erase the deep economic, political and security links that had developed with Moscow over decades. Russia still matters enormously. Trade, migration, military cooperation, political contacts and historical connections continue to give Moscow considerable influence across the region. But the regional picture is changing. China has emerged as a major economic force. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing has invested in infrastructure, transport, energy and regional connectivity. For Central Asian countries, Chinese engagement is not simply

about investment. It also provides additional economic and diplomatic options. That does not mean that these countries are choosing China over Russia. They are increasingly choosing between options. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the other Central Asian states continue to maintain relations with Moscow while deepening their economic ties with Beijing, Europe and Türkiye. The United States is also seeking a stronger presence in the region. THIS is often described as a multi-vector foreign policy. In simple terms, it means that smaller states are trying to avoid placing all their strategic interests in one basket. The war in Ukraine has made this approach even more important. Central Asian governments have longstanding relationships with Russia, but they have little interest in being pulled into the wider confrontation between Moscow and the West. Their response has largely been one of careful balancing. It would therefore be misleading to say that Russia has simply lost Central Asia. A better description is this: Russia remains influential, but the region is no longer shaped by a single external power. China's role is also different from Russia's. Moscow retains particular strengths in security, migration and political networks, while Beijing's influence is increasingly visible in trade, infrastructure, investment and connectivity. For Central Asian governments, that difference creates room to manoeuvre. And then there is geography. Central Asia sits between Russia, China, Afghanistan, Iran and Europe. The five republics are landlocked, but that very geography places them along some of the emerging overland routes linking major economic centres. A railway can change the direction of trade. A pipeline can create long-term economic dependence. A road through a mountain corridor can open an entirely new strategic possibility. That is why the

Wakhan road matters beyond Afghanistan and China. It is part of a wider movement towards creating alternative routes across a region that has historically been dependent on a limited number of corridors. For Pakistan, this changing geography deserves particular attention. Pakistan has a natural geographical connection with Central Asia through Afghanistan and access to the Arabian Sea through Karachi and Gwadar. Yet geography by itself does not create economic influence. Roads need trade. Borders need efficient management. Businesses need confidence. And connectivity becomes meaningful only when it generates sustained commercial activity. This is where Pakistan's opportunity lies. If Central Asia is becoming more connected to China, the Middle East and wider Eurasia, Pakistan cannot afford to remain merely a country on the map between these regions. It has to become part of the economic geography that is taking shape around them. The new Great Game, however, is not simply Russia versus China. Nor is it another version of East versus West. Perhaps the more important development is that the Central Asian states themselves are becoming increasingly active players. In the nineteenth century, great powers competed over Central Asia. Today, Central Asian countries are increasingly trying to use great-power competition to strengthen their own strategic autonomy. That is a significant change. The future of the region will depend not only on which major power has the greatest economic or military influence. It will also depend on whether the Central Asian states can convert their geography into connectivity, connectivity into trade, and competition among larger powers into greater freedom of choice. – The writer is a media and strategic communication professional and international relations analyst. X: @TMAwanOfficial)

Pakistan's IMF Trap: The Long Road to Economic Independence

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Pakistan's predicament is particularly instructive because repeated recourse to the Fund has not produced lasting independence from it. Narrow exports, weak revenue collection, persistent fiscal deficits, expensive energy and insufficient investment have contributed to a recurring cycle. Whenever foreign exchange becomes scarce, the government seeks assistance; once immediate...

PAKISTAN'S recurring dependence on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has become an enduring feature of its economic history. Every new programme brings temporary relief, helps restore confidence in the country's ability to meet its external obligations and offers another opportunity to place the economy on a sustainable path. Yet, as one agreement follows another, a fundamental question remains unanswered: why has Pakistan repeatedly needed external assistance to finance its needs and stabilise its economy? The problem extends beyond the burden of debt. It lies in the structural weaknesses that have made borrowing an almost habitual instrument of economic management. Pakistan's real challenge is not simply to negotiate another loan or secure the next tranche, but to reform the economic system that repeatedly makes such assistance necessary. Pakistan's predicament is particularly instructive because repeated recourse to the Fund has not produced lasting independence from it. Narrow exports, weak revenue collection, persistent fiscal deficits, expensive energy and insufficient investment have contributed to a recurring cycle. Whenever foreign exchange becomes scarce, the government seeks assistance; once immediate pressures ease, the urgency of deeper reforms often diminishes. The result is temporary stability without a durable solution. The latest IMF programme must be assessed against this history. In October 2026, Pakistan reached a staff-level agreement on reviews under its Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). Subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board, the agreement could release approximately \$1.2 billion in additional financing. While this support may strengthen short-term stability, it cannot guarantee that Pakistan will avoid another programme. That outcome depends on what the country does with the breathing space it receives. Economic stabilisation is necessary, but it is not equivalent to economic transformation. Moderating inflation, rebuilding foreign-exchange reserves and maintaining fiscal discipline are important achievements. Their benefits, however, will remain fragile unless Pakistan expands production, creates employment and earns substantially more foreign exchange. A sustainable economy must finance its development through productive activity rather than rely repeatedly on external assistance.

Tax reform is an essential starting point. Pakistan cannot maintain a fair and effective fiscal system by placing a disproportionate burden on salaried employees and documented businesses while significant economic activity remains undertaxed. The tax base must be broadened, exemptions rationalised and collection modernised through digital monitoring and transparent administration. Agriculture, property and retail sectors should contribute fairly according to their economic capacity and the law. Provincial governments must also improve revenue mobilisation. Sustainable public finances require cooperation between the federation and the provinces, not the shifting of responsibility from one to another. Energy reform is equally urgent. Circular debt, electricity theft, distribution losses and weak recoveries continue to burden public finances and undermine industrial competitiveness. Repeated tariff increases, without corresponding improvements in efficiency and governance, cannot provide a lasting remedy. Distribution companies must perform better, losses must be reduced, and private participation should be encouraged where it improves efficiency. Energy must become financially sustainable without making domestic production prohibitively expensive. The decisive test, however, is Pakistan's ability to earn foreign exchange. The government's Uraan Pakistan framework envisages merchandise exports of approximately \$63 billion by 2029. This ambition will remain unrealised without predictable policies, competitive energy costs, access to finance, modern technology and efficient trade procedures. Pakistan must move beyond excessive dependence on traditional exports by developing higher-value textiles, information technology, engineering goods and processed agricultural products. Export diversification is not merely a growth strategy; it is essential to reducing the need for external borrowing. Investment requires confidence in the continuity of public policy. Investors are reluctant to commit capital when taxation, regulations and economic priorities change unpredictably. State-owned enterprises must be governed professionally, with restructuring or privatisation pursued where appropriate. Public expenditure should support productive investment rather than sustain inefficiencies that consume scarce national resources. Institutional credibility is therefore as important as financial incentives in attracting long-term investment.

Reform, however, cannot succeed if its social costs are ignored. Fiscal discipline must not become a justification for transferring the burden of adjustment to vulnerable citizens. Savings from wasteful expenditure and poorly targeted subsidies should help strengthen healthcare, education, vocational training and social protection. Pakistan's young population can become a powerful engine of economic growth, but only if education, skills and employment opportunities prepare it for a competitive world. Stability that fails to improve ordinary lives cannot command the public confidence needed to sustain difficult decisions. The ambition to conclude the present IMF programme without requiring another is worthy of serious commitment. Yet an exit date is not an exit strategy. Fiscal discipline, energy-sector reform, export growth and institutional improvements must survive political transitions and changes in leadership. Short-term political convenience must no longer take precedence over long-term economic resilience. The experiences of other borrowers offer further lessons. Argentina's enormous IMF exposure, Ukraine's wartime financing needs and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's deep poverty and insecurity demonstrate that debt distress has different causes and consequences. Economic structure, governance, conflict and external shocks all matter. Pakistan must draw lessons from international experience while pursuing reforms suited to its own circumstances. The IMF is neither Pakistan's permanent adversary nor a substitute for sound economic management. Its assistance can provide valuable breathing space, but the responsibility for using it wisely rests with the nation's own leadership and institutions. Repeated borrowing will end only when the weaknesses that necessitate it are addressed. Ultimately, success will not be measured by another agreement or the arrival of another financial tranche. It will be measured by an economy capable of meeting its obligations through competitive exports, fair taxation, productive investment and prudent public finances. Pakistan must escape not only its present debt burden but also the economic habits that continually recreate it. Temporary relief can be negotiated across a table; lasting independence must be built at home through courage, consistency and the willingness to undertake reforms long postponed. That is the road Pakistan must travel if it is to replace recurring dependence with genuine economic sovereignty.

Briefs

Mediator
Pakistan
doesn't...

FROM PAGE 01

people-to-people ties between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. "So I can share with you that Pakistani troops, in multiple capabilities and domains, are already there," the ISPR DG said. The remarks come after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments and ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia. The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh on Monday, according to a joint statement shared by Pakistan's Foreign Office.

Pakistan
pledges
'resolute'...

FROM PAGE 01

territorial integrity and security is resolute," the prime minister said. Pakistan fully supports Saudi Arabia's legitimate right to defend its people and protect its cities and vital infrastructure, he added. The prime minister also called on the Houthis militia to "immediately cease these attacks", saying Islamabad will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Saudi Arabia in the face of threats. The prime minister's remarks come days after Islamabad, Riyadh and Ankara agreed to ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

South
Africa's
'Navi'...

FROM PAGE 01

Israel dismissed the report as "scandalous". The peace prize is the fifth Nobel awarded this week, after literature, chemistry, physics and medicine. Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado won in 2025. The Nobel Peace Prize, worth 12 million Swedish crowns, or about \$1.2 million, is due to be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will. The United Nations human rights office welcomed the news of Navi Pillay's Nobel Peace Prize win, acknowledging her longstanding advocacy for human rights.

Bilawal
Bhutto
urges PTI...

FROM PAGE 01

who are in prison today will not necessarily remain in prison tomorrow," he said, warning that Khan could surpass President Asif Ali Zardari's record of 14 years in prison if the party continued on its current political path. Bilawal criticised Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, accusing him of pursuing negative politics. He said the PTI's confrontational approach was ultimately harming the party itself. The PPP chairman urged the PTI to abandon its current approach, return to parliamentary committees and engage in dialogue with the federal government, saying these steps could help improve the situation.

India in
talks with...

FROM PAGE 01

held bilateral talks with various government officials, including Al-Mazroua, who also participated as a speaker. "The historical trade ties between India and Saudi Arabia are rapidly transforming into a dynamic, modern maritime partnership," Sonowal said on X after the talks. "We discussed setting up a joint working group to further collaboration in the maritime energy sector, port investments & seafarer capacity building." More specifically, Sonowal and Al-Mazroua discussed "Saudi participation in Indian port projects such as Vadhavan and Galathea Bay," according to a statement issued.

Abbas Afridi to lead Pakistan
at Hong Kong Sixes 2026

The tournament will be held at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground in Hong Kong from October 30 to November 1. Pakistan will depart for Hong Kong on October 28

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday announced the squad for the Hong Kong Sixes, with Abbas Afridi named captain for the six-a-side tournament. The tournament will be held at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground in Hong Kong from October 30 to November 1. Pakistan will depart for Hong Kong on October 28. Pakistan will compete alongside 11 other teams in the three-day tournament, featuring 12 sides in total. The participating teams have been di-

vided into four pools of three teams each, with Pakistan placed in Pool C. Defending champions Pakistan, who clinched the coveted title last year, their sixth overall, by defeating Kuwait in the final, have been placed in Group C alongside India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Australia, host nation Hong Kong, China and England comprise Group A, while Bangladesh, Scotland and Sri Lanka are in Group B. South Africa, Oman and Afghanistan form Group D. The opening day will feature nine matches, with the first game between Australia and

Hong Kong, China scheduled for 5:45am as per Pakistan Standard Time (PST), followed by Bangladesh's clash against Scotland at 6:40am. Holders Pakistan will kick off their campaign against the UAE at 7:35am PST on Friday, October 30, before taking on arch-rivals India at 11:15am on the same day. The remaining group-stage fixtures will be completed on Saturday, October 31, with the first match between Oman and Afghanistan scheduled for 5:45am PST. The knockout stage of the Hong Kong Sixes will also get underway on Saturday, with the

top-ranked teams from each group progressing to the Cup semi-finals. The second-placed sides will contest the Plate semi-finals, while the third-placed teams will compete in the Bowl semi-finals. The final day on Sunday, November 1, will feature the respective finals and placement matches. The Cup final is scheduled for 12:10am PST, while the Bowl and Plate finals will take place earlier at 10:20am and 11:15am, respectively. Mohammad Abbas Afridi (captain), Abdul Samad, Ahmed Daniyal, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Khawaja Nafay, Muhammad Shahzad and Saad Masood.

Argentina friendlies no fairy
tale for African footballers

DNA

WHEN Benin and Burkina Faso flew to Buenos Aires for friendlies against Argentina — including superstar Lionel Messi's swansong — it would have seemed like dreamland for players who rarely, if ever, rub shoulders with the aristocrats of the 'Beautiful Game'. The flight to Buenos Aires took not hours but days. There was no hot water in the hotel. Training facilities were "not up to scratch". And the African football associations invited didn't receive any of the profits from the match, which potentially generated millions of dollars in revenue

and TV rights, he said. Before the match, the state-owned daily La Nación in Cotonou looked forward breathlessly to the team "showcasing Benin to the whole world", and the national football association revelled in the "privilege" of being selected to play. "I'm going to tell Messi, 'You are a god'," Benin defender Mohamed Tijani told the Argentine press of the country's legendary No 10. "He's the best player in the world." The Cheetahs lost 3-0. Whilst there is no standard practice for organising international professional friendlies, smaller African teams generally rely on agencies to manage their away fixtures and don't necessarily make any

profit from the games. "African football associations accept these deals because everything is taken care of. It saves them having to find opponents and organise friendlies," explained an expert on African football who asked not to be named. "But it's true the travel and accommodation arrangements are substandard." Airport chaos The Burkina friendly turned into a farce. On the eve of kick-off, the Stallions were still stranded in Morocco after their connecting flight to Buenos Aires was cancelled. When organisers eventually found them a plane at the last minute, the senior squad was so annoyed it refused to board and Burkina ended up hastily despatch-

ing an Under-23 team. The young players arrived jet-lagged just a few hours before the match and were predictably thrashed 7-0 by this year's World Cup finalists. Piqued, Burkina's military ruler Ibrahim Traore complained the country's football was "in a sorry state" and threatened "significant decisions" to "remedy it". "The next international window in November is fast approaching," Burkinabe Football Federation official Ibrahim Dianda warned on Facebook. "If the relationship between the stakeholders doesn't change, we risk a repeat of these difficulties and the consequences could be even more regrettable," he wrote. — APP

Desert Vipers to kick off defence of
DP World ILT20 title in November

DNA

DUBAI: The Desert Vipers will begin the defence of their title against last year's finalists and season two champions the MI Emirates in the opening match of the DP World International League T20 season five at the Dubai International Stadium on Saturday, Nov. 21. The first ball will be delivered at 6:30 p.m. local time. All the tournament's evening matches will start at the same time. The season's second fixture will be a clash between the Sharjah Warriors and season one champions, the Gulf Giants. The fixture will be the season's first match

at the historic Sharjah Cricket Stadium and will be played from 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 22. Season-three champions the Dubai Capitals will launch their title hunt against the Abu Dhabi Knight Riders at their home venue, the Dubai International Stadium, in the second match of the Super Sunday doubleheader. Abu Dhabi will host its first match on Thursday, Nov. 26, when the Abu Dhabi Knight Riders take on the MI Emirates at the Zayed Cricket Stadium. The DP World ILT20 will celebrate the UAE National Day (Eid Al-Adha) on Dec. 2 with traditional festivities and a cricket doubleheader. The Abu Dhabi Knight

Riders will host the Desert Vipers at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in the afternoon, while the Dubai Capitals play the MI Emirates at the Dubai International Stadium in the evening. Each team will play 10 matches in the double round-robin 34-match tournament. At the end of the 30-match group stage, the top four teams will progress to the playoffs which will culminate with the final at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2026. The 30-day competition will feature six days of doubleheader action. A total of 15 tournament matches will be played at the Dubai International Stadium. Abu Dhabi's

Zayed Cricket Stadium will host 11 matches and Sharjah Cricket Stadium eight fixtures. The DP World ILT20 season five contests will feature some of the game's biggest stars including Moeen Ali, Usman Tariq and Finn Allen (Abu Dhabi Knight Riders), Babar Azam, Shimron Hetmyer and Naseem Shah (Desert Vipers), and Faf du Plessis, Marcus Stoinis and Mustafizur Rahman (Dubai Capitals). Other stars playing are Heinrich Klaasen, Liam Livingstone and David Miller (Gulf Giants), Rashid Khan, Nicholas Pooran and Faisalhaq Farooqi (MI Emirates), and Mohammad Nabi, Sikandar Raza and Adil Rashid (Sharjah Warriors).

Dubai Basketball
lose first home game
of the season against
Crvena Zvezda

Crvena Zvezda converted 29 of 66 field-goal attempts (43.9 percent), compared with Dubai's 20 from 61 (32.8 percent). From beyond the arc, Dubai made five of 22 attempts (22.7 percent), while the visitors connected on eight of 30 (26.7 percent)

DNA

DUBAI Basketball suffered a 77-58 defeat to Crvena Zvezda in EuroLeague Round 4 at Coca-Cola Arena, struggling to find their offensive rhythm against a disciplined Serbian side. Dubai started competitively, keeping pace with the visitors during the opening quarter. However, Crvena Zvezda gradually took control through efficient shooting and disciplined defense, while Dubai struggled to convert their scoring opportunities. Despite remaining within reach during parts of the first half, Dubai were unable to regain momentum after the break. Crvena Zvezda opened the third quarter with an unanswered eight-point run, shifting the momentum decisively in the visitors' favor. The Serbian side continued to extend its lead before securing a 77-58 victory. Crvena Zvezda converted 29 of 66 field-goal attempts (43.9 percent), compared with Dubai's 20 from 61 (32.8 percent). From beyond the arc, Dubai made five of 22 attempts (22.7 percent), while the visitors connected on eight of 30 (26.7 percent). Dubai were more effective at the free-throw line, converting 13 of 16 attempts (81.2 percent). However, Crvena Zvezda held the advantage in rebounds, recording 41 to Dubai's 36. Peaking after the game, Dubai Basketball Head Coach Xavi Pascual expressed his disappointment with the performance, acknowledging that the team had fallen short in several key areas. "First of all, congratulations to Crvena Zvezda and their coach on the victory. We played a very bad game in every aspect. It was a disastrous 40 minutes for us, and perhaps we were only in the game during the first 10 minutes. After that, we lost control of everything," Pascual said. "We did not show the defensive level we have demonstrated in previous games, and we did not share the ball properly in offense. We were static in our movements, lacked energy and struggled with our shooting, both from beyond the arc and around the basket."

Pak has 'substantial
number of forces...

FROM PAGE 01

The Makkah Defence Alliance is a tripartite arrangement that includes Türkiye as well. It was signed on Aug 7 and aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empower its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them. Speaking during a weekly briefing, the FO spokesperson recalled that a joint statement by the three members of the alliance was "very clear in stating that the three countries are united in ensuring deterrence and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". The three countries had decided to contribute and mobilise resources rapidly, he said, adding that Pakistan already had a "substantial number of forces, as well as resources, in Riyadh". "It is now up to the organisation to assess the threat perception and operate in accordance with its own mandate," he said. The spokesperson went on to say that providing further details on operational matters of the alliance, "including how the situation will be handled, would not be appropriate on my part. It would also be speculative on my part to suggest that certain countries could be involved". On the Houthis and escalation of the conflict, he said, "This is a militia that has been involved in such proxy activities and has contributed to regional instability. It has been actively fighting Yemeni forces for quite some time, and access to resources is possible these days.

Archaeologists discover ancient
structure at Jandial in KP near Sirkap

PREVIOUSLY unstudied, ancient structure measuring nearly 100 metres long and 50 metres wide has been discovered at Jandial in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Khanpur-Taxila region. The discovery has opened "new avenues for understanding the history and urban landscape of Gandhara", a press release said on Friday. The monument, identified as Jandial D, lies opposite the famous Ionic temple of Jandial, outside the ancient fortified city of Sirkap. First noted by Alexander Cunningham in 1864, the structure remained largely unexplored for more than a century. Workers dig at the excavation site at Jandial in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Excavations that began in mid-August 2026 revealed substantial walls, while the monument's precise function — whether public or religious — remains under investigation. The discovery was made by the KP Archaeology Department under the Khyber PATH Project, directed by Italian archaeologist Dr Luca M. Oliveri and funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). The project is being implemented by the Italian Archaeological Mission of Ca' Foscari University of Venice in collaboration with the KP Directorate General of Archaeology and Museums. It is supervised by KP Director General of Archaeology and Museums Dr Abdul Samad.

Italian NGO ISCOS provided logistical and financial support for the project. Workers dig at the excavation site at Jandial in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Dr Abdul Samad said the discovery highlighted the archaeological potential of the Khanpur-Taxila region and the importance of continued scientific research and international collaboration, stressing the need to protect archaeological remains threatened by expanding urbanisation. He said, "The discovery at Jandial demonstrates that the archaeological landscape of KP continues to hold important historical secrets. "Our priority is to support scientific research, strengthen international partnerships and protect these irreplaceable heritage assets." Khyber Path Director Dr Oliveri said the discovery demonstrated the "richness and unpredictability of the region's archaeological landscape". "Its monumental scale and strategic location raise important new questions about the ancient landscape of Sirkap and the wider Gandhara region." The Khyber PATH project has been ongoing for a year at eight archaeological sites across KP from Swat to the Khanpur-Taxila region. — DNA

Italy and Museums. It is supervised by KP Director General of Archaeology and Museums Dr Abdul Samad. Italian NGO ISCOS provided logistical and financial support for the project. Workers dig at the excavation site at Jandial in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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The feedback from our existing members has been very positive and we're looking forward to a strong season. "Entries for our Qualifying Schools have been fantastic. Greg's score, and every one of the top 10 at Dalmahoy breaking par in tough conditions, shows the level of golf coming through our ranks. "We saw last season what a talent Michael is, and to record that result at the Home of Golf is a credit to the hard work he's put in." Waters added: "It's great to see players develop through the MENA Golf Tour in the same way Matthew Fitzpatrick and Robert MacIntyre did. Young professionals need international experience in a competitive environment, so it's no surprise to see our players doing well when they step up a level."

Ali Amin
Gandapur
targets KP
CM Afridi

FROM PAGE 01

office, on what conditions you came, and who brought you," Gandapur can be heard in the audio. He alleges that CM Afridi had failed to launch an expected move on November 26 last year because he had been "managed" and had reached a deal.

Iran Guards
say struck
tanker...

FROM PAGE 01

Maritime trackers also reported on Friday that an unknown projectile sparked a fire aboard a ship off the UAE coast, but named a different vessel. In a statement carried by official media, the Guards said Iranian forces "have taken control of the administration of the strait". "In carrying out this mission, a few hours ago, a giant LPG carrier named NV Sunshine, owned by Nat-Wit, which was attempting to transit via the illegal route south of the Strait of Hormuz, was struck," they added. Britain's UKMT maritime agency said on Friday that a ship 13 nautical miles (24 kilometres) off the UAE's Al Jazeera Al Hamra, southwest of the strait, was struck by a projectile, which caused a fire on board.

US imposes
curbs on
criminal...

FROM PAGE 01

Hague-based tribunal. "Either the ICC will end its threats, or we will end the ICC," Rubio said in a statement, claiming that the court wants more power at the expense of American sovereignty. Rubio's statement did not mention Pillay or the Nobel award. Instead, he said the sanctions were needed to protect security personnel and elected officials from prosecution by a court the United States has never joined. "President Trump will never allow the International Criminal Court to prosecute Americans," Rubio said, adding that the measures would cut off the court's resources and cripple "its ability to operate".

PIA flights
to Riyadh
suspended

FROM PAGE 01

Meanwhile, 104 flights arriving at or departing from Riyadh airport were cancelled and 154 were delayed on Friday, according to Flightradar24. The website's data showed that 335 flights had been cancelled on Thursday. Flightradar24 shows the lack of flights arriving or departing from Riyadh airport. — Screenshot Flightradar24

PIA's decision follows similar moves by several other airlines, including Lufthansa Group and three Indian carriers, which suspended flights to Riyadh on Thursday.

Pilot among
3 Saudi
nationals
killed

FROM PAGE 01

Separately, the kingdom's national carrier confirmed that a Saudia Airlines pilot was killed, and an aircraft was damaged at Riyadh airport. "It is with profound sadness that Saudia announces the passing of Captain Hamoud Ali Alkalthami," the Saudi flag-carrier said in a statement, citing an "incident" at King Khalid International Airport. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said on Thursday they had attacked the airport with two cruise missiles. The group also said it had targeted an airport in the southwestern city of Najran, a claim Saudi authorities have not confirmed, and an airbase in Khamis Mushait with ballistic missiles. The Houthis say they are targeting the kingdom over its support for government forces in Yemen's reignited civil war. Saudi Arabia says it is backing an offensive by Yemen's UN-recognised government to take back territory from the Houthis.

MENA Golf Tour confirms Cairo start of 2026-27 season

Michael Stewart, 20th on last season's MENA Golf Tour Rankings, made the most of a sponsor's invitation to the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship earlier this month, closing with a 66 on the Old Course to finish tied fourth alongside Tommy Fleetwood

DNA

DUBAI: The MENA Golf Tour will open its 2026-27 season in Cairo with three tournaments at Madinat Golf Club and New Giza Golf Club between Nov. 28 and Dec. 10, with membership for the new season opening on Oct. 22. Both courses hosted the tour last season, when Juan Salama set a course record 60 on his way to a wire-to-wire victory at Madinat, and Lauri Kuuska closed with a 62 to win at New Giza. The season will feature a minimum of 12 tournaments and at least \$1.2 million in prize money, with every event carrying a minimum \$100,000 prize fund and \$18,000 to the winner. The cut falls after 36 holes at

the top 60 and ties, with every player who makes it receiving prize money and Official World Golf Ranking points. Further tournaments, including events in Morocco and the UAE, are yet to be announced. Greg Dalziel won the first of the tour's three Qualifying Schools, at Dalmahoy in Edinburgh, with an 11-under-par two-round total, and all of the top 10, who earn a place in every 2026-27 tournament, finished under par in challenging conditions. Two Qualifying Schools remain, at Slammer & Squire, World Golf Village, Florida (Oct. 13 to 15) and the Royal Automobile Club, Epsom (Oct. 20 to 21). Leading players on the 2026-27 MENA Golf Tour Rankings will have a clear route to the next level, with exemptions onto the HotelPlanner Tour and

into the DP World Tour Qualifying School, and invitations to HotelPlanner Tour events throughout the season. Last season's rankings winner, Chris Wood, sealed his HotelPlanner Tour card and won his first start of the season at the Italian Challenge Open in May. Michael Stewart, 20th on last season's MENA Golf Tour Rankings, made the most of a sponsor's invitation to the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship earlier this month, closing with a 66 on the Old Course to finish tied fourth alongside Tommy Fleetwood. Keith Waters, chairman and commissioner of the MENA Golf Tour, said recently: "We've chosen to start in Cairo, on courses our players already know, to keep travel and costs down for them.

Briefs

Chaotic scenes as police, youths face off

BRUSSELS: Hundreds of youths faced off with riot police in the streets of Brussels Friday in chaotic scenes on the sidelines of a workers' march, with officers firing water cannon and tear gas at the crowd.

Some 30,000 people turned out for the national strike against government austerity measures, police said, with tensions running high after days of student protests inspired by those in France.

Police said they deployed water cannon and tear gas after being targeted with sticks and bottles by young people on the edge of the protest, taking place in the city's central tourist district.

"Several hundred youths gathered along with the demonstrators," police said in a statement. "The atmosphere gradually became more tense and there were serious disturbances to public order." Police said the main trade union march had gone ahead peacefully.

But an AFP team on its sidelines witnessed groups of youths — numbering hundreds in total — facing off repeatedly with police as tear gas filled the air.

High-school students from Belgium's French-speaking community have been demonstrating against education budget cuts — inspired in part by protests across the border in France.

Several days of demonstrations in the city of Liege — the epicenter of the protests — descended into violence, with some 200 arrests carried out and dozens of police officers wounded. Friday's day of action was the latest in a series of strikes in recent months against efforts by Prime Minister Bart De Wever to save 10 billion euros (\$11.2 billion) over the next few years in a bid to reduce the country's high deficit. The Flemish conservative is currently locked in protracted talks with his coalition partners to try to find a deal on the cuts by October 13.—APP

India in talks with KSA for investment in strategic port projects

NEW DELHI: India is in talks with Saudi Arabia for investment in its strategic port projects and closer co-operation in shipbuilding and seafarer training, the Indian shipping minister said following a meeting with Saudi Ports Authority President Suliman Al-Mazroua. New Delhi is hosting South Asia's largest maritime conference, Sagarmathan: The Great Oceans Dialogue 2026, which concluded on Friday after gathering over 1,200 speakers and participants from more than 70 countries.

On the sidelines of the event, Sarbananda Sonowal, India's minister of ports, shipping and waterways, held bilateral talks with various government officials, including Al-Mazroua, who also participated as a speaker. "The historical trade ties between India and Saudi Arabia are rapidly transforming into a dynamic, modern maritime partnership," Sonowal said on X after the talks. "We discussed setting up a joint working group to further collaboration in the maritime energy sector, port investments & seafarer capacity building." More specifically, Sonowal and Al-Mazroua discussed "Saudi participation in Indian port projects such as Vadhavan and Galathea Bay," according to a statement issued by the Indian Shipping Ministry, suggesting that the Kingdom may do so through India's Maritime Development Fund. Developing the ports in Vadhavan and Galathea Bay is key to some of India's strategic interests, said Vanshika Saraf, research analyst for the geostrategy program at the Takshashila Institution. The Vadhavan Port, located around a four-hour drive from India's financial capital of Mumbai, is likely to "serve as an important deep-water gateway for India's trade with the Gulf," she told Arab News. "Since it is designed to accommodate ultra-large container vessels, it would help overcome some capacity constraints facing existing ports. Hence, Vadhavan is being positioned by India as a port supporting the proposed IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor), in which Saudi Arabia is a participating country."—APP

Pakistan for diplomacy, consensus at OPCW

Ambassador Shah highlighted the growing challenges facing multilateralism and underscored Pakistan's efforts to promote diplomatic engagement, secure peace and help defuse conflicts. He also briefed the council on important events organised by Pakistan in support of the Chemical Weapons Convention

THE HAGUE: Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), calling for greater reliance on diplomacy, dialogue and consensus-based decision-making to address global challenges and strengthen multilateral cooperation. The position was articulated by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Syed Haider Shah, who led the Pakistani delegation at the organisation's 113th Executive Council session held in The Hague from October 6 to 9. In his statement, Ambassador Shah highlighted the growing challenges facing multilateralism and underscored Pakistan's efforts to promote diplomatic engagement, secure peace and help defuse conflicts. He also briefed the council on important events organised by Pakistan in support of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Ambassador Shah expressed gratitude to China and Japan for facilitating the Executive Council delegation's visit to abandoned chemical weapons sites in China in September 2026. He also stressed the importance of discussions within the OPCW on emerging technologies and their implications for the convention.



Welcoming the restoration of the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic at the OPCW, he emphasised the need for consen-

sus-based decision-making to ensure the effective achievement of the convention's objectives.

Pakistan is an active member of the OPCW's 41-member Executive Council, which is based in The Hague. It continues to advo-

cate the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.—DNA

Pakistani fresh mango exports across 49 countries

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's fresh mango exports reached \$107.09 million, with shipments of 85,247 tonnes to 49 countries, according to official export figures available with Wealth Pakistan. Data from the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) shows that Pakistan exported fresh mangoes worth approximately Rs30.21 billion during the reporting period covered by the figures. The United Kingdom emerged as the largest export market by value, importing Pakistani mangoes worth \$29.92 million, with shipments totalling 8,078 tonnes. The United Arab Emirates ranked second in export value, receiving mangoes worth \$17.98 million. However, the UAE was the largest destination by quantity, importing 23,025 tonnes of Pakistani mangoes. Kazakhstan was another major destination, receiving 18,412 tonnes of mangoes worth \$13.99 million, making it the third-largest market by export value and the second-largest by quantity. Afghanistan ranked fourth in value terms, importing 14,261 tonnes of Pakistani mangoes worth \$10.75 million. Oman followed with shipments of 10,067 tonnes valued at \$7.53 million. Together, the five leading markets — the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Oman — accounted for approximately \$80.16 million, representing nearly 75% of Pakistan's total fresh mango export earnings recorded in the data. Their combined import volume stood at approximately 73,842 tonnes, accounting for nearly 87% of total mango shipments. The figures also show exports to several European, North American and Gulf markets. Germany imported Pakistani mangoes worth \$4.73 million, followed by Saudi Arabia at \$3.14 million, Norway at \$2.73 million, Canada at \$2.05 million and Qatar at \$1.50 million. Other destinations included Italy, Sweden, Japan, the United States, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Ireland, Australia, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Singapore, Greece, Spain, Malaysia, South Korea, Kuwait, Uzbekistan and the Netherlands. The export data also records shipments to Hong Kong, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Mauritius, Austria, Romania, Azerbaijan, Finland, Brunei Darussalam, Russia, Iraq, South Africa, Tanzania, the Philippines, Fiji, Turkey, Madagascar and Trinidad and Tobago. China also featured among Pakistan's fresh mango export destinations, with shipments valued at \$14,510.66 and weighing approximately 11,811 kilogrammes. Although China's import volume was considerably smaller than those of the leading destinations, its inclusion in the figures reflects the geographical spread of Pakistani mango shipments. The data highlights differences in export earnings and shipment volumes across major markets. While the United Kingdom generated the highest export value, the UAE, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan accounted for substantially larger quantities. The top five destinations collectively generated nearly three-quarters of export earnings, while the remaining markets accounted for approximately one-quarter of the total value.

Overall, Pakistan exported more than 85,000 tonnes of fresh mangoes worth \$107.09 million across 49 international markets, with the United Kingdom leading in export earnings and the UAE in shipment volume.—DNA

Fudan delegation promotes JUSTCOOL PhD programme in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A six-member delegation from Fudan University visited four leading Pakistani universities to introduce the JUSTCOOL PhD programme and strengthen academic and research cooperation between Pakistan and China. The five-year PhD programme is designed for international students, offering 90 seats annually in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Applications for the current intake are open from September 28 to November 14. The programme provides outstanding non-Chinese undergraduates with a direct pathway from a bachelor's degree to doctoral research, with instruction and supervision conducted in English. The Chinese delegation visited the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and COMSATS University Islamabad on October 5, followed by Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) and Bahria University on October 6. The delegation was led by Chen Yan, Associate Vice President and Executive Dean of Fudan University's Graduate School, and comprised faculty members and representatives responsible for international students and global partnerships. Jointly launched by Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Tongji University, the JUSTCOOL programme aims to attract outstanding international students to experience China's leading research environment and provide them with opportunities to engage in cutting-edge scientific research. A comprehensive scholarship package is available to successful students, covering tuition fees, on-campus accommodation and medical insurance. The programme also provides assistantship stipends and an additional fellowship, offering financial support to international students during their doctoral studies.—APP

Asim Ali presents credentials to King of Norway



OSLO: Pakistan's Ambassador to Norway, Asim Ali Khan (Sitara-i-Imtiaz), has formally assumed his responsibilities after presenting his credentials to King Haakon VIII at the Royal Palace in Oslo. In a statement, Ambassador Khan expressed his honour at presenting his credentials and reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Norway. He said the two countries shared a relationship based on mutual respect, goodwill and cordiality, expressing confidence that bilateral ties would continue to grow stronger.—DNA

Poultry industry needs export strategy : Haroon

LAHORE: Adviser to Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan said that Pakistan's poultry industry was playing an important role in ensuring food security, generating employment and promoting economic growth, while also serving as a vital link connecting rural areas with industry, laboratories and markets. He said that the time had come for the poultry industry to move beyond meeting domestic requirements and establish a stronger presence in international markets, for which a comprehensive export strategy was essential. Addressing the International Poultry Expo (IPEX) 2026 here at Expo Centre, he said Pakistan needed a poultry industry that could produce more efficiently, provide affordable nutrition to the people and compete effectively in international markets. He said that despite high production costs, disease challenges, energy-related pressures and uncertainty, the poultry industry had continued to invest and maintain production, reflecting its resilience and national importance. The PM's Adviser said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government was working to translate policies into practical outcomes and productive economic activity. He added that

increased investment, industrial expansion and creation of employment opportunities were the true measures of the success of government initiatives. He stressed the need to ensure uninterrupted availability of feed and other essential raw materials for the poultry industry. Decisions relating to the import of soybean and other critical inputs should be made against clear requirements and within defined timelines to provide greater certainty to the industry. Haroon Akhtar Khan said Pakistan needed to expand access to international markets for processed, packaged and branded halal poultry products. Alongside halal certification, he stressed the importance of disease surveillance, internationally recognised processing standards and comprehensive traceability systems. He said biosecurity was essential not only for protecting poultry farms but also for safeguarding export opportunities, while an efficient cold-chain system was fundamental to maintaining product quality and protecting the reputation of Pakistani brands.

"Pakistani poultry products should be of a standard that encourages international buyers to choose them repeatedly on the basis of quality and competitive value," he

said. The Adviser said that a practical export roadmap would be developed in collaboration with the Pakistan Poultry Association, covering priority markets, required approvals, production capacity and clearly defined responsibilities. Haroon Akhtar Khan said that modern technology, precision feeding, advanced genetics, early disease detection and digital monitoring could significantly enhance the productivity of Pakistan's poultry industry. He urged international partners to contribute to technology transfer, training and development of local supply chains in Pakistan. He said that greater opportunities should also be created for young people in biotechnology, engineering, food science, entrepreneurship and other areas connected with the poultry industry. He said a strong partnership between the government and industry was essential for sustainable growth of the productive sector. Clear priorities, defined responsibilities and an effective follow-up mechanism were necessary for resolving industrial issues and ensuring implementation. "The government's objective is to create a business environment where entrepreneurs can plan for the next decade rather than remain focused on the next crisis," he said.—DNA

81 tons of donkey meat exported to China via Gwadar

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese Company operated in Gwadar North Free Zone, Hangeng, has sent 81 tons of donkey meat, bones and hides to China in recent week. The three consignments, with a net weight of 27 tons each were exported to China after meeting all required standards, custom clearance, export protocols and prescribed procedures, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.

A Hangeng official told Gwadar Pro that all donkey meat was dispatched in frozen condition through ships. Under the agreed protocols, the Hangeng facility operates within a strictly controlled "only exit by air or sea" policy in the Gwadar Free Zone to ensure no by-products enter the local Pakistani market. Pakistan's first China-led top-notch construction of modern slaughterhouse for donkey meat and hide was completed at a cost of \$50 million last year. In China, there is a significant market demand for donkey meat and hides, particularly as donkey hides serve as a crucial raw material for Ejiao, a traditional Chinese medicinal product. Pakistan, the world's third-largest donkey-owning country, has a population of approximately 5.8 million donkeys.—APP

Saudi weekly consumer spending surges 23% to \$4.4b on edu outlays

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's consumer spending jumped 23.4 percent week on week to SR16.51 billion (\$4.4 billion) in the week ending Oct. 3, driven by a sharp increase in education-related outlays, official data showed. The increase in point-of-sale spending was accompanied by a 12.5 percent rise in transaction volumes to 273.92 Amillion, according to data from the Saudi Central Bank. Education spending posted the biggest sectoral increase, surging 142.8 percent to SR212.57 million, while the number of education transactions climbed 69.1 percent. Economist Talat Hafiz told Arab News "the sharp increase in education-related spending was largely seasonal, reflecting the start of the new academic year and, to some extent, the later start of some educational institutions, particularly international and foreign schools, compared with the general school calendar in the Kingdom." The increase was also driven by school and university fees and purchases of educational supplies, he said, adding that the subsequent normalization in September confirmed the temporary, back-to-school nature of the spike.—APP

Oman signs \$1.4b in investment agreements

JEDDAH: Oman has signed investment agreements worth more than 550 million Omani rials (\$1.4 billion) across tourism, real estate, education, housing and other sectors as the government seeks to attract private capital and diversify the economy. The agreements were signed at an investment forum at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre as part of "Urban October," according to Oman News Agency, or ONA. The deals span public, private and community-sector partnerships, including tourism projects, land-use agreements, housing initiatives, financing arrangements and quality-of-life developments. Oman is seeking to reduce its dependence on oil revenues under Oman Vision 2040, with economic diversification, private-sector development and investment forming key parts of its strategy. The largest agreement involves the development of the Madana integrated tourism complex by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Dhofar Tourism Co., the project's owner and developer. The investment is valued at more than 400 million rials.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan
eyes Airbus
planes,
Rolls-Royce
engines
for PIA

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: The federal government is considering potential aircraft leasing and fleet modernisation deals with Airbus and Rolls-Royce for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) following its privatisation, the commerce ministry said.

The discussions follow Pakistan's efforts last month to secure potential US financing for Boeing aircraft and engines, suggesting the government is exploring multiple international suppliers and financing arrangements to help PIA rebuild its fleet, according to The News.

The latest proposals were discussed during a meeting between Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and British High Commissioner Jane Marriott in Islamabad, according to a commerce ministry statement.

The two sides discussed possible arrangements involving Airbus aircraft and Rolls-Royce engines, including leasing options to meet PIA's immediate requirements and longer-term plans to modernise its fleet.

"PIA's direct international flights are an important commercial asset," Khan said, according to the ministry's statement. He said that restoring passenger confidence would require improvements in service quality, reliable flight operations and modernisation of the airline's aircraft fleet.

US to
livestream
army firing
squad
execution

DNA

NEW YORK: The US will livestream the army's upcoming firing squad execution of a gunman who killed 13 people at the Fort Hood military base in 2009, the Pentagon said, in what would be an unprecedented broadcast of a US execution.

Nidal Hasan, a former army psychiatrist, is set to become the first person to be executed by firing squad by the US military since 1945. The execution is scheduled for December 3 at the same sprawling Texas base where Hasan opened fire with a laser-sighted handgun in a medical facility. It comes amid heightened debate in the US over the death penalty following the botched lethal injection of a Tennessee woman last week.

"It will be livestreamed. Details will follow," a Pentagon official told Reuters, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, who championed the push to execute Hasan by firing squad, confirmed plans to livestream the execution in an X post.

UK Greens leader
Polanski loses election
amid Zionism row

The by-election to represent the Holborn and St. Pancras constituency in London after former UK leader Keir Starmer stood down was also an early test of Labour Prime Minister Andy Burnham's popularity

LONDON: The leader of Britain's left-wing Greens said on Friday he would stay on as party chief after he failed to grab a parliamentary seat in the wake of a row with Israel.

Zack Polanski, who is Jewish but has made the Greens avidly pro-Palestinian, was barred from Israel this month after his party backed a motion to define Zionism as racism.

The by-election to represent the Holborn and St. Pancras constituency in London after former UK leader Keir Starmer stood down was also an early test of Labour Prime Minister Andy Burnham's popularity.

Polanski told Britain's Sky News he would stay on as leader after coming second to Labour candidate Sagal Abdi-Wali, securing one-third of the vote compared to her 45 percent. Abdi-Wali, who arrived in Britain as a child refugee in the 1990s after fleeing war in Somalia and now leads the local council, was declared the winner in the early hours of Friday. Labour has held the seat continuously since its creation in 1983, and the contest was a two-horse race with the Greens, which have enjoyed a surge in membership since Polanski

became its leader in September last year.

The 43-year-old former actor and hypnotherapist has moved the party leftwards and made it staunchly pro-Palestinian, capitalizing on anger at the Labour government's stance on the Israel-Hamas war under Starmer.

Israel's foreign ministry announced on Sunday that Polanski was barred from the country after Green Party members backed a motion saying Zionism would be "treated as any other form of racism." The text also voiced support for the establishment of a "single democratic Palestinian State in all of historic Palestine."

It was widely condemned by mainstream UK parties, British Jewish groups and Israel's government, which called it "a clear antisemitic text." A Green Party spokesperson said they were "disappointed" with the election result but celebrated a "huge swing in one of Labour's safest seats." They said voters had "delivered a message" that "they want real change" on issues including climate change, soaring rent prices and "justice for Palestinians." - APP

Ethiopia and Pakistan agree to
enhance educational cooperation

Ambassador Dr. Oumer underscored the importance of educational cooperation, noting the growing ties between the two countries across various sectors.

He said educational cooperation is vital to bringing the two nations closer and advance shared progress in the Global South

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the education sector to further strengthen their bilateral relations. An important discussion to this end took place during a meeting between H.E. Dr. Oumer H. Oba, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, and H.E. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister for Education and Profession-



al Training, in Islamabad on Thursday. The two sides discussed key areas of cooperation, including institutional linkages, higher education, technical and vocational education, student exchanges, and research and development. Ambassador Dr. Oumer underscored the importance of educational cooperation, noting the growing ties between the two countries across various sectors. He said educational cooperation is vital to bringing the two nations closer and advance shared progress in the Global South.

Highlighting Ethiopia's young population, the Ambassador said the country is giving immense priority to skills development, including in modern fields such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and robotics. He cited the success of the 5 Million Ethiopian Coders initiative, led by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, in upskilling the country's youth and expanding its skilled workforce.

Federal Minister Siddiqui appreciated Ethiopia's economic development and reiterated the Government of Pakistan's commitment to strengthen relations with Africa, including Ethiopia. He assured the Ambassador of his full support for cooperation in higher education, technical and vocational education, and technology and innovation.

Five dead as
bottom of Istanbul
building crumbles

Fifty-five people living around the accident site have been evacuated as a precaution. According to Turkish media, the manager of a shop on the ground floor of the building said she had noticed cracks in the structure since April

ISTANBUL: Five people, including three children, were killed in an Istanbul building collapse that saw the bottom storeys crumble and the top floors remain perched on the rubble, officials said on Friday.

The collapse occurred early Thursday on the Asian side of the sprawling metropolis, the city governor's office said.

"Search and rescue operations in the area under the rubble ... ended after the

discovery of the last victim's body at 6:15 am (0315 GMT)," the city governor's office said. Two girls aged five and 10, a boy of 12 and two other people died in the collapse, while nine people were pulled alive from the rubble. The collapse saw the bottom three storeys cave in, with the top four storeys perched on top.

"The building was built in 1987," Nuri Aslan, Istanbul deputy mayor, told reporters. "The basement, ground floor and first two floors were built in accordance with the norms at the time, but the other floors were added later."

Fifty-five people living around the accident site have been evacuated as a precaution. According to Turkish media, the manager of a shop on the ground floor of the building said she had noticed cracks in the structure since April.

Local media estimate that up to 1,200 structures in Istanbul could collapse because of faulty construction or materials. In August an empty building collapsed in the city without causing any casualties. - APP

Malaysia closes schools
in parts of country

Malaysia's King Sultan Ibrahim weighed in on the matter on Thursday, saying schools should be closed as air quality readings reached 150 or higher on the Air Pollutant Index (API).

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia closed schools in Kuala Lumpur and other parts of the country on Friday, the education ministry said, as haze from fires in neighboring Indonesia pushed air quality to unhealthy levels.

"I have instructed all state education departments and district education offices to continue monitoring the haze situation and to take immediate action should conditions require it," Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek said in a statement.

"I also understand that any decision to close schools will affect the daily affairs of parents," she added in the statement, which listed fully or partially closed schools in five states, as well as two federal territories.

"In the future, we will ensure that any decision to close schools is notified in advance so that parents have sufficient time to prepare," Fadhlina said late on Thursday.

Air quality in Kuala Lumpur remained firmly in "unhealthy levels" this week, with a Swiss-based air quality monitor ranking the Malaysian capital among the world's most polluted cities on most days.

Malaysia's King Sultan Ibrahim weighed in on the matter on Thursday, saying schools should be closed as air quality readings reached 150 or higher on the Air Pollutant Index (API).

Under Malaysian guidelines, API readings above 200 are classified as very unhealthy, above 300 as hazardous, while readings beyond 500 constitute the threshold for declaring a local emergency.

Kuala Lumpur on Friday showed a reading of around 170 API.

The city was the second-most polluted globally behind neighboring Singapore, Swiss-based air monitor IQAir said.

Arab League,
UN condemn Houthi
attacks on Saudi Arabia

The United Nations also condemned the cross-border attacks, with spokesman Stephane Dujarric citing the strikes on both airports and warning of a broader military escalation in and around Yemen. "Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law," Dujarric said

LONDON: The Arab League's secretary-general, Nabil Fahmy, on Thursday condemned the continuing Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom's Foreign Ministry said.

During a telephone call with the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Fahmy said the security of the Kingdom was integral to the security of the wider Arab world. They also discussed the latest regional developments and ways in which the league might strengthen its response to challenges across the region.

Their talks took place shortly after Saudi Civil Defense said falling debris from an intercepted Houthi ballistic missile damaged a kindergarten and a medical complex in Riyadh on Thursday. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Earlier in the day, the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen said it intercepted two Houthi ballistic missiles targeting Riyadh and a third aimed at Khamis Mushayt.

Attacks by the Iran-backed Yemeni group targeting the Kingdom have escalated in recent weeks. The incidents on Thursday came a day after strikes on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and Abha International Airport in which three people were killed and 36 injured, according to figures from Saudi civil aviation authorities.

The United Nations also condemned the cross-border attacks, with spokesman Stephane Dujarric citing the strikes on both airports and warning of a broader military escalation in and around Yemen. "Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law," Dujarric said. He urged all parties to uphold their obligations and take precautions to protect civilians and the infrastructure they rely on.

"We remain deeply concerned about the ongoing military escalation in and around Yemen, with intense fighting across multiple frontlines, including around Taiz," he said. "We underscore that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law." Meanwhile, fighting between the Houthis and Yemeni government forces has intensified along Yemen's western Red Sea coast recently, including areas close to the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, a key route for international shipping. - DNA

Modi wants
India to
power the
AI age

MUMBAI: The view from Indian engineer Tushar Shetty's Mumbai apartment captures a tension playing out around the world as the artificial intelligence boom fuels an unprecedented data-center building spree.

What was once a stretch of lush greenery outside his 21st-floor window is now a scar of red earth where trees were felled to make way for an Amazon facility that forms part of the tech giant's planned \$21 billion investment in AI infrastructure in India by 2030.

"I would not have bought the house if I had known," said the 46-year-old, lamenting a purchase made just five months ago.

From the suburbs of Virginia to the outskirts of Amsterdam and Dublin, residents have increasingly rebelled against the spread of AI data centers, complaining of noise, surging electricity consumption, water stress and industrialization of residential neighborhoods. That resistance is gaining ground in India, where Amazon, Google and Microsoft are pouring billions into facilities that advance Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambition to host "the whole world's data," stretching from Maharashtra in the west to Andhra Pradesh in the south. - APP

Gaza
rescuers say
Israeli fire
kills seven

JERUSALEM: Gaza's civil defense rescue service said on Thursday that seven people were killed in separate Israeli strikes throughout the day, while the Israeli army said three of the victims were "military operatives." Six of the seven were killed in various parts of Gaza City.

Two people were killed in a drone strike on a car, while one was killed in a drone attack on a tent in an encampment for displaced people, the rescue service and Al-Shifa hospital said.

The Israeli army told AFP that the three targeted were "military operatives in terrorist organizations."

"Two people, a woman and a child, were killed and others were wounded when Israeli aircraft bombed a residential building" in Gaza City, the civil defense said. A woman was also killed by artillery shelling in Gaza City, health officials reported. - APP