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Pakistan values its relations with the SCO: Ishaq Dar

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To deal with Iran issue requires patience: Naqvi

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Aurangzeb reviews gas roadmap

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Military spokesperson says

Pak may review military help to Yemen if requested

ISPR Chief Lt Gen Chaudhry warns Makkah pact's collective deterrence could come into play if talks fail in Middle East

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said Pakistan may "evaluate" any request for direct military support from Yemen's internationally recognised government, as Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia continue. "I think not in my knowledge that there has been any formal request. If there is any request, then that is for the government of Pakistan to evaluate that and respond to that," he said in an interview with Independent Arabia on Sunday, when asked whether Yemen's government had sought support from Pakistan. The ISPR chief warned that the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement's (MJDA) collective deterrence could come into play if negotiations fail and military confrontation follows in the Middle East. "If we are unable to come to a negotiated outcome and we turn into a military conflict, then this instrument of collective deterrence of the Makkah alliance will definitely come into play, as it is coming into play," Lt Gen Chaudhry said. The MJDA between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye advanced significantly in a short period, he said, adding that the pact represented the combined thinking of the three countries. The regional powers signed the MJDA on August 7 during the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit for Joint Defence. Under the pact, an armed attack against any one of the three countries would be regarded as an attack against all three. Lt Gen Chaudhry said that Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and territorial integrity remained a foremost priority for Pakistan, adding that the protection of Islam's two holiest sites was equally important. Reiterating that Pakistan's position was clear and

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US-Iran peace efforts require patience

Makkah defence pact aims to promote peace rather than war, Naqvi tells Global Security Forum

DNA

WASHINGTON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said achieving peace between the United States and Iran requires patience, trust and sustained efforts, stressing that lasting peace cannot be secured in a single meeting. Addressing the Global Security Forum in Doha on Monday, Naqvi said Pakistan had made every possible effort to bring Washington and Tehran to the negotiating table. He added that there were moments when tensions escalated sharply, but Islamabad did not give up its efforts. His remarks came amid mounting regional tensions, as Yemen's internationally recognised government forces continue to fight Houthi rebels, who are also targeting Saudi Arabia. The kingdom reported intercepting four drones on Saturday, followed by further interceptions on Sunday, amid repeated Houthi attacks. Meanwhile, efforts to revive US-Iran dialogue remain stalled, with both sides at odds over the terms for resuming negotiations.

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Briefs

Punjab govt to ban spying objects

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab government decided on Monday to ban objects equipped with hidden cameras and recording devices, including pens, eyeglasses and watches. A statement by the Punjab Home Department identified such objects as those "used for spying" and said the decision was taken to protect the citizens' privacy and personal information, particularly those of women and children. The statement said "strict legal action" would be taken against the use, purchase and sale of "spying devices and covert electronic devices", further warning that the "illegal use" of objects equipped with hidden cameras would result in "severe penalties". The statement also mentioned that complaints had been received about the use of "spying devices" for "illegal surveillance, harassment and blackmailing".

India extends detention of opposition leaders

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: A New Delhi magistrate extended the detention of two leaders of India's youth-led Cockerroach Janta Party (CJP) movement by two days on Monday, after they were remanded in custody five days ago. CJP activists and opposition parties have defied a security crackdown to demand the resignation of India's chief election commissioner, accusing the poll body of manipulating voter rolls to benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party. The commission, which oversees voting in the world's most populous nation, has denied any wrongdoing.

CDF Munir, new Saudi envoy stress stronger defence ties

ISPR says Field Marshal congratulates Dr Albugamy, expresses hope for stronger Pak-Saudi ties during his tenure



STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Saudi Arabia's newly appointed ambassador to Pakistan Dr Rajeh Tami Albugamy have stressed the need to strengthen defence collaboration and strategic coordination between the two countries. The two held a meeting at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Monday, where they discussed matters of mutual interest and regional security dynamics, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. Both sides expressed satisfaction over progress made under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), underscoring the importance of strengthening defence cooperation and institutional linkages. Field Marshal Munir congratulated Albugamy on his appointment and expressed

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PM calls for FBR reforms

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed to accelerate the pace of reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). He was chairing a meeting regarding the Federal Board of Revenue in Islamabad today. The Prime Minister highlighted that the initial results of the ongoing reforms in the FBR are encouraging. He further emphasised the need for continuously improving the FBR's capacity to address the tax gap, with a special focus on technology, effective training, transparency and accountability. He also directed the acceleration of the implementation of a faceless system in tax collection areas. Shehbaz Sharif said FBR officers must improve their performance in line with the expectations of the nation.

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Karachi reports polio case

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A polio case has been reported in Karachi's East district, taking the 2026 nationwide tally of the crippling disease to seven, the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) confirmed on Monday. The port city had last reported a polio case in December 2024. According to the NEOC, five cases have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and two in Sindh so far this year. The NEOC stressed that polio is an incurable disease and vaccination is the only way to prevent it.

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Romanian Ambassador highlights security, defense cooperation

Ambassador Stoenescu commended Pakistan's efforts in promoting regional peace and stability and recognized the dedication and sacrifices of Pakistani military personnel in combating terrorism and supporting international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Marking Romania's Armed Forces Day, Romanian Ambassador Dan Stoenescu paid tribute to the courage, professionalism, and dedication of the Romanian Armed Forces while reaffirming Romania's commitment to collective security, regional stability, and international partnerships. Addressing distinguished guests, including Air Marshal Shakeel Ghazanfer, Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Projects) of Pakistan, the Ambassador noted that October 25 is one of Romania's most significant national celebrations, dedicated to honoring the achievements and sacrifices of servicemen and women throughout the country's history and those currently serving under the Romanian flag. The Ambassador emphasized that, as a member of both NATO and the European

Union, Romania considers the transatlantic partnership a cornerstone of peace and security in Europe. He underlined that more than seven decades of cooperation between North America and Europe have contributed significantly to stability, freedom, and democratic development across the continent. Discussing the evolving security environment, Ambassador Stoenescu highlighted the profound impact of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine on European defense policies. He noted that Romania has responded by pursuing an ambitious defense modernization agenda and aims to increase investments in defense and security over the coming years. He outlined Romania's ongoing efforts to strengthen its military capabilities through investments in air and missile defense systems, combat aviation,

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Army major martyred, four terrorists killed in Balochistan Ops

Security forces convoy targeted with IED during clearance operation in Gwadar, says military's media wing

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan Army major was martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in Balochistan's Gwadar while security forces killed four India-sponsored terrorists in an operation conducted in Kalat district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday. According to the military's media wing, security forces conducted a series of op-

erations in Shadi Kaur area in Gwadar and Jattakabad in Kalat district on Sunday on the reported presence of terrorists. The first engagement came when security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in Jattakabad, effectively targeting a militant hideout, the ISPR said. During the IBO, security forces killed four militants and recovered a large quantity of weapons and ammunition during the operation, it added.

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Myanmar and Pakistan share a promising future (P-1)

Exclusive Interview with H.E. Wunna Han, Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In an exclusive interview with Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline, and DNA News Agency, H.E. Wunna Han, Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan, shared his perspective on the enduring friendship between Myanmar and Pakistan, highlighting opportunities for stronger economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and regional collaboration. The ambassador expressed optimism about the future of bilateral relations and emphasized the importance of transforming historical goodwill into meaningful partnerships in trade, education, tourism, and investment. Ambassador Wunna Han noted that Myanmar and Pakistan enjoy a relationship grounded in mutual respect, historical ties, and cooperation at international forums. He recalled a significant historical connection between the two countries, pointing out that Myanmar's first envoy, Ambassador U Pe Khin, had the honor of presenting his credentials to Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on August 14, 1947. He also highlighted the cultural and spiritual links connecting the nations, including Pakistan's Gandhara Buddhist heritage and the tomb of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, located in Yangon.

Discussing economic prospects, the ambassador emphasized that Myanmar presents substantial opportunities for Pakistani businesses. He identified pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, textiles, sports goods, and information technology services as key sectors where Pakistani companies can successfully expand their presence. According to him, Myanmar's growing demand for quality healthcare products and consumer goods creates favorable conditions for increased trade between the two countries. He further stressed the importance of direct business engagement, encouraging Pakistani entrepreneurs to participate in international trade fairs and exhibitions in Yangon. Such interactions, he explained, are vital for understanding local market dynamics and establishing long-term commercial relationships. He also recommended the establishment of joint ventures with Myanmar partners as an effective strategy for gaining access to local distribution channels and market knowledge.

Addressing the role of trade organizations, Ambassador Wunna Han described chambers of commerce as the driving force behind stronger bilateral economic relations. He advocated closer cooperation between the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), regional chambers such as the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Lahore Cham-



ber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), and Myanmar's Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). The ambassador proposed several practical measures to strengthen business cooperation. These include signing and operationalizing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), establishing a



permanent Joint Business Council, organizing sector-specific trade delegations, and improving the exchange of market information, tariff structures, and regulatory requirements. Such initiatives, he said, would help businesses in both countries better understand available opportunities and navigate trade procedures more effectively.

To be continued

Two convicts sentenced to death

SARGODHA: Additional District and Sessions Judge Naveed Iqbal on Monday sentenced two men to death in a triple murder case registered at Katha Sukhral Police Station. According to the prosecution, the accused, Suleman and Ahmed, had allegedly killed Laiba, Alyas and another person in a firing incident near Fazal Elahi Narri Road following a minor dispute. The court awarded the death penalty to both convicts and imposed a fine of Rs 5 million on each.—APP

New polio case reported from Karachi

KARACHI: Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Sindh has said that a new case of polio has been reported from Karachi East District in Sindh province. According to the Sindh EOC the total number of polio cases in 2026 in the country has reached seven. Out of the seven polio cases reported this year, five are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and two from Sindh. It added that the last polio case from Karachi was reported in December 2024. It further said that polio is an incurable disease but it can be prevented through vaccination. The Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign will be conducted from 2 to 8 November 2026. The EOC said that the campaign will be conducted in 97 districts across the country including all districts of Karachi. Over 23.9 million children under five years of age will be vaccinated against polio. The EOC urged the parents to ensure that their children receive polio drops during every campaign and complete the full immunization course on time, alongside the polio vaccine. All segments of society are urged to play their full part in supporting efforts to eradicate polio, it added.—APP

Daily wheat release raised to 4,000 tonnes in KP

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Department has increased the daily wheat release quota from 3,000 to 4,000 metric tonnes following a Peshawar High Court decision and directions from the Cabinet Oversight Committee. The additional 1,000 metric tonnes will be supplied to operational flour mills from the National Reserve Centre (NRC) warehouses in Azakhel to ensure timely utilisation of stored wheat and prevent further losses. According to a notification issued by the Food Department, the additional wheat quota will be distributed among all districts in proportion to the province's population of 43.84 million. The Director Food has issued necessary instructions to all district food controllers and rationing controllers to implement the revised allocation. Under the revised arrangement, Peshawar will receive an additional 116 metric tonnes daily, followed by Mardan with 67 tonnes, Swabi with 46 tonnes, Charsadda with 45 tonnes, Nowshera with 43 tonnes and Lower Dir with 40 tonnes.—APP

Varsities must become growth engines of economy: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Monday urged universities to drive Pakistan's economic transformation through technology, innovation and research, stressing that higher education institutions must serve as growth engines of the national economy. Addressing the NUST Master Convocation 2026 as chief guest at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) main campus, the minister said Pakistan faced challenges in technological advancement, per capita income and exports, requiring structural reforms and greater adoption of modern technologies. The ceremony conferred doctoral degrees on 66 PhD scholars, while 26 undergraduate students received President's Gold Medals and 28 were awarded Chancellor's Silver Medals in recognition of their academic achievements. Ahsan Iqbal congratulated the graduating students, doctoral scholars and medal recipients, describing graduation from one of Pakistan's leading universities as an honour. He recalled that during his tenure as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in the 1990s, the NUST model was presented, and he had expressed confidence that the institution would emerge as a leading university in Pakistan and internationally. Emphasising the importance of practical contributions after graduation, the minister urged students to build projects and leave a legacy through their professional achievements, saying people were remembered for their contributions to society. He paid tribute to parents for their sac-

rifices in supporting their children's education and called on graduates to work for Pakistan's progress and prosperity in their respective fields. The minister said increasing exports was a key priority under the Uraan Pakistan programme and emphasised that universities must play a leading role in technological advancement, innovation and economic transformation. Describing the world as entering an era of disruption, he said artificial intelligence was reshaping existing systems, while political and economic dynamics were also undergoing significant changes. He stressed that meaningful reforms required a peaceful and stable environment. Pakistan had sufficient resources to change its economic trajectory, he said, adding that the country's youth could play a pivotal role in achieving this objective. He also urged universities to contribute practical solutions to national challenges and encouraged graduates to learn from setbacks and use them as opportunities for growth. Referring to the potential of Pakistan's young population, Ahsan Iqbal said the youth should be viewed as Allama Muhammad Iqbal's Shaheen (eagle), symbolising ambition, courage and the ability to rise above challenges. Earlier, Rector NUST Dr Muhammad Zahid Latif welcomed the graduates, their parents and faculty members, acknowledging the sacrifices made by families in supporting students' educational journeys. He said NUST had evolved into a leading institution committed to academic excellence, emerging technologies, leadership development and service to society.—APP

MNA Sidhu pledges to serve masses

Attends golden jubilee celebrations of Meraan Baksh baradari event in Lalamusa

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

LALA MUSA: Member National Assembly (MNA) Ch. Naseer Abbas Sidhu addressed a gathering organized to celebrate the golden jubilee celebrations of Meraan Baksh Bradari. The event was organized under the auspices of the Meraan Baksh Baradri spearheaded by its Patron-in-Chief Naseer Ahmed But, Chairman Tahir Mahmood Butti, President Sajjad Ahmed Butt and Patron Akhtar Hussain Butt. Other office-bearers were present on the occasion included Ahmed Iqbal Butt, Kashif Naseer Butt Secretary General Meraan Baksh and others. Sajjad Ahmed Butt who is also President of the PML N Lalamusa also addressed the gathering and thanked the chief guest for gracing the occasion. Addressing a gathering that included community elders, local notables, and political workers from across party lines, MNA Ch. Naseer Abbas Sidhu began by thanking the organizers. He noted that the event reflected the community's enduring respect for its forebears. MNA Ch. Naseer Abbas Sidhu, stressed that Allah Almighty created humanity for service to his creation, and that the greatest act of worship is alleviating people's suffering. He recounted lessons from his childhood under the guidance of his elder, Hakim Hafiz Gulam Muhammad, who taught him humility and respect for others regardless of status. In a notable declaration, Naseer Abbas Sidhu said he holds no personal or political grudge against any party — including PTI, PPP, or Jamaat-e-Islami — and that his team serves all citizens without discrimination. "By Allah, there is no discrimination. Whether someone is from BAP, PTI, or Jamaat-e-Islami, you are all respectable to



me," he stated, appealing to residents to bring any collective, local, or neighborhood problem to his team. On development matters, the speaker announced that the DHQ hospital has been approved and that he would push for funds this year to begin work at the local health center. He acknowledged that residents had raised concerns about the absence of a surgeon and a pediatric specialist, and confirmed that a surgeon and a children's specialist have been arranged for two days each week. He also said digital X-ray and other medical equipment have arrived at the facility. MNA Ch. Naseer Abbas Sidhu further addressed civic

issues, including a complaint about substandard gravel (Margalla liability) being used in local construction, which he said was immediately reported to the Chief Minister's Office, prompting the dispatch of an inspection team. He also recalled that when he entered the election, the city was flooded, and underscored his ongoing efforts to improve the city's condition. Reflecting on the election outcome, MNA Sidhu said life and death, success and failure, are in Allah's hands, and that divine decisions must be accepted. He expressed hope for continued development of Lala Musa and pledged to support every citizen in the next election.

MoU inked to improve medicine safety

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA) have agreed to strengthen collaboration on medicine safety awareness. They also decided to improve the reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) in Pakistan. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Dr. Akhtar Abbas Khan, Director Pharmacy Services at DRAP, and Asadullah, Technical Officer at WHO Pakistan, with Prof. Dr. Gen. Salman Ali, PPA President; Dr. Waaseem Jamalvi, PPA General Secretary; and Prof. Dr. Dure Samin Akram on the sidelines of the 28th Biennial International Pediatric Conference. The discussions focused on sensitizing paediatric consultants to the importance of reporting suspected adverse drug reactions and adverse events following immunization to strengthen medicine safety monitoring. The participants agreed that the PPA would collaborate with DRAP to promote medicine safety communication and encourage timely reporting of ADRs and AEFIs across the country. The collaboration aims to enhance awareness among healthcare professionals, strengthen pharmacovigilance practices and support efforts to improve patient safety through more effective monitoring and reporting of medicine-related risks.—APP

Punjab okays Rs 1,995b industrial uplift programme

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the 37th meeting of the Punjab Cabinet here on Monday, which approved a number of initiatives relating to industrial development, exports, agriculture, housing, healthcare and public services. The cabinet offered Fateha for the officers and personnel who embraced martyrdom during operations against terrorists. Prayers were also offered for the departed soul of the mother-in-law of Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb. The cabinet approved the features of the industrial development and export programme, presented by Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Under the PIVOT programme, an investment of Rs1,995 billion is expected, including Rs1,089 billion in government investment and Rs 906 billion in private investment. The programme is expected to generate more than 162,000 employment opportunities. The programme includes industrial infrastructure and cluster development, competitive exports, value-chain transformation, mechanisation in agriculture and livestock, public-private partnerships, solar installations and skills development. It also envisages support for existing industries, cluster infrastructure development, e-business, e-commerce, garments, plug-and-play facilities, leather and foot-

wear. Testing and certification facilities for sports goods, cutlery, hand tools and ceramics, along with a material-testing laboratory for the fan industry, are also included. Export financing for horticulture and floriculture, value addition in sweet potatoes and mangoes, and the establishment of agricultural processing parks in Sargodha, Khanewal, Okara and Bhakkar form part of the programme. Wheat value enhancement, meat and milk value chains, tourism, aquafarming and skills development to meet domestic and international requirements are also included. The cabinet approved the establishment of horticulture authorities in 20 districts. The chief minister reiterated her resolve to establish Parks and Horticulture Authorities in every district of the province. The cabinet approved subsidies for Phase V of the Chief Minister's Green Tractor Programme for the high-power category. More than 250,000 applications have been received under the scheme.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Famous artist Jamal Shah along with visitors taking interest in paintings of Irfan Mumtaz during the exhibition of his work "Denmark Series" at Islamabad Art Gallery.

Water seamless transit mega projects reshaping city

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi is undergoing a magnificent infrastructural transformation as the provincial government fast-tracks several multi-billion rupee projects designed to permanently resolve chronic water shortages, modernize municipal services, and overhaul transit connectivity. Flagship schemes such as the Daducha Dam, the Rawal Dam bulk water supply pipeline, Chhahn Dam Water supply project, the 38-kilometre mighty Rawalpindi Ring Road and strategic urban underpasses are systematically tackling the city's mounting supply-demand deficits while redirecting heavy transit away from congested commercial districts to alleviate everyday civic burdens. Detailing the sweeping administrative efforts, Commissioner Salman Ghani in an exclusive talk with APP highlighted that

the Punjab government is vigorously executing multiple mega projects to expand the city transit links and address the critical demand-supply gap. "To combat long plagued water shortage challenges, he elaborated that Rawalpindi's current available water supply stands at 51 million gallons per day (MGD) against a total requirement of 72 million gallons, a deficit that is planned to be bridged and expanded to 83 MGD over the coming years through comprehensive initiatives", he said. The commissioner highlighted that the Daducha Dam project has reached advanced completion stages standing at 92% physically completed, with a target to finish remaining civil works, including spillways, bridges, and intake/outlet structures, by the end of this year. To a question, Salman Ghani informed that to bridge the sup-

ply-demand deficit, the Punjab government has approved PC-1 for a surface water treatment plant, a 28 km water supply line, and a comprehensive distribution network yielding 35 MGD, which will be shared equally between Rawalpindi City and its two antonment areas. In addition to major water reservoirs, he highlighted that rain harvesting systems are being actively promoted to conserve rainwater. "Initial implementations already underway across select residential areas in Murree and Rawalpindi", he said. Nearly 1500 prototype water harvesting initiatives have been successfully completed in Murree. Addressing additional measures to counter the depleting water table, he informed that a new pipeline project from Rawal Dam to Rawalpindi is progressing swiftly. The project involves laying a new pipeline system to accelerate the city's surface water intake from Rawal Lake. On road expansion, traffic management and enhanced connectivity with Islamabad, he highlighted that the Rawalpindi Ring Road (RRR) serves as a primary milestone. He observed that the 38.3 km highway connecting GT Road to the M-2, M-1.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days	
OCTOBER	
Oct 01/China	National Day
Oct 01/Cyprus	National Day
Oct 01/Republic of Korea	Armed Forces Day
Oct 01/Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Oct 02/Guinea	National Day
Oct 03/Germany	Unification Day
Oct 03/Republic of Korea	National Foundation Day
Oct 05/Indonesia	Armed Forces Day
Oct 06/Egypt	Armed Forces Day
Oct 09/Uganda	Independence Day
Oct 12/Spain	National Day
Oct 23/Hungary	National Day
October 24/United Nations	United Nations Day
Oct/25/Romania	Armed Forces Day
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Pak aims to become regional hub for arbitration

He noted that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) provisions in existing Pakistani laws had limited practical implementation. He urged participants to raise awareness about available legal mechanisms and help ensure their effective implementation, encouraging them to promote ADR within their respective organisations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan aims to emerge as a credible regional hub for arbitration and commercial dispute resolution through professional capacity-building and the adoption of international best practices, said Aisha Rasool, Senior Consultant at the Ministry of Law and Justice and Project Director of the International Mediation and Arbitration Center (IMAC). She was addressing the closing ceremony of a six-day internationally accredited foundational training programme on arbitration, organised by IMAC at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad. Aisha Rasool congratulated the participants on completing the programme and emphasised adherence to internationally recognised standards, impartiality and equal opportunities for all parties to be heard during arbitration proceedings. She highlighted the importance of competent and impartial arbitrators in strengthening public confidence in dispute resolution mechanisms and boosting investor confidence. IMAC Registrar Ehsan Ullah Khan appreciated the contributions of the trainers, training organisations and participating institutions for nominating representatives to attend the programme. He noted that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) provisions in existing Pakistani laws had limited practical implementation. He urged participants to raise awareness



about available legal mechanisms and help ensure their effective implementation, encouraging them to promote ADR within their respective organisations. The training team, led by Dr Nudrat E. Piracha from the International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention (ICADRP), and the International Law Institute (ILI), USA, covered key stages of arbitration. Through case studies, simulations and interactive discussions, participants examined arbitration agreements, the ap-

pointment and conduct of arbitrators, evidentiary procedures and the enforcement of arbitral awards. Representing the participants, Muhammad Saqib Ayyaz, Member of the Anti-Dumping Appellate Tribunal, Islamabad, described the programme as a valuable learning experience that enhanced their understanding of arbitration and its practical application in dispute resolution. The programme brought together representatives from Parliament, federal and provincial governments, the judiciary, the

legal community, regulatory bodies, public-sector organisations and academic institutions. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants who successfully completed the six-day training. IMAC reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening Pakistan's arbitration and mediation framework through professional training and national and international collaboration, with the aim of improving access to justice and supporting investor confidence.—DNA

NPC marks Liaquat Ali Khan's death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Nazriya Pakistan Council (NPC) Trust has organised a ceremony at Aiwan-e-Quaid to commemorate the death anniversary of Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Shaheed-e-Millat Khan Liaquat Ali Khan, highlighting his contributions to nation-building, democratic principles and the protection of minority rights. The speakers at the ceremony paid tribute to Liaquat Ali Khan's political leadership, sacrifices and close association with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, calling for greater efforts to familiarise younger generations with the services and ideals of the country's founding leaders, said a press release issued here on Sunday. Presiding over the ceremony, Dr Farooq Adil, a distinguished intellectual and member of the Rehmat-ul-lil-Alameen Authority, expressed concern over the limited representation of national heroes in the national curriculum.

He stressed the need to preserve Pakistan's intellectual and ideological heritage, saying that education should equip young people with global knowledge while also familiarising them with the country's history, founding principles and national leaders. Chief guest Professor Khalid Jilani Tawana highlighted Liaquat Ali Khan's role in presenting the historic Objectives Resolution, describing it as a landmark in defining Pakistan's ideological direction. NPC Trust Chairman Mian Muhammad Javed recalled Liaquat Ali Khan's close association with Quaid-e-Azam and his efforts to safeguard minority rights through an agreement with India. Renowned intellectual and Iqbal scholar Syed Zaheer Gilani highlighted Liaquat Ali Khan's role in addressing the challenges faced by the newly established state, particularly refugee rehabilitation and econom-

ic difficulties. He also recalled the historic budget presented by Liaquat Ali Khan as finance minister, popularly known as the "Poor Man's Budget." Intellectual Daud Kaif recalled his spirit of sacrifice, noting that he had handed over his residence in Delhi for use as Pakistan's embassy, while senior journalist and analyst Tazeen Akhtar highlighted his political acumen during the challenging period surrounding Pakistan's independence. Renowned short-story writer Afshan Abbasi described Liaquat Ali Khan as a sincere and devoted companion of Quaid-e-Azam, saying that nations must remember those who made lasting contributions to their establishment and development. Hosting the ceremony, story writer Hameed Qaiser said commemorating Shaheed-e-Millat should serve as an opportunity to draw inspiration from his ideals, national character and struggle for Pakistan's stability. He emphasised the Trust's role in educating younger generations about the lives and contributions of national heroes. The ceremony concluded with prayers for the elevation of Liaquat Ali Khan's ranks and a renewed resolve to work for Pakistan's progress, stability and intellectual development.—DNA

9 new private members' bills introduced in Senate

ISLAMABAD: As many as nine new private members' bills including the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the National Tree Protection and Ecological Justice Bill, 2026, the Federal Prosecution Service (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Private Security Guards (Protection of Rights and Welfare) Bill, 2026, the Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 (Amendment of Section 2 and insertion of new section 10A, the Islamabad Regulation and Control of Disposable Syringes Bill, 2026 and the Islamabad Regulation.—APP

Chinese firm selected to repair N-5 sections

ISLAMABAD: China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd. has been selected to rehabilitate sections of National Highway N-5 in Sindh under a \$100 million Chinese grant funded project being implemented by the National Highway Authority (NHA), with the contract now drafted for signing following approval by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on February 27, 2026. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the project falls under the Ministry of Communications and aims to improve the condition of key sections of N-5, one of Pakistan's main transport arteries connecting major cities, commercial centres, industrial zones and agricultural markets. The rehabilitation work is expected to improve road safety and driving conditions while facilitating the smoother movement of passenger and freight traffic along the targeted sections. The project is also expected to reduce vehicle operating costs and transportation delays, improve logistics efficiency and strengthen domestic supply chains, benefiting transport operators, businesses and communities along the highway. The \$100 million grant commitment from China reflects bilateral cooperation in infrastructure development, with improved road connectivity expected to support trade, logistics and economic activity in the region.—APP

Call for data-driven policy making, innovation

ISLAMABAD: Air University Vice Chancellor Air Marshal (Retd.) Abdul Moeed Khan HI (M), emphasised the need for effective utilisation of data to promote innovation, generate new knowledge and support evidence-based decision-making in Pakistan. Addressing the 3rd International Conference on Recent Trends in Statistics, Data Analytical Sciences and AI Tech Expo on Monday, he said data was a vital resource for national development and growth, but its potential remained underutilised in Pakistan. Highlighting the conference theme, "Data, Innovation and Impact," he said data provided the foundation for creating new knowledge, exploring innovative ideas and developing solutions to complex problems. He stressed that universities and researchers should focus not merely on acquiring existing knowledge but also on generating new ideas and concepts through research, analytical thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration. VC said the growing influence of artificial intelligence was transforming human life, making it essential for Pakistan to embrace technological advancements and play a leading role in the ongoing knowledge revolution rather than simply responding to changes. He emphasised the need to improve the collection, integration and analysis of available information and apply mathematical and analytical methods to generate meaningful insights for policymakers and decision-makers. He said data-driven decisions, when based on accurate analysis and sound interpretation, could help authorities make informed choices and address challenges more effectively. Air Marshal (Retd.) Ab-

dul Moeed Khan HI (M), said Air University had introduced an interdisciplinary undergraduate programme in Statistics and Data Analytical Sciences, incorporating artificial intelligence and creative technologies, to promote emerging fields of knowledge. He expressed satisfaction over the department's progress during its first year, noting that students had enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including master's and PhD studies. He termed the students torchbearers of the initiative and urged them to pursue research, develop innovative concepts and contribute to the creation of new knowledge. The vice chancellor appreciated the department's efforts in organising the international conference and bringing together experts to discuss developments in statistics, data analytical sciences and artificial intelligence. Distinguished speakers, including Dr Ammara Nawaz Cheema, Head of the Department of Statistics and Data Analytical Sciences (SDAS) at Air University, Prof. Dr. Tasawar Hayat, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, Dr. Shahjahan Khan OAM, Emeritus Professor at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia, among others, also spoke on the occasion. The two-day conference, organised by Air University's Department of Statistics and Data Analytical Sciences, provides a platform for researchers, students, industry professionals and public-sector representatives to share knowledge and explore developments in statistics, data analytics and artificial intelligence.—DNA

Justice Hasan takes oath as Acting CJ FCCP

ISLAMABAD: Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi took the oath of office as Acting Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) here Monday. Chief Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, is on an official visit to Azerbaijan from 19 to 24 October 2026, pursuant to an invitation extended to the Court following the grant of observer status to it by the Conference of Constitutional Courts and Institutions Exercising Constitutional Jurisdiction of the Turkic World (TÜRK-AY) in July 2026. During his absence, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi will discharge the duties of Acting Chief Justice. An oath-taking ceremony was held at the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan, where Justice Aamer Farooq administered the oath of office to Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi. The ceremony was attended by the Judges of the Court, office-bearers of the legal fraternity and officers of the Court.—APP

DRAP consults stakeholders on first medical devices policy

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has initiated consultations with healthcare experts, regulatory bodies and industry stakeholders to develop the country's first Medical Devices Policy. According to official sources, the objective was to promote local manufacturing, strengthening regulation and improving access to essential medical technologies. The preliminary consultation was held in line with the National Regulatory System Strategic Plan 2026-30, bringing together representatives of national organisations, including the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA), Connectech, industry bodies such as the Pakistan Engineering and Medical Devices Association (PEMDA) and the Health Devices Association of Pakistan (HDAP), as well as local medical device manufacturers and contract research organisations (CROs). The participants discussed measures to establish an enabling regulatory environment for domestic medical device production and promote evidence-based regulatory decision-making.—APP

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Briefs

FGP, PLUS
sign MoU
to advance
climate
literacy

ISLAMABAD: Strengthening climate literacy, access to justice, disability inclusion and inclusive education through institutional collaboration is the focus of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) and Pakistan Legal United Society (PLUS) at FGP's office on Monday. Muhammad Anwar, Chief Executive Officer of FGP, and Advocate Altaf Hussain Khoso, Chief Executive Officer of PLUS, signed the MoU. Shafqat Aziz and Dr. Shahbaz Tariq of FGP were also present at the signing event. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Anwar highlighted the importance of partnerships that bring together diverse expertise and institutional networks.

He said collaboration between organizations working on climate action, education, civic engagement and community development can help translate knowledge and shared objectives into practical initiatives for vulnerable and marginalized communities. Advocate Altaf Hussain Khoso emphasized the role of legal empowerment, the rule of law and access to justice in promoting inclusive development. He noted the importance of strengthening community awareness of legal rights and public services, particularly for women, persons with disabilities and other underserved groups. Under the agreement, the two organizations will explore joint initiatives in climate and environmental literacy, inclusive disaster preparedness, disability rights, gender equality, community legal awareness, entrepreneurship, green skills and youth and women's empowerment. Cooperation may also include joint publications, training programmes, research, policy dialogue and public awareness activities.

The partnership envisages practical knowledge resources, including teacher-focused green literacy materials and accessible climate literacy materials, and ensuring publications are available in Urdu and Sindhi. The organizations will also explore opportunities for joint resource mobilization, institutional capacity-building and community outreach, with specific activities to be developed through mutually agreed work plans.—APP

HSA holds
breast cancer
awareness session

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad has organized a breast cancer awareness session under its Pinktober 2026 campaign to promote early detection, breast health education, and preventive practices among future healthcare professionals. The session was organized by the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, with active participation from faculty members and students of the first batch of BS Midwifery. The event brought together faculty members, experts from the Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL) and medical professionals to highlight the importance of breast cancer awareness, timely diagnosis and access to appropriate healthcare. A practical demonstration of breast self-examination (BSE) was also conducted to familiarize students with breast health awareness and encourage proactive health practices. Addressing the participants, the HSA Vice Chancellor emphasized the importance of raising awareness, promoting early diagnosis and strengthening collective efforts to address breast cancer. The session reaffirmed HSA's commitment to health education and empowering future healthcare professionals to promote awareness and preventive care in their communities.—APP

Zikria urges youth to
embrace entrepreneurship

Senior Vice President ICCI, Mohammad Ashfaq Chatha, briefed the students on the Chamber's role in representing the business community and facilitating commercial activities. He underscored the importance of connecting educational institutions with business organizations to enhance students' understanding of entrepreneurship, commercial practices and available business opportunities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, has urged students to embrace entrepreneurship, develop innovative business ideas and establish start-ups, emphasizing that young people should aspire to become job creators rather than job seekers to contribute to Pakistan's economic growth. Addressing a delegation of B.Tech students from International Maarif Schools, headed by Principal Dr. Zarfishan Adnan, at the Chamber House, he welcomed the students and described ICCI as a platform for learning, mentorship and business guidance. He assured them of the Chamber's support in exploring startup opportunities, understanding available youth financing schemes and developing practical business ventures. Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia emphasized that young people should recognize their entrepreneurial potential, acquire practical skills and pursue their business ideas with dedication and perseverance. He encouraged students to explore market opportunities and seek guidance to transform innovative concepts into viable enterprises, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship in employment generation and economic development. Principal Dr. Zarfishan Adnan said the visit aimed to familiarize students with ICCI's functions, certification and facilitation services, entrepreneurial opportunities and the working environment of the business community. She highlighted the importance of



understanding commercial operations, including imports, exports and distribution, to prepare students for future business ventures. She also thanked the ICCI leadership for hosting the delegation and providing students with valuable practical exposure. Senior Vice President ICCI, Mohammad Ashfaq Chatha, briefed the students on the Chamber's role in representing the business community and facilitating commercial activities. He underscored the importance of connecting educational in-

stitutions with business organizations to enhance students' understanding of entrepreneurship, commercial practices and available business opportunities.

Vice President ICCI, Mohammad Waqas Khan, shared valuable guidance on becoming successful entrepreneurs, encouraging students to develop practical skills, identify market needs, and remain committed to their goals and approach business challenges with confidence and perseverance. ICCI Executive Member

Abrar ul Haq and former Senior Vice President Naveed Malik also addressed the session, sharing their perspectives on entrepreneurship and business development. The interactive session provided students with an opportunity to engage with business leaders, ask questions and gain practical insights into establishing and managing successful enterprises. ICCI Executive Member Zohaib Arshad Malik and senior member Noman Bhatti were also present on the occasion.

Doctors stress infection
prevention to protect patients

ISLAMABAD: Health experts have called for stronger infection prevention and control measures in hospitals, healthcare facilities and communities to reduce the spread of infections and protect patients, healthcare workers and the public. Marking International Infection Prevention Week 2026, doctors emphasized the importance of hand hygiene, environmental cleanliness, safe medical practices and public awareness in preventing healthcare-associated infections. "Infection prevention is a shared responsibility that begins with simple but essential practices, including proper handwashing, maintaining hygiene and following safety protocols in healthcare settings," Dr Anwar Naem, a health expert said. He highlighted that healthcare-associated infections can increase complications, prolong hospital stays and place additional pressure on healthcare systems. He stressed that consistent implementation of infection prevention and control protocols can help reduce these risks and improve patient safety. "Healthcare workers must strictly follow infection control guidelines, while hospitals should ensure staff training, access to hygiene facilities and regular monitoring of safety practices," Dr Naila Saleem, a medical professional said. She underscored the importance of responsible antibiotic use, explaining that preventing infections can help reduce unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions and contribute to efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance. She urged healthcare institutions to strengthen staff training, promote a culture of safety.—APP

CDA reclaims 1,133 kanals
in E-12 after four decades

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has reclaimed 1,133 kanals of state land in Sector E-12 after nearly four decades, paving the way for accelerated development work in the sector, according to an official statement issued on Monday. The authority said the land, worth billions of rupees, was retrieved from illegal occupants on directives of Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and under supervision of CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf. The operation was carried out under the supervision of deputy director general (enforcement) and Addition-

al Deputy Commissioner (General) Dr Anam Fatima, missioner and Islamabad police, the statement said.



with the assistance of the Islamabad administration, the relevant assistant com-

The CDA said development work in E-12 was continuing at an accelerated pace

following the recovery of the land. Infrastructure work was being expedited in line with the plan to complete the sector's development within the stipulated timeframe, it added. CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf directed the relevant departments to ensure that development work in the sector was completed on time and in accordance with approved standards. He said protection of state land and timely completion of development projects in accordance with prescribed quality standards remained among the authority's priorities. The statement added that residents had appreciated the authority's efforts to remove encroachments and expressed satisfaction with the pace of development work in the sector.—DNA

Wajiha, WFP
join hands
for girls' edu,
school meals

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education Wajiha Qamar on Monday reaffirmed the government's commitment to girls' education, out-of-school children, and equitable access to quality education under PM Shehbaz Sharif's leadership. She expressed these views during a meeting with a high-level delegation of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), which called on her at the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The delegation included Ms. Ahmaren Karim, Chief of Programme Operations, GPI, WFP Headquarters, Rome; Ms. Anita Hirsch, Country Director, WFP Pakistan; Ms. Kavita Brahmabhatt, Senior Programme Policy Officer, GPI, WFP Headquarters; and Ms. Rubina Zulqarnain, Partnerships Officer, WFP Pakistan. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation in girls' education, inclusive education and the role of school meals programmes in improving school enrollment, attendance and retention, particularly among girls from disadvantaged communities. Ms. Wajiha Qamar highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to address educational disparities and bring out-of-school children, especially girls, back into classrooms through targeted interventions and inclusive education policies. She emphasized that school meals programmes could serve as an effective instrument for improving educational participation, addressing nutritional challenges and encouraging families to keep their children in school. "Educating girls is not merely an educational priority; it is a national responsibility and a vital investment in Pakistan's sustainable development and future prosperity," the Minister said. The discussions also covered Pakistan's national and international education commitments, progress in the education sector within the devolved governance framework, and opportunities to strengthen gender-responsive approaches in WFP-supported school meals initiatives. The Minister appreciated WFP's continued engagement with Pakistan and underscored the importance of stronger institutional coordination, evidence based policymaking.—APP

Naqvi praises
security
forces

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid tribute to security forces for their operations against militants in Kalat and Pasni and expressed condolences over the martyrdom of Major Wajahat Waheed, who martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Pasni. In his statement, the Interior Minister paid tribute to Major Wajahat Waheed and expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family. Naqvi said Major Wajahat had laid down his life for peace in the country and would remain immortal for his sacrifice.

He said every drop of blood shed by Major Wajahat and other martyrs served as a guarantee for the country's security and protection.

The Interior Minister said Major Wajahat would always live in the hearts of the nation. Naqvi added that the nation would always remember the great sacrifice made by the martyred officer.—APP

ABAD
appoints
Gohar as its
North Region
chairman

ISLAMABAD: The Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) on Monday has appointed Sultan Gohar, chief executive officer of Lake City Holdings, as chairman of its North Region for a two-year term, expressing the hope that his experience and leadership would contribute to the growth of the construction and real estate sectors. The appointment was approved by ABAD's Executive Committee, which nominated Gohar to lead the association's North Region for the next two years. Gohar brings extensive experience in the real estate industry, a background that ABAD expects will help advance the interests of builders and developers and support efforts to promote the construction and property sectors. The Association expressed its best wishes to Gohar on his appointment and voiced confidence that he would play an effective role in addressing industry challenges and promoting the development of the construction and real estate sectors.

The appointment comes at a time when the construction and real estate industries remain important to economic activity, investment and employment generation. The sector also supports a wide range of allied industries, including cement, steel, building materials and construction services. As chairman of the North Region, Gohar is expected to contribute to ABAD's efforts to represent the concerns of builders and developers and promote a conducive environment for investment and sustainable growth in the sector.—APP

Pakistan has
immense
tourism
potential:
Envoy

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan Pham Anh Tuan has said Pakistan has immense potential for tourism with its scenic natural beauty besides warm and hospitable people. Talking to media, the ambassador said he had visited several areas, including Hunza, Gilgit, Skardu and Swat, and was deeply impressed by the landscape. "With its beautiful scenery, Pakistan has a lot of potential for tourism," he said. The ambassador said he was impressed by Pakistan upon his arrival and found the country quite different from the perceptions he had formed before coming here. He said his stay in Pakistan had completely changed his impression, describing Pakistanis as open-hearted, welcoming and very friendly. "I very much agree with the point about the hospitality of the Pakistani people," he said, highlighting the warmth and generosity he had experienced during his stay. Reflecting on his experience, the ambassador's remarks underscored the role of people-to-people interaction and tourism in improving international perceptions of Pakistan.—APP



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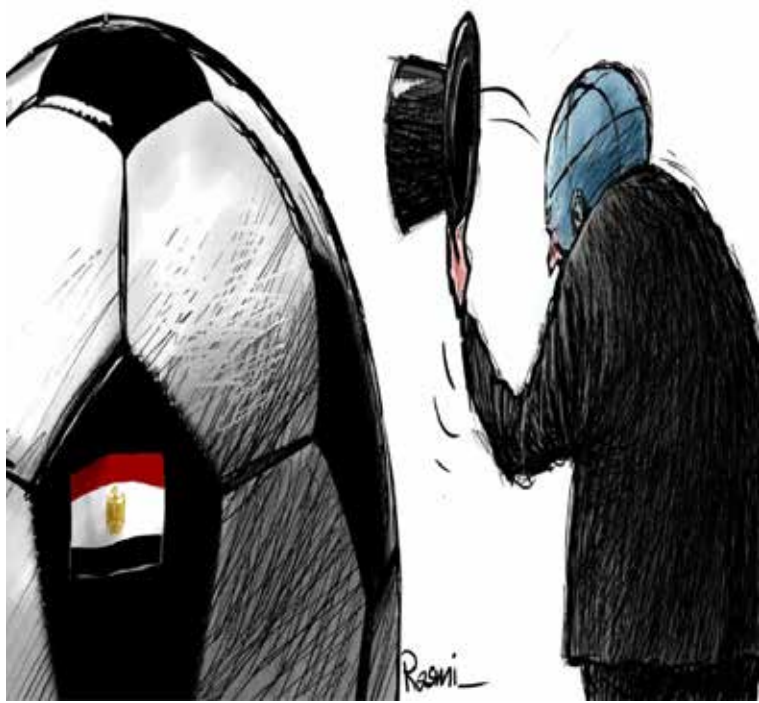
The Global South Pays More



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

THE difference in financing costs is particularly striking in clean energy. Recent international estimates show that the cost of capital for utility-scale solar projects in emerging economies can approach 13 per cent, compared with around 6.5pc in advanced economies. The technology is essentially the same. What changes is the financial environment in which it is deployed. The usual response has been to call for greater mobilisation of private capital. Private investment is certainly important, but it cannot be the sole answer. When countries are already facing high debt, currency depreciation, weak growth and climate-related disasters, asking private investors to fill the financing gap often means accepting the high risk premiums they demand.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created in a very different international environment, but their role remains crucial. They possess financial resources, privileged access to capital markets and considerable influence over the rules governing international finance. They should use that position to reduce borrowing costs directly rather than relying primarily on private investors. The IMF, in particular, can do more during periods of external shock. Developing economies need financing that expands when crises occur rather than disappearing precisely when it is most needed. Short-term emergency financing should be made more accessible, while the Fund's mechanisms for helping the poorest countries cope with disasters and debt distress should be strengthened. Special Drawing Rights provide another opportunity. The IMF's reserve asset has considerable potential to strengthen the financial position of countries facing external pressure, yet its distribution is largely linked to IMF quotas, which favour the largest economies. A fairer allocation and greater willingness to rechannel SDRs towards countries with greater financing needs would make a substantial difference. The IMF should also reconsider its surcharges. Additional charges imposed on countries that borrow heavily or for extended periods may protect the Fund's financial position, but they can also increase pressure on governments already struggling to restore economic stability. At a time when many developing economies are trying to avoid recession and protect essential spending, such charges deserve serious scrutiny. The World Bank and other multilateral development banks face a similar choice. They can continue to concentrate on attracting private capital through guarantees and other instruments, or they can make much greater use of their own balance sheets to provide long-term, affordable finance. The latter is particularly important for climate investment. Concessional financing through institutions such as



the International Development Association should be expanded. Multilateral development banks can also use their capital more efficiently without compromising their financial strength. Their callable capital and other forms of unused financial capacity should be examined as potential sources for increased lending. Guarantees have a role, but they cannot replace public finance. If a guarantee eventually has to be honoured, the financial burden may still fall on a government already carrying heavy debt. Nor does a project-level guarantee necessarily solve the deeper problems of currency instability, sovereign risk and high borrowing costs. African governments frequently borrow in dollars or euros while collecting most of their revenues in local currencies. When the local currency falls, debt-servicing costs rise even if the underlying economy has not deteriorated. This currency mismatch has become a structural weakness in African public finance. Yet Africa's borrowing costs often appear disconnected from its actual record of sovereign defaults. Risk perceptions, credit ratings and assumptions about political and economic instability can impose what has increasingly been described as an "Africa premium". The result is a striking contradiction: countries that need investment most urgently are often charged the highest price for obtaining it. Some countries face a liquidity problem and need temporary assistance. Others face a deeper solvency crisis in which their existing debt simply cannot be repaid from future revenues. Treating the latter as a temporary shortage of cash only postpones the inevitable restructuring. Debt restructuring therefore needs to become a central part of the international response. Restructuring should be timely, comprehensive and capable of bringing all major creditors into a common framework. Development and climate requirements should also be considered when assessing whether a country's debt is sustainable. The World Bank itself should reconsider how it distributes risk. Its preferred creditor status protects its loans from restructuring in many circumstances, leaving other creditors to absorb losses. This can encourage those creditors to charge higher risk premiums from the outset. The Bank also lends predominantly in major international currencies, transferring exchange-rate risk to borrowers. The international financial system therefore needs more than additional money. It needs a different approach to risk. Multilateral institutions should lend more in local currencies, accept a greater share of exchange-rate risk, provide more concessional finance and participate meaningfully in debt restructuring when countries become insolvent. The central question is not whether private capital has a role. It does. The question is whether countries with the greatest development needs should continue paying the highest price for capital. If the IMF and World Bank are serious about development, climate resilience and poverty reduction, their success should not be measured only by how much private money they mobilise. It should also be measured by how much they reduce the cost of finance for the countries they were created to serve. A global financial system that protects the cost of capital for wealthy economies while making development more expensive for poorer ones cannot remain the foundation of a fair international economic order. The real reform must begin with sharing risk more fairly.

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Democracy on trial in India and the future of Modi's rule

Muhammad Rafi



The challenges faced by Muslims in India are another important dimension of this debate. Sameerul Islam, a member of parliament from West Bengal, has appealed to the United Nations human rights authorities for assistance over the reported suspension of water supplies to approximately 5,000 Muslims in Kolkata's Jyoti Nagar Colony. He has alleged that the measure was motivated by religious and political discrimination. Reports of Muslims being denied access to essential services and subjected to discriminatory treatment raise serious questions about the protection of minority...

THE true strength of democracy lies in the people's vote, the rule of law, and equal rights for all citizens. No government can claim to uphold democratic values merely by holding elections unless it also ensures respect for dissent, protection for minorities, and the impartiality of state institutions. India claims to be the world's largest democracy, yet controversies surrounding electoral rolls, the difficulties faced by Muslims, and concerns over the safety of journalists have once again placed the governance of Narendra Modi's government under intense scrutiny. Protests in New Delhi in October 2026 against the revision of electoral rolls have heightened political tensions. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, other opposition parties, and the youth movement known as the Cockroach Janata Party have raised objections to the electoral process. According to Reuters, more than 130 million names were removed during the wider revision of electoral rolls. These included approximately 28 million deceased individuals, 63 million people who had moved elsewhere, and nearly 30 million voters whose current residence or presence could not be verified. Election officials maintain that the exercise was intended to improve the accuracy of electoral lists, while the opposition fears that the process could also deprive eligible citizens of their right to vote.

The challenges faced by Muslims in India are another important dimension of this debate. Sameerul Islam, a member of parliament from West Bengal, has appealed to the United Nations human rights authorities for assistance over the reported suspension of water supplies to approximately 5,000 Muslims in Kolkata's Jyoti Nagar Colony. He has alleged that the measure was motivated by religious and political discrimination. Reports of Muslims being denied access to essential services and subjected to discriminatory treatment raise serious questions about the protection of minority rights. Concerns relating to education, employment, religious identity, and political representation have also become part of this wider debate. Democracy requires the protection of minority rights and equal access to essential services for every citizen, without discrimination. However, concerns about the functioning

of democratic institutions and the treatment of minorities in India continue to grow.

The detention of journalists and alleged mistreatment during the electoral protests have also raised concerns about press freedom. According to Reporters Without Borders, around 40 journalists covering demonstrations against the electoral roll revision on October 10 and 11 were detained in different cities. The organisation expressed concern over reports of alleged physical abuse, the confiscation of mobile phones, and damage to journalistic equipment. The Committee to Protect Journalists also condemned the reported incidents and stressed the need to protect journalists and safeguard their ability to report freely. The challenges confronting journalists are not limited to the recent protests. Concerns have previously been raised over incidents in which journalists in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir were summoned by police and allegedly harassed. Muslim women journalists also face religiously motivated and gender-based harassment, online character assassination, and threats. Such incidents raise broader questions about the protection of press freedom and the ability of journalists to work without intimidation.

The transparency and security of electronic voting machines (EVMs) are another major aspect of the questions being raised about India's electoral system. Opposition parties have openly expressed reservations about the use of these machines, the verification of results, and the impartiality of the electoral process. The Election Commission of India maintains that EVMs are stand-alone devices, are not connected to external networks, and allow voters to verify their choices through Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips. However, public confidence in an electoral system requires more than official assurances; it also depends on transparency, independent verification, and effective accountability. Against this backdrop, reports of repeated objections by two members of the Election Commission to decisions concerning the electoral process have further intensified the debate over its impartiality.

An investigative report published in September 2026 stated that the two members had expressed reservations about the electoral process and re-

lated decisions on at least 14 occasions over a period of ten months. These revelations added momentum to protests led by opposition parties and youth groups, with calls growing for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to resign. Although the Election Commission described its decisions as unanimous, the reported objections raised further questions about its transparency and impartiality. Against the backdrop of the Bharatiya Janata Party's electoral victories, concerns about public confidence in the electoral process have continued to mount. The growing participation of students and ordinary citizens in the protests suggests that the issue has moved beyond a dispute between political parties and become a matter of wider public debate.

In these circumstances, an important question arises: can the current protests pose a genuine political challenge to the Modi government? Rahul Gandhi has emerged as a prominent opposition voice, while the youth movement has sought to link the electoral controversy with broader public discontent. Nevertheless, the scale or intensity of protests alone cannot be regarded as a certain indication that the government is nearing its end. For Rahul Gandhi to emerge as an effective political alternative to Narendra Modi, he will need more than criticism of government policies. He must also present a clear national programme and build broad-based public confidence. Meanwhile, recurring reports of Hindu extremism, hatred against minorities, and human rights violations have raised questions internationally about India's democratic credentials. Within India, secular circles are also increasingly concerned that, if religious polarisation, social intolerance, and the weakening of democratic institutions continue, the country could face serious internal conflict and communal violence. The strength of democracy in India ultimately depends on respect for the people's vote, protection of minority rights, a free press, and the equal application of the law. When public confidence in these principles erodes, democratic institutions are weakened as well. The question is therefore becoming increasingly pressing: is Modi's prolonged rule turning into a growing burden for India rather than a source of stability?

Pakistan's AI Wake-Up Call

Syed Shujahat Ali

Pakistan's freelancers now generate substantial export earnings, while the wider information technology and IT-enabled services industry bring in billions of dollars annually. Beyond these figures are hundreds of thousands of workers in business process outsourcing, call centers, accounting, data entry, customer support, graphic design and content production. But the very model that created these opportunities is now under pressure. Artificial intelligence can write marketing copy, generate designs, analyze...

YESTERDAY, a friend working at a multinational logistics company told me that his employer had laid off its entire Figma team. Another friend, who worked in content writing with a team of 15, has abandoned the industry altogether. The reason, in both cases, is the same: artificial intelligence can now perform much of the work that once required entire teams. These are not isolated stories. They are early warnings of a transformation that could reshape Pakistan's employment landscape. For years, Pakistan has celebrated its emergence as a major global freelancing hub. Government programs invested in digital skills, while platforms such as Fiverr and Upwork connected young Pakistanis to international clients. Initiatives such as DigiSkills, Ignite's technology training programs, and provincial schemes like e-Rozgar helped thousands enter the digital economy. DigiSkills alone has delivered millions of training sessions. The results have been significant. Official programme figures document the scale of this investment. Freelancing offered an escape from an economy that struggled to create enough formal jobs. A young graduate could earn dollars from a bedroom in Lahore, a small town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or a village in southern Punjab. For many, it was more than a career choice. It was a path to financial independence.

Pakistan's freelancers now generate substantial export earnings, while the wider information technology and IT-enabled services industry bring in billions of dollars annually. Beyond these figures are hundreds of thousands of workers in business process outsourcing, call centers, accounting, data entry, customer support, graphic design and content production. But the very model that created these opportunities is now under pressure. Artificial intelligence can write marketing copy, generate designs, analyze spreadsheets, answer customer queries and produce software. It does not eliminate every job in these fields, but it reduces the time, money and number of people needed to complete many tasks. Companies that once hired ten people may increasingly need three, supported by AI tools.

For Pakistan, this presents an uncomfortable question: what happens when the industries absorbing our educated but underemployed youth begin hiring fewer people? The timing could hardly be worse. The World Bank's Reclaiming Momentum Towards Prosperity: Pakistan's Poverty, Equity and Resilience Assessment, published in September 2025, warned that poverty had risen after years of progress. Its October 2026 Pakistan Poverty and Equity Brief reports that the national poverty rate increased from 22 per cent in 2018-19 to 29 per cent in 2024-25. World Bank assessment Latest poverty figures Pakistan must already contend with a rapidly growing young population, inadequate educational opportunities, brain drain, weak investment and regional inequality. Economic shocks and conflict have compounded these pressures. Now imagine AI eliminating a significant share of the jobs that have become a lifeline for educated young Pakistanis.

Where is our plan? The answer cannot simply be to train more people in the same skills that AI is making cheaper. Nor can we expect every displaced copywriter to become a machine-learning engineer overnight. We need a practical transition built around three priorities. First, move workers up the value chain. A graphic designer should learn AI-assisted visual direction, brand strategy and creative workflow management. A content writer should develop expertise in research, editorial judgement and industry-specific communication. Basic execution will become less valuable; the ability to solve problems, manage AI systems and deliver reliable results will become more valuable. India offers a useful example. Its FutureSkills Prime initiative, developed by NASSCOM and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, promotes training in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and data analytics. Pakistan should build a similar system that links training to actual employer demand, recognized certifications and job placement, not merely the number of certificates issued. Second, create a domestic market for AI. Pakistan can-

not rely indefinitely on foreign clients and freelance platforms. Federal and provincial governments should commission local technology firms to develop AI applications for taxation, agriculture, healthcare, education and public administration. Regional innovation hubs, equipped with computing resources, reliable internet and access to global payment systems, could help smaller firms compete internationally.

Estonia and the UAE offer lessons in integrating digital technology into public services. Pakistan should adapt what works to its own needs, building local capabilities rather than simply importing finished products.

Third, prepare workers for the new support industries emerging around AI. Models need data labelling, testing, evaluation, quality assurance and monitoring. Pakistani firms could specialize in Urdu and regional-language datasets, AI evaluation, computer vision and culturally informed model testing. Traditional call centers and BPO companies could transition towards more specialized services. These opportunities are not a permanent refuge from automation, but they offer a bridge to higher-value work. None of this will happen through training programs alone. It requires investment, reliable electricity and internet, predictable regulation, access to capital, stronger universities and partnerships between government and industry. It also requires measuring success by sustainable jobs and rising productivity, rather than enrolment figures and announcements. Pakistan cannot build an economy indefinitely around IMF programs, borrowing, exporting its skilled people and celebrating the remittances they send home. AI is not the enemy. Being unprepared for it is.

— Syed Shujahat Ali

Fulbright Scholar and a Civil Servant

Briefs

Pak may review military...

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unequivocal, he said that Islamabad's message had already been conveyed through the country's political and military leadership. The military spokesperson's remarks come as fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis, who control the capital Sanaa and much of the north, has escalated in recent weeks, becoming another front in the US-Israeli war on Iran. The Houthis have in recent days attacked Riyadh's international airport, Makkah and Madina amid renewed fighting in the region. The group's advances also threaten the strategic Bab el-Mandeb oil shipping route, following the collapse of a truce. According to Lt Gen Chaudhry, the Houthi attacks on Islam's holiest sites had caused deep grief and anger among the public and the political and military leadership. On the regional security situation, Lt Gen Chaudhry warned that escalating military tensions would benefit no country, saying that expanding the military conflict in the Middle East was not in anyone's interest and stressed the need to reach a negotiated settlement.

US-Iran peace efforts require...

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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that Tehran's proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within seven days remained on the table, but progress depended on Washington's response to Iran's conditions. Iran's demands include lifting the US blockade on its ports, easing sanctions on its oil exports and ending hostilities across regional fronts, while Washington wants Iran's nuclear programme addressed as a priority. Against this backdrop, Naqvi praised Qatar's diplomatic efforts to mediate between the United States and Iran, saying Islamabad and Doha had worked together to prevent further escalation in the region.

CDF Munir, new Saudi envoy...

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confidence that his tenure would further strengthen the longstanding ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The military's media wing said the relationship between Islamabad and Riyadh is rooted in shared faith, mutual trust and strategic partnership. The meeting comes a day after ISPR Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said the MJDA's collective deterrence could come into play if diplomatic efforts failed and the regional crisis escalated into military conflict. In an interview with Independent Arabia on Sunday, the top military spokesperson described the alliance as defensive in nature and said it was not directed against any particular country.

Army major martyred, four...

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Separately, security forces launched clearance operations in the Shadi Kaur area of Gwadar to eliminate other militants present in the area, the ISPR said. During the clearance operation, a security forces contingent was targeted with an IED, resulting in the martyrdom of Major Wajahat Waheed, 34, a resident of Lahore. The military's media wing said that clearance operations would continue until the remaining militants in the area had been eliminated. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to the sacrifices of armed forces, saying the nation would never forget its martyrs, who sacrificed their lives to protect Pakistan and its people. Those responsible for attacking Pakistan's soldiers must not be spared and should face the strictest possible action under the law.

Chinese firm, Sindh Authority sign MoU to promote investment cooperation

The Sindh Investment and Trade Conference 2026 took place in Shanghai, China, on October 15, 2026, led by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah

SHANGHAI: Jiang Tonland International Holding (Beijing) Co., Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sindh Economic Zone Authority of Pakistan on the sidelines of the Sindh Investment Conference in Shanghai, aiming to promote investment, facilitate business partnerships, and strengthen China-Pakistan economic and industrial cooperation. The conference sought to attract Chinese investment to Sindh, strengthen bilateral economic ties, and foster partnerships between government institutions and private-sector enterprises to support industrial development and employment generation. The organizers told Gwadar Pro that the MoU was particularly significant among the agreements signed at the Sindh Investment Conference for its focus on bringing Chinese companies to invest in Sindh's Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Under the MoU, the two parties will work together to identify potential investors, manufacturers, technology providers, and strategic business partners. Cooperation will include facilitating investor engagement, arranging business meetings and site visits, and sharing information on investment opportunities, industrial land, infrastructure, and available incentives.



The proposed areas of cooperation include manufacturing, logistics, energy, infrastructure, technology, electric vehicles, automotive components, and industrial parks. Jiang Tonland International will help connect prospective

investors with relevant stakeholders in Sindh, while the Pakistani counterpart will facilitate coordination with relevant authorities, subject to applicable laws and regulatory approvals. The MoU was signed by Amanda He, chair-

person of Jiang Tonland International, and Faisal Mujeeb, chief executive officer of the Sindh Economic Zone Authority.

It establishes a framework for introducing potential Chinese and international investors to investment opportunities in Sindh, particularly in designated special economic zones (SEZs) and other industrial and economic zones. The agreement is intended to deepen China-Pakistan business ties and encourage foreign investment and industrial development in Sindh.

It also aligns with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17, which promotes partnerships to advance sustainable development. The Sindh Investment and Trade Conference 2026 took place in Shanghai, China, on October 15, 2026, led by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Over 400 delegates, business leaders, and representatives from more than 100 Chinese and international companies and financial institutions attended the event.

It was held after a 12-year gap since the previous Shanghai investment outreach. The Sindh government signed 16 MoUs directly with Chinese companies, alongside 34 total bilateral/private-sector agreements to boost industrial modernization and job creation. — APP

Salman Agha explains century celebration in ODI tri-series opener

DNA

PAKISTAN batter Salman Ali Agha broke his silence on his celebration following his century in Sunday's ODI tri-series opener against Sri Lanka, saying the gesture was not intended to send a message to anyone. Agha marked his return to the Pakistan side with an impressive century, helping the hosts post 305 runs before securing a 37-run victory over Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The right-handed batter's performance came after a challenging period in his international career. He captained Pakistan in the opening Test against England before missing the second match and being sent home as part of a major squad reshuffle that saw seven players released ahead of the third Test.

Following his return from the England tour, Agha featured for Kingsmen Academy in the President's Trophy Grade-I, playing five matches and making headlines with an unbeaten 300 in his first outing against Markhor IT (MIT) Solutions.

He was subsequently removed as Pakistan's T20I captain, with Sahibzada Farhan appointed as his replacement. Agha was also left out of Pakistan's squad for the T20I series against Sri Lanka, which the hosts won 2-1. During the post-match media conference, Agha addressed his celebration after registering his fourth ODI century, explaining that the gesture was not intended to send a message to anyone or prove a point. Instead, the middle-order batter revealed that the celebration was dedicated to his young son, who watches cricket on televi-

sion and celebrates in a similar manner.

"I don't have enough time to message someone or prove someone wrong. I love my cricket, I love batting and I like playing for Pakistan. That was only celebration and my little son watches TV like this, so the [celebration] was for him," Agha explained. Pakistan's bowlers subsequently completed the job, restricting Sri Lanka to 268. Captain Shaheen Afridi led the attack with three wickets, while Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf and Faheem Ashraf claimed two wickets apiece.

Beyond discussing his celebration, Agha also called for greater recognition of domestic cricket, stressing that scoring runs at that level requires considerable skill and determination. "I think we don't give enough respect to our do-

mestic cricket. The conditions there are not that easy and scoring runs is not an easy job. Otherwise, everyone would go there and score runs," he said.

The batter also expressed disappointment over the tendency to downplay domestic performances, particularly when players make the transition to international cricket.

"If a player like me scores runs in domestic cricket, former cricketers say on social media that he has scored runs in domestic cricket, but scoring runs there is not that easy. You have to play well to score runs there," he added. Agha emphasised that players who consistently perform in domestic competitions deserve recognition for their efforts, citing his own journey alongside those of Saud Shakeel and Saad Baig.

Arsenal snatch late win to keep pressure on Man City as Man Utd held

DNA

LONDON: Arsenal struck late to beat Nottingham Forest and keep the pressure on Premier League leaders Manchester City on Sunday, while struggling Manchester United dropped more points in a draw at Leeds. The Gunners faced Forest a day after pacesetters City celebrated a seventh win in seven games at home to Ipswich — shrugging off the fallout from the club's guilty verdict for serious financial irregularities. Defending champions Arsenal huffed and puffed against Oliver Glasner's struggling side but finally secured the breakthrough when substitute Noni Madueke's effort found the net in the 80th minute after a deflection off Jair Cunha. The goal was Arsenal's only shot on target in a disjointed performance that lacked attacking quality, but they are showing an impressive ability to grind out results when not at their best. The 1-0 victory moved Mikel Arteta's side back up to second in the table, three points behind leaders City, while Forest, who failed to capitalize on a clutch of late chances, are now in the relegation zone. "We had to earn it until the last second," Arteta told the BBC. "They are a well-coached team and hard to break down. "We had to take risks, they are a dangerous team. We had to manage the emotional part really well. We stayed focused and the finishers made a huge impact."

Al-Khaleej stage stunning comeback to beat Al-Fateh in Eastern Province Derby

DNA

AL-HASA: Matchday 10 of the 2026/27 Saudi Pro League is officially underway, albeit under unique circumstances, with three matches from the previous round postponed because of the logistical difficulties facing teams traveling across the country amid frequent airport closures. Only one game took place on Sunday, as Al-Fateh and Al-Khaleej met in a thrilling Eastern Province derby, both sides coming off their first victories of the season last Thursday. Mourad Batna led Al-Fateh to a late 3-2 win over Al-Hazem with a stunning free kick in the dying moments, while Al-Khaleej rallied to a 2-0 victory over Al-Fayha thanks to goals from Joshua King and recent signing Mateo Benegas. King, however, was nowhere to be seen when Al-Khaleej's starting XI made it onto the Maydan Tamweel Al-Oula pitch against Al-Fateh. Alongside Musa Barrow and Pedro Rebocho, King was rested as head coach Jose Gomes opted to rotate players ahead of their match against Al-Ahli on Thursday. The gamble did not pay off initially, as it was Al-Fateh head coach Djamel Sellami who went into the break more satisfied with his side. After starting his stint at the club with a 4-0 defeat to Al-Ahli at home, things have started to turn for the better for the former Jordan national team head coach.

Saudi clubs spent \$2.3bn on player acquisitions in the last 5 summer transfer windows

DUBAI: The Kingdom's clubs spent \$407 million in the 2026 summer transfer window while the Saudi Pro League has remained sixth globally with a total expenditure of \$579 million so far this year, Asharq Al-Awsat reported recently. Al-Hilal led the spending with \$239 million, while Cristiano Ronaldo is the highest-paid player with a weekly salary of \$4.62 million, as clubs continued the investment momentum that began in 2023. The figures for the 2026 summer transfer market confirmed the strong SPL presence in the global football industry, despite a decline in spending compared to the summer of 2025. The figures were provided in the Asharq Al-Awsat — Saudi Arabia Summer 2026 report, the fourteenth edition of the sport's finance series provided by Asharq Bloomberg. Saudi clubs spent \$407 million on international contracts during the

summer transfer window alone, compared to revenues of \$105 million from selling players abroad. The Kingdom accounted for 78.7 percent of the total spending by Asian clubs on international transfers at \$517 million, and represented 66 percent of the continent's total revenue from player sales. Despite a 26.3 percent decrease in international spending compared to the summer of 2025, the figures reflect the momentum that Saudi football has witnessed since the launch of the Public Investment Fund-led project to attract top foreign players in the summer of 2023.

After spending on international transfers reached only \$26.9 million in the summer of 2022, it jumped to \$875 million in 2023, \$431 million in 2024, \$552 million in 2025, and \$407 million in 2026. This places the SPL seventh globally in spending on international transfers during that period,

behind the leagues of England, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and Türkiye. In total, the spending of Saudi clubs on international contracts during the last five summer transfer windows exceeded \$2.29 billion, compared to revenues of \$254.5 million during the same period. The report showed that the Saudi league also ranked third globally in net spending during the summer of 2026, with a total of \$464 million. Taking 2026 into account, including the earlier winter transfer window, the SPL ranked sixth globally in terms of spending with a total of \$579.5 million, behind the English Premier League, Italy's Serie A, the German Bundesliga, Spain's La Liga and the French Ligue 1. Al-Hilal continued to lead the spending among Saudi clubs during the summer transfer window, injecting \$239 million into the contracting market. It also recorded the highest net local spending of \$214.8 million, ranking fifth globally during the 2026 summer transfer window. Saudi clubs were involved in several high-profile deals, including the transfer of Brazilian winger Gabriel Martinelli to Al-Hilal for \$81.3 million, Dutchman Tijani Reynders to Al-Qadsiah for \$70.8 million, and Englishman Ollie Watkins to Al-Hilal for \$67.8 million. — DNA

Romanian Ambassador highlights security...

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naval and land forces, military infrastructure, logistics, and emerging technologies, including unmanned and counter-drone systems. He also welcomed the support offered through the European Union's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument, which is intended to help accelerate modernization programs and industrial cooperation within the defense sector. The Ambassador stressed the growing geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region, describing it as a critical area for Euro-Atlantic security. He referred to recent security challenges arising from the conflict in Ukraine, including drone-related incidents near Romania's borders, which have highlighted the need for vigilance and enhanced collective defense mechanisms. Reaffirming Romania's role within NATO, Ambassador Stoescu stated that the country remains committed to strengthening deterrence and defense measures while actively contributing to missions and operations conducted under the framework of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy. He also reiterated Romania's strong support for the Republic of Moldova's European aspirations and its efforts to maintain stability in the Eastern Neighborhood and the Western Balkans.

PM calls for FBR reforms

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He reaffirmed that the ongoing reforms are in the broader national interest and will continue without interruption. The Prime Minister also directed to take indiscriminate action against corrupt elements in the FBR. He said officers and staff demonstrating improvements in their conduct and performance should be given an opportunity to reform themselves, while there would be no place in the institution for those who persist in corruption and poor performance. The meeting was briefed on the latest progress and results of the reforms underway in the FBR, covering technology, operational systems and human resources. It was informed that the estimated tax gap has declined from six percent to five percent of GDP over the past three years as a result of the reforms. The meeting was updated that the effective use of technology has significantly reduced the discretionary powers of FBR officers. It was told that the newly recruited FBR officers are being trained at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), while in-service training programmes are also underway for serving officers. A peer-rating system has been introduced to assess officers' performance.

Karachi reports polio case

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It urged parents to ensure their children receive polio drops during every campaign and complete their routine immunisation schedule on time. The national anti-polio campaign will run from November 2 to 8, 2026, across 97 districts of the country, the NEOC said. During the campaign, more than 23.9 million children will be administered polio vaccine drops. The NEOC appealed to all sections of society to play their full part in eradicating polio and urged parents to ensure their children are vaccinated during every campaign. Pakistan recorded 31 polio cases in 2025, with KP accounting for 20 of them. The country remains one of only two where wild poliovirus transmission continues, alongside Afghanistan. Authorities said that polio eradication is a collective responsibility, while Pakistan's dedicated frontline workers ensure that vaccines reach every child; parents and caregivers play a crucial role by making sure their children receive all recommended doses, including routine immunisations. The authorities added that communities, religious leaders, and the media also play a vital role in promoting vaccination.

Mbappe hits two as Real Madrid rout Sevilla

DNA

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe scored twice including one brilliant individual goal as Real Madrid thrashed Sevilla 4-1 on Sunday to climb into third in La Liga. Arda Guler, who was fortunate to avoid an early red card for an elbow, netted a spectacular opener before Mbappe's double and a rocket from Yan Diomande as Jose Mourinho side moved above Real Betis. Mbappe's first was a sensational strike, involving a roulette on the edge of Sevilla's box, and his second a chipped Panenka penalty. Champions Barca are six points ahead of Real Madrid before next weekend's Clasico at Camp Nou after thrashing Betis on Saturday, with Atletico Madrid second, sandwiched between Spain's giants. "We played a great game... we are a team and we work to improve, we've only been together for a very short time," Mourinho told Real Madrid TV. "It's hard to have the calm that other coaches enjoy at other clubs, given the scale of Real Madrid, but we're making the most of every minute we have." Mourinho lined up with Diomande on the left in place of suspended Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior, and brought Guler in as part of the midfield pivot. Vinicius's red card for hair-pulling last weekend provoked ire in the Spanish capital at officiating in Spain. Madrid fans at their Santiago Bernabeu stadium chanted and held up banners against La Liga president Javier Tebas, after he said the club's strategy of trying to discredit referees was similar to the techniques of Nazi propaganda chief Joseph



Goebbels. Los Blancos and their new coach Mourinho have complained bitterly about Spanish refereeing in recent weeks, and more generally over the past two seasons, in which they have failed to win a major trophy. On this occasion it was Sevilla who had more to complain about in terms of officiating as Madrid eased to victory. A quiet start was disrupted when Madrid midfielder Guler appeared to elbow Sevilla's Peque, which went unpunished midway through the first half. "There's a match that's 11 against 11 where they deserve to win, without any doubt, but we were denied the chance to play another match," said upset Sevilla coach Luis Garcia Plaza.

"We were denied the chance to play a match of 11 against 10. From there on I don't want to talk about the match anymore. We should have been playing 11 against 10 from the 25th minute." The coach said "maybe" Guler was not dismissed so Madrid did "not arrive nine points behind" Barca at the Clasico next weekend. Mourinho said he had seen no replays of the incident which proved Guler had elbowed Peque. Sevilla had resisted the probing of Madrid's attacking stars early on, but were undone by a moment of magic from Guler himself after 30 minutes. Jude Bellingham played the ball out to the flank where record signing Diomande received it and fed Guler on the edge of the box. The Turkish playmaker lofted a superb strike across Sevilla goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos and into the top corner. Mbappe came close to adding a second with a lightning-quick burst down the pitch, but his low effort was saved. The French superstar soon got his goal, one of the best of the season.

Briefs

PSX loses over 453 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained bearish on Monday, losing 453.63 points, a negative change of 0.27 percent, to close at 165,966.09 points against 166,419.72 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 370.941 million shares, compared to 396.904 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs19,562 billion from Rs18,679 billion. Market capitalisation declined to Rs18,427 trillion from Rs18,536 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 499 companies that traded in the ready market, 163 posted gains, 302 suffered losses, while 34 remained unchanged, reflecting a bearish trend in the market. Pak Refinery led the volume chart with 52,931 million shares, followed by Cnergyco PK with 35,789 million shares and TPL Trakker Limited with 14,356 million shares. Among the top gainers, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs118.04 to close at Rs1,298.40, while Pakistan Engineering Company Limited advanced by Rs71.10 to settle at Rs782.11. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited B declined by Rs366.67 to close at Rs14,199.66, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs142.58 to Rs25,407.42. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 97,465 million shares with a traded value of Rs7,644 billion, compared with 118,033 million shares worth Rs6,678 billion in the previous session. Of 296 companies traded in the DFC market, 91 advanced, 201 declined and 04 remained unchanged.—APP

Gold price remains stable

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold remained unchanged in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola holding steady at Rs439,036, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold witnessed no change and closed at Rs376,402, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold also remained flat at Rs345,047. In the international market, the bullion price showed a stable trend, remaining constant at \$4,165 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs59 to Rs6,234, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs50 to Rs5,344. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$0.59 to \$57.56 per ounce, the association added.—APP

SECP to review IPO approval framework

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Monday initiated an investigation into the accuracy and completeness of disclosures in the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of the SE Fruits and Vegetable Limited IPO. The investigation will examine whether any gaps, omissions or negligence occurred by the responsible parties in reporting the information and determine where responsibility lies, said a news release. The inquiry will review the Pakistan Stock Exchange's role as a front-line regulator; the consultant to the issue's due diligence, role in preparing the prospectus and certification of its accuracy; and the auditor's audit of the company's financial statements. It will also examine the SECP's internal procedures for review and approval of IPO applications. The findings of SECP's inquiry into the SE Fruits and Vegetable Limited IPO will guide improvements to the IPO review and approval framework. These will cover measures for adequate and accurate disclosures, proper discharge of duties by auditor and consultants, timely identification and proper reporting of all any material issues and coordination between PSX and SECP.—APP



KUALUMPUR: Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Malaysia His Excellency Khazar Farhadov presented the Letter of Credentials to His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia at Istana Negara Palace.—DNA

Proposed roadmap for gas sector restructuring

The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of aligning all stakeholders around a practical and implementable reform architecture. The proposed framework draws on international experience, including gas-sector reforms in Türkiye and the United Kingdom, while taking into account Pakistan's institutional structure, market conditions and consumer interests

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the proposed restructuring and deregulation roadmap for Pakistan's gas sector, focusing on financial sustainability, operational efficiency, consumer welfare and greater private-sector participation. The proposed reforms aim to establish a financially sustainable, efficient and competitive gas market that supports businesses, encourages private investment and protects consumer welfare, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance. The meeting discussed a phased transition towards greater competition, supported by effective regulation, improved operational

performance and a more sustainable approach to gas pricing and supply. Participants reviewed key sectoral challenges, including circular debt, cross-subsidies, unaccounted-for-gas (UFG) losses and supply-demand imbalances. Discussions focused on addressing legacy liabilities, improving the financial viability of gas utilities and ensuring that existing financial pressures do not undermine the proposed market structure or place an undue burden on consumers. A sustainable resolution of legacy circular debt and a clear approach to address cross-subsidies were identified as important to the viability of restructured entities and the transition to a competitive market. The meeting also discussed the expected outcomes of the reform framework, including enhanced energy security, increased private-sector investment, reduced

fiscal and sovereign risks, greater business-to-business transactions, more stable and sustainable gas pricing, improved access to competitively priced gas for exporters, and lower system losses through stronger efficiency benchmarks and performance-based incentives. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of aligning all stakeholders around a practical and implementable reform architecture. The proposed framework draws on international experience, including gas-sector reforms in Türkiye and the United Kingdom, while taking into account Pakistan's institutional structure, market conditions and consumer interests. Participants also stressed the need for careful sequencing to safeguard security of supply, protect regulated consumers and create a predictable environment for pri-

vate-sector participation. The proposed framework will be presented to the Prime Minister, following which further technical work and stakeholder consultations will help refine the reform approach and support an orderly transition. The meeting reaffirmed the Government's commitment to advancing gas-sector reforms in a phased and consultative manner to strengthen financial sustainability, improve operational efficiency, attract investment and develop a more competitive gas market while safeguarding consumer interests. The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Petroleum, the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Energy, senior officials from the Petroleum and Finance Divisions, representatives of gas utilities and the World Bank team.

Shaza, Google VP to discuss technology cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja met senior Google officials on Monday on the sidelines of the Global AI and Digital Summit 2026 in Seoul, South Korea. During the meeting, she held discussions with Google Vice President Wilson L. White on educational and technological cooperation in Pakistan. The two sides also exchanged views on expanding Google's network, presence and technological activities in Pakistan. They discussed ways to strengthen cooperation to support the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in the country.—APP

Arab League backs Lebanon's negotiations with Israel

DUBAI: The Arab League fully supports Lebanon's negotiations with Israel and will intensify its political and diplomatic efforts in support of Beirut, Secretary-General Nabil Fahmy said on Monday. Speaking after meeting Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, Fahmy said Lebanon was a priority for the Arab League, which would support the Lebanese state and its institutions politically, economically and socially. He also announced plans to visit southern Lebanon amid repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanese citizens and interests.—APP

Germany summons Iran envoy over 'malicious' assassination plots

BERLIN: Germany on Monday summoned the Iranian ambassador after two men were jailed last week over what it called a "malicious" plot to assassinate pro-Israeli public figures on behalf of Tehran. A Hamburg court on Thursday convicted a Danish national and an Afghan national for planning to target the president of Germany's main group representing the Jewish community and the head of the German-Israeli society. The foreign ministry said on X the Iranian ambassador had been summoned, adding Tehran would not be allowed to "threaten our free society." "The malicious assassination attempts... will have legal consequences," it said. "We do not tolerate attacks on Jewish life and on those who defend it — anywhere, and certainly not in Germany." The Danish man, partially identified as Ali Hassan S., was jailed for eight and a half years. The 54-year-old worked directly for Iranian intelligence and was tasked with scouting targets in Germany in preparation for assassinations and arson attacks, according to prosecutors. As well as prominent pro-Israel figures, he had been planning to target a Jewish grocer's shop in Berlin, they said. The Afghan man, who was recruited as his accomplice, was jailed for four and a half years.—APP

Philippines vows solidarity with KSA

MANILA: The Philippine government reaffirmed on Monday its solidarity with Saudi Arabia in the wake of Houthi attacks, as it brought home dozens of nationals affected by the recent strikes on the Kingdom. Filipinos were among more than 300 people injured on Oct. 10 — the deadliest in a recent series of attacks — when a Houthi missile struck King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, killing at least 13 people. The Department of Foreign Affairs was coordinating with Saudi authorities to provide them with necessary medical care and assistance. "Seven Filipino workers were wounded, three of whom are in critical condition," it said in a statement, "reaffirming the Philippines' solidarity with the Kingdom in protecting its nationals and residents, including nearly one million Filipinos." The Philippine government was also assisting overseas Filipino workers seeking repatriation, as many were affected by the cancellations of flights in recent days following temporary airport closures due to the attacks. "These attacks are a grave threat to regional peace and stability," the Department of Foreign Affairs said. "We urge all Filipinos in the Kingdom to follow the guidance of Saudi authorities." The first group of 34 overseas Filipino workers was brought from Riyadh to Manila on Monday by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Department of Migrant Workers. Bella Baldoz from Isabela province, whose mother was on the repatriation flight, told Arab News that during the attacks she immediately received assistance from Saudi authorities. "They immediately provided them with food, a place to sleep, shampoo, and soap because my mother had absolutely nothing when she arrived at the shelter. She didn't have any belongings with her," Baldoz said.

"We are thankful to the Saudi government ... they were there to support and look after her." —APP

Jazz, Samsung sign strategic partnership in South Korea

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading connectivity provider from JazzWorld, and Samsung Electronics have signed a strategic partnership at Samsung's global headquarters in Suwon, South Korea, to make AI-enabled smartphones more accessible across Pakistan. The collaboration will focus on device affordability, access to Galaxy AI and greater convenience in digital payments through opportunities around Samsung Wallet, supporting the broader ambition of digital and financial inclusion. The partnership brings together Jazz's connectivity, retail presence and customer reach with Samsung's global leadership in mobile innovation, Galaxy devices and AI capabilities. Through installment plans and trade-in programs, the collaboration aims to reduce the upfront cost of upgrading to compatible Galaxy AI and 5G-enabled smartphones, helping more people use advanced technology in their everyday lives. Commenting on the partnership, Kazim Mujtaba, President, Jazz GSM, said: "Making AI accessible to more Pakistanis starts with the smartphone in their hands. Affordability, connectivity and ease of use all matter. Through our partnership with Samsung, we want to help more people own capable devices and use AI to learn, work and create. Alongside this, opportunities around Samsung Wallet can bring greater convenience to everyday payments, supporting our ambition to broaden participation in the digital economy." Ryan Na, Managing Director, Samsung Electronics Pakistan, commented: "At Samsung, our ambition is to bring the power of Galaxy innovation and AI to more consumers, helping them create, connect and achieve more in their everyday lives. Our strategic partnership with Jazz represents an important opportunity to combine Samsung's advanced mobile technology with Jazz's connectivity, retail and customer reach. By working together on premium device experiences, consumer engagement and more flexible ownership solutions, we aim to make the Galaxy experience more attainable while strengthening the adoption of next-generation mobile technology in Pakistan." To support adoption, selected Jazz outlets will create opportunities for consumers to experience Samsung's latest innovation firsthand. Customers will be able to try Galaxy AI features and receive guidance on device financing and connectivity options. After-sales support will further strengthen the ownership experience. The partnership will also promote 5G-ready devices, supporting experiences across productivity, communication, content creation and entertainment. For corporate and enterprise customers, Jazz and Samsung will work towards bundled device and connectivity offerings to help businesses equip their teams. Together, Jazz and Samsung aim to make advanced smartphones more attainable and useful, opening access to AI and supporting greater participation in Pakistan's digital economy.—DNA

Mining control, factional rivalries continue to fuel unrest in N Afghanistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Unresolved internal disputes over mining control, revenue distribution, and local rights are driving ongoing violence and unrest in northern Afghanistan, according to a comprehensive report published by Pak Asia Youth Forum. The report, titled "Gold, Power and Grievance: Afghanistan's Mining Sector and Unrest" says that while the country holds globally significant mineral reserves—including nearly 90 confirmed mineral occurrences and over 30 critical minerals such as lithium, rare earths, copper, and cobalt—mining under Taliban rule operates with little legal restraint or transparency. Subsidiary laws have been repealed, no independent body audits financial proceeds, and concessions have allegedly been handed to commanders and officials through informal applications. It emphasizes that the ongoing unrest is fueled chiefly by an internal power struggle between the Kandahari leadership and the Haqqani Network over control of the mining sector.

Local commanders affiliated with the Haqqani faction have fiercely resisted the transfer of mining authority to Kandahari-aligned officials. This friction intensified following a 2024 leadership reshuffle that shifted the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum from Haqqani-aligned Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar to Kandahari-aligned Haji Gul Agha (Mullah Hidayatullah Badri). Northeastern provinces like Takhar and Badakhshan represent some of the richest regions for natural resources, containing valuable precious stones, semi-precious stones, and gold. However, local residents face forced displacement, seized farmland, severe environmental damage, violent crackdowns, and unequal economic benefits. Many locals report that the industry benefits only powerful individuals rather than the community. According to the report, in Badakhshan and Takhar, disputes over gold mines have frequently escalated into deadly clashes between rival Taliban factions, mining companies, and local residents. Notable incidents include a January 2026 clash in the Samti area of Chah Ab district, Takhar, which resulted in four deaths and

five injuries. The factional infighting also culminated in armed clashes in Badakhshan's Nusay district involving Haqqani-affiliated commander Jumma Khan Fateh. Fateh ultimately surrendered on August 17, and the Taliban later revealed from an intercepted audio clip that he had contacted the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), an Afghan armed resistance group. The publication notes that the sector continues to face severe challenges regarding transparency and financial oversight. Major concessions have been allocated through informal applications and personal connections rather than open, competitive tenders. Documented corruption includes a USD 200,000 bribe over the Wikador mine and a USD 700,000 talc scheme in Nangarhar, alongside undisclosed financial stakes held by high-ranking officials in mines such as the Awez gold deposit in Shahri Buzurg. Ultimately, the investigation and leadership reshuffle demonstrate that the unrest in northern Afghanistan is an internal matter rooted in domestic grievances, with no external connection.

Briefs

Albanian PM warns of 'red line' after days of unrest

TIRANA: Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama accused protesters of crossing a "red line" Monday after a police station was set ablaze during anti-government demonstrations.

Demonstrators have clashed with police since Tuesday as months of protests escalate, driven by fresh demands for better university conditions, anger over corruption and renewed calls for Rama's resignation. "Protests are a right, whereas violence is a crime; this red line must be drawn clearly at this critical stage of our democratic development," Rama said in a Facebook post.

The prime minister said he was prepared for dialogue, except with those who commit violence and political parties that fail to distance themselves from it.

Hundreds of protesters again gathered at Tirana's main square and in front of the education ministry on Monday. "We will continue our movement until Rama resigns. We are not criminals, we want social peace and better living conditions in our country," Leka Sina, a 22-year-old science student, told AFP. "Violence is not a solution, but the government also needs to reflect deeply to understand this revolt," he added.

Riot police have used water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds that have targeted government buildings and smashed stores in several parts of the city. — APP

Russian FM Lavrov in Tehran

TEHRAN: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Iran on Monday, Russian media said, in his first visit since the outbreak of the Middle East war as Moscow seeks to play a mediating role. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Sunday that the trip would focus on "regional and international developments".

Lavrov is scheduled to meet Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and hold talks with his counterpart Abbas Araghchi, according to the Russian foreign ministry. The veteran diplomat has said Moscow's efforts are "aimed at preventing the return of a large-scale war", with talks stalled between Tehran and Washington.

His visit comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin told Pezeshkian in early October that Moscow was prepared to contribute to mediation efforts. Russia and Iran, two of the most heavily sanctioned nations in the world, maintain close ties. Their military and economic cooperation has only increased since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. — APP

Dar in Tajikistan to take part in SCO conference

DPM Dar to meet Tajikistan's leadership and counterparts from SCO member states on sidelines of summit, says FO



DNA

DUSHANBE: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, to lead Pakistan's delegation at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting, scheduled for October 19–20. Upon arrival, DPM Dar was

received by Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Daler Juma, who is also co-chair of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement on Monday. Pakistan's Ambassador to Tajikistan, Irfan Ahmed, and the country's National Coordinator for the SCO, Khalil Hashmi, along with senior Tajik government officials, were also present to receive him. Besides participat-



ing in the proceedings of the meeting, DPM Dar will meet Tajikistan's leadership and his counterparts from SCO member states on the sidelines of the summit, a statement from the Foreign Office said. Dar will lead Pakistan's delegation to the meeting at the invitation of Tajikistan Prime Minister Qohir Rasulzoda. The prime ministers of Belarus, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, along with the vice

president of Iran and India's external affairs minister, will represent their respective countries at the CHG meeting.

The Council of Heads of Government is the SCO's second-highest decision-making institution and provides guidance on a range of areas, including the economy, finance, trade, connectivity, commerce, socio-economic cooperation and the organisation's budgetary matters.

Police 'lost control' during French protests, says interior minister

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French police "lost control" during nationwide protests marred by violence over the weekend, the interior minister admitted Monday, with President Emmanuel Macron calling for a security review. Macron also refused Interior Minister Laurent Nunez's resignation even as he acknowledged security and intelligence failures in the government response.

Saturday's demonstrations saw some half a million people turn out across France to protest the cost of living, but morphed into some of the worst violence to rock the country in years, with town halls and shops looted and set ablaze. More than 2,500 people were arrested, while almost 1,000 members of the security forces were injured. Injuries were also reported among protesters, with one demonstrator's hand blown off by a police crowd-control grenade.

"On Saturday, in some major cities, you couldn't look shopkeepers in the eye after hundreds of shops had been looted and tell them we hadn't lost control," Nunez said.

IHC takes up Imaan, Hadi's appeals

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday took up appeals filed by human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, against an anti-terrorism court (ATC) order rejecting their petitions challenging the framing of charges and the inclusion of terrorism-related provisions in the security breach case.

The case pertains to the alleged disruption of the security route of an international cricket team and incitement to public unrest. A division bench comprising Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas and Justice Shahrugh Arjumand heard the matter on Monday, with Riasat Ali Azad, Zainab Janjua and other lawyers appearing before the court. At the outset, Justice Minhas asked whether the accused had received copies of the relevant documents.

Musk says will give SpaceX share to 'every kid in America'

There are around 73 million children under the age of 18 in the United States, according to 2024 data from the US Census Bureau. Musk owns 38 per cent of SpaceX, according to Forbes

NEW YORK: Tech billionaire Elon Musk said on Monday that he would give every child in the United States a share in his SpaceX rocket company.

"Next year, I will give one of my SpaceX shares to every kid in America," Musk, the richest man in the world, said on X. "This will be the first of many," he said, without providing details about how the scheme would work.

There are around 73 million children under the age of 18 in the United States, according to 2024 data from the US Cen-

sus Bureau. Musk owns 38 per cent of SpaceX, according to Forbes.

His announcement comes after US President Donald Trump promised last month to give every American adult \$5,000 if his Republican party retains control of Congress in November's midterm elections.

SpaceX set the record for the largest initial public offering in history, raising \$85.7 billion in June. The company's Starship megarocket reached orbit for the first time in September, a milestone for the rocket central to Musk's Mars ambitions. — DNA

Twelve migrants drown as boats capsize off Greek islands

ATHENS: Twelve migrants drowned in two separate incidents off the Greek islands of Lesbos and Samos in the north-eastern Aegean Sea on Monday, after their boats capsized as the coast guard chased them, authorities said. Five men and one woman died after a speedboat carrying migrants from Turkey made a sudden maneuver and overturned roughly four nautical miles north of Samos, the Greek coast guard said.

Fourteen men survived and a search-and-rescue operation was under way. Authorities arrested one of the survivors, an Iranian national, on suspicion of migrant smuggling. Earlier, four men, one woman

and an infant died when their boat collided with a Greek coast guard vessel and overturned off the area of Agrilia in Lesbos. Eight survivors were taken to hospital. Authorities arrested a 37-year-old Turkish national who was among the eight survivors and identified him as the suspected smuggler and operator of the boat.

The government vowed "zero tolerance" toward migrant smugglers, whom it blamed for the deaths. On the incident off Lesbos, Greece's shipping minister Vassilis Kikilias said evidence so far indicated the speedboat struck the left side of a coast guard vessel with its bow, adding that the exact circumstances were under investigation. — APP

Govt tightens grip on bureaucrats returning from foreign training, deputation

New rules require officers returning from foreign scholarships to submit certified copy of degree certificate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division has placed strict mandatory requirements on degree verification and watertight financial surety tracking for civil servants returning from foreign and local studies, scholarships and deputations. Under newly released standard operating procedures, the government has signalled that state-funded foreign training and academic excursions will no longer be treated as open-ended vacations, introducing severe career and financial penalties for non-compliance.

Bureaucrats returning from international universities or local academic programmes after study leave often delayed submitting their final credentials. But the new circular changes the game entirely. According to the new circular, officers returning from study leave or foreign scholarships must submit a certified copy of their degree certificate or official academic transcript alongside their joining report. If an officer fails to submit their degree without a cogent, verifiable reason, they will officially be considered absent from duty. If a foreign university has delayed official degree issuance, the officer must provide verifiable institutional documentation confirming their "good academic standing" and a justifiable reason for the delay. Without this, rejoining remains blocked. Once submitted, the degree and joining report are immediately routed to the Training

Wing of the ED to ensure permanent, synchronised central record-keeping. The federal government has also moved to plug massive financial blind spots concerning state-funded scholarships and professional training programmes, where officers previously attempted to jump ship or resign without fulfilling mandatory service tenures.

To combat this, the Establishment Division has instituted a centralised statement of liability protocol for every officer who executes a surety bond. The T-Wing is now mandated to immediately supply comprehensive financial breakdowns to the Executive Wing (E-Wing). This includes the exact cost of the scholarship, training expenses and all recoverable emoluments. The liability statement explicitly spells out the mandatory length of active service the officer must render to the state upon return. The document outlines clear thresholds for what constitutes a breach of the surety bond such as unapproved resignation or abandonment of service, along with the precise monetary penalty recoverable from the individual. This statement of liability will form a core component of the officer's personal file and must be formally presented to competent authorities whenever any administrative decision regarding the officer's career terms is processed. The ED has also made it clear that applying for an extension of sanctioned leave, study leave or deputation will not, by itself, justify an officer's continued absence. Officers must report on completion of their approved period even if their extension applications are still awaiting approval.