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US Charge d Affaires calls for institutional cooperation boost

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Aurangzeb says Pakistan fiscal performance good

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Pakistan, Qatar agree on boosting LNG relations

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At SCO summit

Ishaq Dar calls for offsetting global economic shocks

The CHG is the SCO's second-highest decision-making body and provides guidance on economic, financial, trade, connectivity and socio-economic cooperation, as well as the organisation's budgetary matters

DNA

DUSHANBE: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday encouraged members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to use national currencies for "mutual settlement" and establish other financial mechanisms to "offset international financial shocks". He made the remarks while addressing the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, where he arrived a day earlier. The CHG is the SCO's second-highest decision-making body and provides guidance on economic, financial, trade, connectivity and socio-economic cooperation, as well as the organisation's budgetary matters. Addressing the SCO meeting, Dar highlighted the "need to accelerate efforts to promote the use of national currencies for mutual settlement", as well as to establish the SCO Development Bank and SCO development and investment funds. "Such tools are measures which will advance development initiatives and help the SCO region to offset international financial shocks," the former finance minister noted. He highlighted that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offered "every SCO partner a compelling opportunity to participate in and accelerate our shared journey towards comprehensive economic integration". At the outset of his speech, Dar extended his appreciation to the Tajik government and people for their "very warm and generous hospitality". "For the past 25 years, the SCO has remained anchored in the Shanghai spirit of mutual trust and respect

for diversity and expanded its mandate to encompass trade, infrastructure, culture and innovation," he noted. Dar went on to state that Pakistan's journey within the SCO highlighted its commitment to the Shanghai spirit, recalling that the country's chairmanship of SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) and the SCO Working Group on Poverty Alleviation. He said Pakistan intended to highlight the role of small and medium enterprises in reducing poverty. "For our region to achieve seamless economic integration, targeted investment in core sectors, most notably in energy and transport, is vital," he stressed. The deputy premier said Pakistan strongly advocated for "expanding investments into high-potential industries, including agriculture, mining and minerals, and information technology, to build a resilient and interconnected economic future". He expressed Pakistan's "belief that artificial intelligence, digital transformation, innovation, energy cooperation and international information security should become important pillars of future cooperation within the SCO". Dar then recalled the priority areas identified by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) summit that Islamabad is set to host in 2027. These comprised peace, security and mutual trust; regional connectivity and trade; innovation, AI and digital transformation; climate resilience and sustainable energy; and people-to-people exchanges. Dar emphasised that strategic investment in transport and energy infrastructure was not merely beneficial but "absolutely imperative for true regional economic integration".



DUSHANBE: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar calling on the President of Tajikistan, H.E Emomali Rahmon in Dushanbe. – DNA

Pak beat England in first ODI

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Arafat Minhas delivered an all-round performance to help Pakistan defeat England by 87 runs, securing their second win in the ongoing ODI tri-series at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. Chasing a target of 303, England were bowled out for 215 in 38.4 overs despite a strong start from openers Tom Banton and Ben Duckett. The duo stitched together a 91-run opening partnership, finding boundaries with ease as they took the attack to Pakistan's bowlers during the early stages of the chase. However, Haris Rauf broke the stand in the 15th over by dismissing Duckett, who fell five runs short of his half-century after scoring 45 off 46 deliveries, including eight boundaries.

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Maldives President arrives in Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Maldives President Dr Mohamed Muizzu arrived in Pakistan on Tuesday for a three-day state visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Dr Muizzu was accompanied by First Lady Madam Sajidha Mohamed and a high-level delegation comprising cabinet ministers and senior officials. Upon arrival at Islamabad International Airport, the Maldives president and the first lady were accorded a 21-gun salute. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office,

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PM Shehbaz ready to build consensus on counterterrorism

The PM's aide's remarks come after the Centre imposed emergency and governor's rule in KP on October 11, citing the PTI-led provincial government's "deliberate disengagement" from the fight against terrorism

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday said the federal government was ready to invite all political parties and build consensus on counterterrorism. Speaking in the Senate, the PML-N leader also urged the opposition to "set other demands aside". The PM's aide's remarks come after the Centre imposed emergency and governor's rule in KP on October 11, citing the PTI-led provincial government's "deliberate disengagement" from the fight against terrorism. The decisions were also endorsed by the Parliament last week amid protests by the opposition. "Even now, if all parties [...] can agree to sit down to discuss this issue, then Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is willing to invite them and find a way forward (on counterterrorism) or how operations can be supported by the entire nation," Sanaullah said, urging

political parties to put other demands aside and "stand united" in tackling terrorism. Sanaullah went on to criticise the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Mahmood Khan Achakzai. "He became the leader of the opposition after the speaker signed off on his appointment; however, [...] he does not accept the speaker's authority and is not even ready to meet the prime minister and has even refused to sit in the speaker's chambers with the PM," Sanaullah said. Sanaullah then turned his attention to the rise in terrorism in the country, expressing sorrow at the martyrdom of an army officer a day earlier and said, addressing the opposition, "You are running propaganda against the head of this institution and [...] making below-the-belt remarks." He also assailed the members of the now non-functional PTI-led KP government for not attending apex committee meetings.

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PHC seeks AG's response on PTI petitions against emergency

High court adjourns hearing on petitions against governor's rule, emergency till Nov 10

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday issued a notice to the attorney general on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petitions challenging governor's rule and the imposition of an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Faheem Wali presided over the hearing on petitions filed by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and Advocate Usman Khan, asking the court to declare the measures unconstitutional and set them aside. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led federal government imposed a governor's rule and emergency in KP, ruled by the Imran Khan-founded party since 2013, on October 11. The federal government cited rising terrorism incidents and the provincial government's lack of support for counterterrorism operations as the reasons for the move. KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi took charge of running the province on behalf of the federal government, assisted by an 11-member technocratic KP Advisory Council. The PTI chairman and Advocate Salman Khan later filed separate petitions against the measures at the PHC, asking the court to declare the measures unconstitutional and set them aside. During today's hearing, the PTI chief said that governor's

rule and the emergency had been imposed on the same day, alongside the formation of an advisory council and the transfer of 38 deputy commissioners. The PTI chairman further alleged that 12 of the party's members of the National Assembly and 13 members of the provincial assembly had been abducted. "Our offices have been demolished, and plaques marking the inauguration of development projects have been broken," he said, alleging that his party was being treated differently from others. Prior to Barrister Gohar, the petitioners' counsel argued that an emergency could be imposed in the event of war or external interference. "There is neither war nor external aggression here," the lawyer told the court. The counsel argued that the provincial government had the authority to take measures to tackle terrorism, saying terrorism had reached its peak in the past, but an emergency was not imposed then. The lawyer further contended that Article 234 of the Constitution could be invoked only when a provincial government ceased to function. The counsel maintained that the provincial assembly and government had continued functioning and that there had been no breakdown of the Constitution. After hearing the arguments, Justice Anwar said the court would issue a notice to the Attorney General's Office and seek its response.

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Briefs

PM wants improved health facilities

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the authorities to take effective measures to improve medical facilities, the quality of healthcare, and service delivery at hospitals and health institutions under the federal government. He gave these directions during a meeting with Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal in Islamabad today.

Israel warns Hezbollah of 'severe blow'

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz has warned that if any attacks from Lebanon target northern Israeli communities, Tel Aviv will respond by targeting Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiyeh, Al Jazeera reports. "This policy establishes deterrence," Katz says in comments shared by Israeli military, warning Hezbollah from participating in any future Iranian attack on Israel, as its military would deal the group a "severe blow" if it does.

Iraq buries security persons

MOSUL: Iraq held a mass funeral on Tuesday for 47 members of the security forces who were executed by the Daesh group a decade ago and whose remains were found in a mass grave. Many remain missing after disappearing during the militant group's bloody rule over parts of Iraq from 2014 to 2017, with the United Nations estimating that there may be more than 200 graves containing up to 12,000 people killed in mass executions. Iraqi authorities continue to uncover new graves, which are concentrated in urban areas.

US-Iran standoff

Field Marshal Asim meets President of Iran Pezeshkian

The visit comes as diplomatic efforts between Iran and the United States remain stalled, with both Tehran and Islamabad highlighting the importance of dialogue, de-escalation, and regional stability

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Field Marshal Asim Munir, arrived in Tehran on Tuesday for high-level meetings with senior Iranian officials, according to Iran's semi-official Mehr News Agency. Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei confirmed the visit during his weekly press conference, saying discussions would relate to ongoing regional developments but would be "mainly focused on bilateral relations and strengthening interactions and cooperation" between Tehran and Islamabad. During the visit, Field Marshal Munir met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, with both sides discussing the evolving security situation in the Middle East,

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Houthi provided with drone technology

NEWS DESK

SANAA: Fahd Al-Khulaifi, first deputy governor of Yemen's Shabwa province, warned that the Houthi group has supplied some terrorist organizations with drone technology as part of what he described as ongoing cooperation between the two sides. His remarks came after a Houthi missile attack on Monday targeted the Martyr Ahmed Al-Sulaimani

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PTI rules out Achakzai's removal

PTI founder Imran Khan has complete confidence in Mahmood Achakzai, says Gohar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday ruled out any "minus" for Mahmood Khan Achakzai, saying there had also been no discussion about replacing him with JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman as opposition leader in the National

Assembly. Speaking to Geo News at Parliament House, Gohar said PTI founder Imran Khan had complete confidence in Achakzai and that the party had no authority to decide whether to accept the opposition leader or not. "We accept the PTI founder's decision and will move forward accordingly," he said. Gohar said everyone in the party was free to express their opinion, but once the party made a decision, it was accepted by all. He said the decision regarding the opposition

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Ashrafi, IIUI President discuss countering ideological terrorism

ISLAMABAD :Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council, Secretary-General of the International Tazee-e-Haramain Sharifain Council and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Tuesday held a meeting with President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, at his office and discussed the issues of mutual interests including ideological terrorism, youth awareness and efforts to promote religious harmony. During the meeting, the two dignitaries discussed the growing challenge of ideological terrorism, emphasizing the need to address the ideas and narratives that fuel extremism. They observed that ideological terrorism could be more dangerous than other forms of terrorism and stressed the importance of raising awareness among young people to help them understand and counter this social menace. The meeting also featured a briefing on the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and its efforts to promote intrafaith and interfaith harmony across Pakistan. The committee's role in fostering understanding, peaceful coexistence and cooperation among different religious communities was highlighted. Ashrafi underscored the importance of engaging young people in awareness initiatives and promoting dialogue and mutual respect as part of broader efforts to counter extremist ideologies and strengthen social harmony. He also appreciated Saudi Arabia's cooperation in the education sector and acknowledged the continued support extended to Pakistan by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in various spheres of life. Concluding his remarks, Ashrafi condemned the Houthi attacks in his strongest terms on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including airports, oil facilities and the holy sites. He reaffirmed his full support on behalf of the Pakistan Ulama Council and its allied parties to the Kingdom and its leadership through thick and thin and reiterated its commitment that the security and sovereignty of the Haramain Sharifain is the redline for them and Pakistan. He assured that there will be no compromise on the safety and integrity of the Saudi Arabia under all circumstances. They underscored the importance of cooperation among religious scholars, educational institutions and relevant organisations in addressing ideological extremism, promoting awareness among youth and strengthening interfaith and intrafaith harmony.—APP

Pakistan's twin deficit falls to 2.6pc of GDP: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said Pakistan's twin deficit had declined from a cumulative 12.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 2.6 percent, reflecting progress in macroeconomic stabilization and fiscal consolidation. Addressing a two-day high-level workshop on "Reforms for a Modern and Growth-Friendly Tax System in Pakistan", the minister said that the country had achieved a 22-year low fiscal deficit in the last fiscal year and recorded primary surpluses for three consecutive years. The event was organized by the Ministry of Finance and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which bring together senior government officials, representatives of the IMF and World Bank, international tax experts, academics and private-sector leaders to discuss priorities for modernizing Pakistan's tax system and strengthening its contribution to sustainable economic growth. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) tax-to-GDP ratio had increased from 8.8 percent to 10.3 percent, while tax revenues had risen by 40 percent over the last two fiscal years. The minister attributed the improvement to stronger enforcement measures and new tax policy initiatives, explaining that 0.9 percentage points of the 1.5-percentage-point increase in the tax-to-GDP ratio over the last two and a half years had come from enforcement, while 0.6 percentage points resulted from new policy measures. The government would further strengthen enforcement, curb revenue leakages and broaden the tax base to improve revenue mobilization, he added. The minister highlighted the ongoing FBR transformation program, covering human resources, processes and technology, which he said was being led by the prime minister and monitored through weekly reviews. He said that the taxation reforms remained a critical component of the government's broader structural reform agenda, alongside reforms in the energy sector, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), privatization, public finance, pensions and tariffs. Emphasizing the need to move from economic stabilization towards growth, Aurangzeb said Pakistan's economy had recovered from a contraction of 0.3 percent and returned to a positive growth trajectory. However, he stressed that the country needed sustainable,

export-led growth rather than liquidity-driven, consumption-based expansion, which had contributed to boom-and-bust cycles in the past.

"We will not let that repeat," he said, underscoring the government's commitment to ensuring that future growth was sustainable and supported by stronger economic fundamentals. The finance minister also pointed to improvements in the country's external position, saying foreign exchange reserves had recovered from a level equivalent to around two weeks of import cover to more than three months, reaching a record high.

He said the quality of reserves was as important as their volume, noting that the recent improvement had not been accompanied by a comparable increase in external debt. Aurangzeb said Pakistan's external debt stock had increased by around \$4 billion over the preceding four years, compared with an annual increase of \$6 billion to \$7 billion during the 2015–2022 period, when external liabilities had risen from around \$55 billion to more than \$100 billion. He said the government would continue designing tax policies around economic value and competitiveness rather than focusing solely on meeting revenue targets.

Referring to the previous budget, he said the government had undertaken recalibrations relating to exports and export-oriented industries and would build on these measures to support export-led growth.

The minister identified broadening the tax base, simplifying the taxation code and ensuring policy predictability and continuity as key priorities for the ongoing reform process. He said frequent and unexpected tax changes could undermine private-sector investment, stressing that businesses needed a predictable policy environment to support long-term planning and economic expansion.

Aurangzeb identified political consensus, stronger institutions, improved taxpayer trust and clear communication as essential enablers of successful tax reforms.

He said cooperation between the federal and provincial governments was particularly important, while rebuilding trust and credibility in the tax authority was necessary to improve compliance and strengthen the relationship between taxpayers and the state.

The minister acknowledged the need for better commu-

nication to demonstrate progress on structural reforms and explain the measures being taken to increase revenue collection and improve its quality. He expressed the hope that discussions during the conference would help assess progress on ongoing reforms and develop a roadmap for advancing from stabilization to sustainable economic growth. He said effective tax policy design and administration would remain critical to strengthening the private sector's role in economic development and ensuring durable economic stability. Addressing the workshop Jihad Azour, Director of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Middle East and Central Asia Department urged to pursue broad-based, fair and predictable tax reforms to sustain macroeconomic stability, boost private investment and achieve stronger, more inclusive economic growth. "Pakistan had made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability, rebuilding confidence, strengthening external buffers and supporting a gradual economic recovery despite repeated shocks and global uncertainty", he remarked. He credited Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, his colleagues in the government, the prime minister and parliament for the progress, saying the next challenge was to translate stabilization gains into stronger and more sustainable economic growth. "The next milestone is to turn the stabilization into stronger and more durable growth," Azour said, emphasizing the need to move beyond recurring adjustment cycles towards a more competitive, investment-friendly and inclusive economy. He said the government's reform agenda, supported by the IMF through its Extended Fund Facility (EFF), aimed to raise productivity, strengthen the private sector and create better economic opportunities for Pakistan's younger generations.

Referring to the IMF's Regional Economic Outlook, he said stronger policy frameworks and buffers had helped countries cushion external shocks, but inflationary pressures, fiscal constraints and financing needs were becoming increasingly evident. He said a stronger, broader, fairer and more predictable tax system could improve fiscal sustainability while reducing distortions that discourage investment, productivity, business expansion and formal job creation.—DNA

Petroleum prices determined on seven-day average: Ali

ISLAMABAD:Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Tuesday said petroleum prices were determined on the basis of a seven-day average under a transparent formula. Responding to a calling attention notice regarding the daily determination of petroleum prices instead of the fortnightly mechanism, the minister said the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) set prices according to the seven-day average. He added that the authority had also published the formula on its website. Referring to the previous practice of revising petroleum prices every 14 days, Ali Pervaiz Malik said prices had earlier been revised annually and later on a monthly basis. He said Pakistan imported all its oil requirements, while volatility in international markets made it necessary for the government to ensure an uninterrupted supply chain and prevent profiteering and hoarding. The minister said keeping domestic petroleum prices close to international market rates helped ensure that changes in global prices were reflected in local prices. This approach also helped maintain the security of the supply chain, he added.—APP



Lahore: The Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Stéphane Rey, met with the Governor of Punjab, H.E. Mr. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, at the Governor House in Lahore. DNA

SVI hosts two-day non-proliferation conference

ISLAMABAD: The Strategic Vision Institute (SVI), Islamabad, hosts the second iteration of Islamabad Non-Proliferation Conference 2026, a two-day international event bringing together a distinguished group of scholars and experts from around the world. The conference aims at fostering constructive dialogue on global strategic issues and sharing Pakistan's policy perspectives. Dr Naeem Salik, Executive Director (ED), SVI, welcomed the distinguished guests to the International Nonproliferation Conference (INC) 2026. Dr Nasir Hafeez, Director, SVI, subsequently introduced the conference to the esteemed audience. The inaugural address was delivered by Lt. Gen. Sarfraz Sattar, HI (M), (Retd.), Advisor, NCA. He mentioned that the disruptive technologies sit at the heart of the push towards bigger and better Nuclear Weapons, against the efforts of restraint or stability on the road to disarmament and sustained economic development. He said, that there has been a shift in the nuclear age marked by the change of threat perception from rouge or non-state actors getting access to nuclear weapons towards the challenge of Great Power Competition and the possibility of interstate conflict in a more contested international system. He mentioned South Asia as a nuclear flashpoint, owing to India's ultranationalist tendencies. We face Hindutva ideology which is in pursuit of Akhand Bharat. He further mentioned that the nuclear non-use taboo seems to be weakening as we see the likelihood of interstate wars increasing both in lethality and expense. The sole function of global nuclear order is also under extreme stress. Lt. Gen. Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, (Retd.), Advisor Development, National Command Authority (NCA), delivered the keynote address. He examined Pakistan's perspective on credible deterrence, strategic balance, and strategic stability in South Asia, tracing their evolution in the pre-May 2025 conflict period and assessing their implications in the post-conflict strategic environment.—APP

Punjab CM okays pilot project to develop 120 model villages

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the launch of a pilot project to develop 120 villages as model villages and decided to introduce the Khushhal Dehat Act 2026 in the province.

Chairing a special meeting here on Tuesday, the chief minister received a detailed briefing on the project to transform Punjab's villages into model settlements. The meeting also decided to establish a village committee in each village in consultation with local public representatives.

CM Maryam Nawaz directed the authorities concerned to immediately constitute the village committees and submit a comprehensive plan for the initiative. The relevant assistant commissioner will head each village committee, while the deputy commissioner will supervise all committees and oversee the project. Each village committee will comprise four public representatives and four government representatives. The committee will include the head teacher, union council secretary, a doctor from the Basic Health Unit or Maryam Nawaz Health Clinic, and other relevant representatives.

The briefing stated that sewerage, drainage and paved streets would be provided in every village under the initiative. The CM said her resolve to transform all villages in Punjab into model villages was unwavering. "Development is no longer limited to big cities; its benefits will reach every village," she said. She said local residents would be consulted in planning and implementing village development projects to ensure that the initiatives reflected the needs of the communities.—APP

Call for implementation of Senior Citizens Act across KP

PESHAWAR: National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has called for immediate implementation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senior Citizens Act, 2014, writing to provincial authorities, public hospitals and district administrations to ensure older people receive their legally guaranteed healthcare, welfare and social protection entitlements. The Commission has approached the Secretary Health, Secretary Social Welfare, Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs) and all Deputy Commissioners across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seeking coordinated action to address longstanding gaps in implementing the law. In its correspondence, NCHR has called for dedicated senior citizens' facilitation desks, preferential treatment, separate queues and geriatric care facilities in government hospitals, including major teaching institutions and district headquarters hospitals. The Commission has also urged the Social Welfare

Department to reactivate the Provincial Senior Citizens Welfare Council, operationalise the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund and expedite the issuance of senior citizen cards to facilitate access to statutory benefits. Rizwan Ullah Shah, Provincial Coordinator, NCHR said the Commission had taken up the matter following concerns raised by older people and civil society organisations, particularly the Senior Citizens Forum Peshawar, which highlighted important issues during its recent interactions with the Commission. "The Senior Citizens Forum Peshawar has brought serious concerns regarding healthcare access, welfare services and non-implementation of the law to our attention. These issues demand coordinated institutional action. NCHR is engaging relevant departments to ensure that the rights guaranteed under the Senior Citizens Act are translated into practical services. Reactivating the

Senior Citizens Welfare Council and strengthening accountability at provincial and district levels are essential," he said. Qamar Naseem, Programme Manager at Blue Veins, welcomed NCHR's intervention and appreciated the Commission's proactive role in advancing the rights of older people. "NCHR's engagement with provincial departments, public hospitals and district administrations is a significant step towards ensuring that the rights guaranteed under the Senior Citizens Act are translated into practical action. Human rights institutions have a vital role in strengthening institutional accountability, monitoring implementation and holding duty bearers responsible for fulfilling their legal obligations. Particular attention must be given to older women, whose voices, experiences and leadership should shape policies, services and accountability mechanisms affecting their lives," he said.—APP

RCB launches cleanliness campaign across 10 wards of Pindi Cantt

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has launched a cleanliness and public awareness campaign across all 10 wards of Rawalpindi Cantt, which will continue until November 5. The campaign was launched on the directions of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Aamer Rashid to improve sanitation, ensure the cleaning of drains, remove accumulated waste and encourage public participation in maintaining a clean and healthy environment. An awareness walk was also organised at the Cantonment Board office, with Additional CEO Tayyba Naseer and staff members participating. As part of the campaign, awareness messages are being disseminated through social media, pamphlets, banners and digital screens along Mall Road in Saddar. Educational institutions, traders and various organisations are also being engaged to promote cleanliness in residential areas, markets and public places. During the first phase, special sanitation operations are being carried out on October 20 and 21 in Ward No. 1, covering Habib Colo-

ny, Rahim Town, Allahabad, Zahid Baig Road, Hafizabad and Sultanabad. The operations include street sweeping, drain cleaning, garbage collection and the removal of wild grass and weeds. The RCB has provided trolleys, excavators and other necessary equipment to facilitate the collection and transportation of waste to designated dumping points. Several departments, including sanitation, gardens, enforcement, building control, water supply, engineering, the Food Control Cell and the Dengue Control Cell, are participating in the campaign. Special attention is being given to preventing the illegal dumping of garbage and construction debris, maintaining green spaces, ensuring hygiene standards at food outlets and eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites to help control dengue.

A complaint cell has also been established at the Cantonment Board office to facilitate the timely redressal of public grievances. Residents can register cleanliness-related complaints by calling 051-9274422.

CEO Aamer Rashid has directed the relevant departments to ensure the effective continuation of sanitation operations and take practical measures, in collaboration with citizens, to keep Rawalpindi Cantt clean and hygienic.



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PIMS.....9261170-79

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Institutional channels can make Pak-US coop durable

The participants said Pakistan wants to work with both the United States and China on shared strategic and economic interests, and its partnership with one should not be viewed as directed against the other

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a seminar at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, agreed that Pakistan and the United States should build institutional channels around their growing cooperation to sustain the present momentum. Pakistan had become a valuable partner for Washington in five areas: counterterrorism, cryptocurrency, critical minerals, crisis management in South Asia, and conflict in the Middle East. They noted Pakistan's role in facilitating a ceasefire and talks between Iran and the United States. The participants stressed that the durability of this cooperation would depend on whether both governments institutionalise it. Close ties between the two countries' leaders had created an opening, and regular dialogues, investment bodies and economic frameworks could carry this goodwill forward. They pointed to the bilateral counterterrorism dialogue, US development finance in Pakistan, and the work of US trade and investment agencies, and called for these channels to become more active. Participants highlighted the scope for economic cooperation. They noted that around 100 American companies operate in Pakistan and that Pakistan has invited US companies to invest in its critical minerals sector. They identified renewable energy, agriculture, dams, information technology and education as further areas for collaboration. The participants urged the United States to



expand market access for Pakistani goods, including through the Generalized System of Preferences, and to facilitate Pakistani students seeking admission to natural sciences programmes at US universities. Some participants proposed a trilateral framework of Pakistan, the United States and Gulf countries to support investment in Pakistan's refineries and renewable energy. On security, the participants noted that terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, were using US

weapons left behind in Afghanistan in 2021 in cross-border attacks on Pakistan. They called on Washington to support Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, including through the provision of advanced defence equipment. The participants recalled Pakistan's long partnership with the United States, from CENTO and SEATO to the Afghan war of the 1980s and the war on terror. Pakistan bore heavy human and economic costs in these partnerships. The participants urged Washington to build a stand-alone relationship with

Pakistan, in line with Secretary of State Marco Rubio's stated aim of expanding cooperation beyond counterterrorism into economic and strategic areas. The participants said Pakistan wants to work with both the United States and China on shared strategic and economic interests, and its partnership with one should not be viewed as directed against the other. They noted that China had remained a steadfast partner of Pakistan in defence supplies and economic investment. The participants also stressed that the benefits of government-to-government cooperation should reach the people of both countries, to strengthen public support for the relationship. They advised both sides to keep expectations realistic so that commitments match delivery, and to use the present goodwill to address some of the irritants constructively. The participants included Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS; Elizabeth Threlkeld, Senior Fellow and Director, South Asia Program, Stimson Center; Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, the United Nations and China; Dr Rizwan Naseer, Senior Research Fellow and Director, Centre for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Studies, IRS; Dr Usman Chohan, Research Fellow, IRS; Mr. Riaz Khokhar, Research Officer, IRS, and all other researchers from the Institute, former diplomats, academics and researchers from Islamabad also attended the talk.

Pakistan expands digital infrastructure: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said that Pakistan has expanded its digital infrastructure through a major spectrum auction, 5G deployment, and nationwide fibre-optic connectivity to support growing demand for digital services. She made these remarks while speaking as a keynote speaker during a high-level panel session titled "The Last 2.6 billion: Is Universal Connectivity a Broken Promise in the AI Era?" on the second day of the Global Digital & AI Summit in Seoul, South Korea. Responding to questions during the session, the minister outlined Pakistan's digital and artificial intelligence (AI) strategy. She said Pakistan primarily viewed AI as a network challenge under the Prime Minister's Digital Nation Pakistan vision. She stated that 70% of Pakistan's population was under the age of 30, while the number of telecom subscribers had exceeded 200 million, reflecting the growing demand for quality and meaningful connectivity. Shaza Fatima said Pakistan conducted its largest-ever spectrum auction in March 2026, acquiring 480 MHz of spectrum and raising \$509 million. The auction increased telecom operators' spectrum holdings from 274 MHz to 754 MHz, an achievement commended internationally by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT). Within six months of the auction, 5G services were launched at more than 1,700 sites across 24 major cities, delivering average speeds of 130 Mbps. Meanwhile, download speeds across the country increased by 68.1% over the past two years. The minister said more than 234,000 kilometres of optical fibre cable had been deployed nationwide. To accelerate fibre deployment and reduce costs, right-of-way (RoW) charges had been completely abolished across the country in consultation with provincial governments. This measure would ensure that every rupee saved on permits

was directly utilised for fibre deployment. She added that Pakistan was connected to the world through six submarine cables with a combined capacity of more than 17 Tbps. The country was also developing the CAREC Digital Corridor to serve as a digital bridge between Central Asia and the rest of the world. Highlighting the importance of satellite technology, particularly direct-to-device connectivity, for remote areas such as the deserts of Balochistan and the mountainous regions of northern Pakistan, Shaza Fatima said the Pakistan Space Activities Regulatory Board (PSARB) and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) were finalising the satellite communications and licensing framework. She emphasised that satellite services would not replace Pakistan's terrestrial networks but would complement them in hard-to-reach areas. To encourage investment, she added, a new framework for mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) and an Infrastructure Sharing Policy had also been issued. Discussing digital inclusion and efforts to reduce the gender gap, the minister said the Universal Service Fund (USF) had provided connectivity to more than 38 million people across 22,100 mauzas (settlements) in over 110 districts. She added that 17.6 million smartphones had been assembled locally in Pakistan during 2025, while smartphone instalment plans were being rolled out. Citing World Bank reports, Shaza Fatima said the gender gap in mobile connectivity in Pakistan had declined significantly from 25% to 8%. She also highlighted that Pakistan's ranking in the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) ICT Development Index 2026 had improved by 27 places. Concluding the session, the minister said universal connectivity was not a broken promise but an unfinished one. "Universal connectivity is not a broken promise; it is an unfinished one. The technology exists, and the money exists—what has been missing is the willingness to share risk. —DNA

Lahore Polo in Pink attracts record 14 teams

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Lahore Smart City (LSC) Polo in Pink Cup 2026 has been launched bringing together 14 teams and international women players to promote breast cancer awareness through sport. The weeklong tournament will conclude with the final on Sunday. Announcing the event at a press conference, Lahore Polo Club President Agha Najeeb Raza said this year's edition was the largest in the tournament's history, featuring 14 female polo players—eight from abroad and six from Pakistan. Players from England, the Netherlands and Iran are participating, reflecting the event's growing international reach. Agha Najeeb Raza said the club had been organising the initiative since 2014, with Lahore Smart City and Pink Ribbon supporting the cause for the past eight years. He expressed gratitude to the sponsors for helping expand the campaign and promote awareness of breast cancer. Lahore Smart City CEO Imran Zahid reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to the initiative, saying its continued support aimed to spread awareness among

Pakistani women. COO Zeeshan Qureshi highlighted sport's role in improving a healthy society and promoting meaningful social causes. Pink Ribbon Pakistan's Dr Umar Aftab, who has worked on breast cancer awareness for around 20 years, welcomed the initiative and highlighted the importance of sustained public education and awareness campaigns. "With its blend of international competition and social awareness, Polo in Pink continues to use the popularity of polo to encourage breast cancer awareness and support women's participation in sport." The teams have been divided into two pools. Pool A comprises Nike Cables/Master Paints, Diamond Paints, AOS, Polo U Khano, Leather Galleria, DIN/FG and SQ Seagold/Master Paints. Pool B features FG/DIN, Platinum Homes, Guard Group, Dagia Polo/Chakor Ventures, Jinnah Polo Team, Robson International and Sheikh/Barry's/Diamond Paints. Lahore Polo Club executive committee members Ahmed Nawaz Tiwana, Taimoor Ali Malik, Dr Kamran Zaidi and Faisal Khan, along with club secretary Major Amjad Ghafoor (ret'd), attended the launch.



NADRA reviews blocked CNICs thru regional boards

ISLAMABAD :Minister of State for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhry told the Senate on Tuesday that NADRA blocks identity cards across the country when holders are found ineligible or have obtained them through forged documents, with such cases reviewed by regional-level boards. He said 138,166 CNICs had been blocked in Balochistan, including 8,875 in the Makran and Rakhshan divisions. Replying to a calling attention notice by Senator Jan Muhammad, he said the two divisions comprised eight districts with a population of about 2.9 million. The minister said the regional-level board examined objections in each case.—APP

CDA discusses hospitality upgrades ahead of SCO summit

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has held talks with investors, developers and hotel operators on upgrading the capital's hospitality sector ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit scheduled to be held in Islamabad in August 2027. The meeting, chaired by CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf at CDA headquarters, focused on improving hotel facilities and bringing hospitality services in line with international standards to accommodate foreign delegations and other visitors expected for the summit. Participants included Ducommun Tim Paul, director of development for Asia at the Accor Group, and representatives of major hotel chains operating in Islamabad, including Marriott, Serena, Mövenpick, Best Western and Ramada, as well as investors and developers associated with the hospitality and real estate sectors. Paul appreciated the CDA's efforts to make Islamabad more attractive to tourists and business visitors, according to a statement issued by the authority. Sohail Ashraf said Islamabad offered significant opportunities for investment in the hospitality industry and modernisation of existing facilities. He said the capital's growing potential as a tourism destination made it necessary to develop services that met international standards. He said the CDA would facilitate investors and encourage private-sector participation in upgrading the hospitality sector, adding that available resources would be utilised to improve the capital's capacity to host major international events. —DNA

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Briefs

SC sets aside
Rs 4.79b tax
liability

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court has ruled that payments made by the Universal Service Fund (USF) to telecom companies for providing services in underserved areas are not subject to tax deduction under Section 153(2)(b) of the Income Tax Ordinance.

Allowing the USF's appeal, a three-member bench comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan set aside the tax liability of approximately Rs4.79 billion. In its 38-page detailed judgment, the court also held that Section 21(c) of the ordinance did not apply to the payments.

The court further annulled the relevant portion of the revised assessment order issued by tax authorities and the decision of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

The dispute concerned payments of approximately Rs17.76 billion made by the USF to telecom companies for projects aimed at providing telecommunications facilities in areas where such services were unavailable or inadequate. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee had reduced the tax liability to approximately Rs1.53 billion. However, the Supreme Court allowed the USF's appeal and set aside the relevant decisions imposing the tax.—APP

Green Enclave-
allottees hopeful
of progress

ISLAMABAD :A delegation of allottees of Green Enclave-I on Tuesday met Project Director Mohsin Sardar to seek an update on the long-delayed housing project and urge the authorities to remove remaining hurdles to the resumption of development work.

The delegation comprised Chaudhary Amjad Ali, Professor Tahir Mahmood, Malik Sartaj, Rana Munawar and Fayyaz Tanoli. The allottees stressed the need for concrete progress on the project.

During the meeting, Project Director Mohsin Sardar said that work was underway to resolve the outstanding issues and that almost all hurdles had been addressed. He explained that a few minor adjustments were still required before the matter could be placed before the FGEHA Executive Board.

He said the project was expected to be presented at the board's next meeting, likely to be held next week.

The development has raised hopes among allottees that the long-pending matter may finally move towards a decision. Green Enclave-I, initiated through an agreement in 2009 and formally launched in 2015, covers approximately 3,153 kanals. Chaudhary Amjad Ali said, "The Executive Board's consideration of the matter is expected to be a crucial step towards resolving the outstanding issues and determining the way forward.—APP

Shumaila Rana
says anti state-
ments could
benefit adver-
saries

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (N) central leader Shumaila Rana, on Tuesday said that making statements against the law enforcement agencies amid the prevailing sensitive situation was inappropriate, as such remarks could benefit the country's adversaries.

Talking to the media outside Parliament House, she urged national unity against elements seeking to undermine the country's stability and weaken its national cohesion. She emphasized that speaking against the country's own institutions at such a critical juncture was not in the national interest. She said Pakistan's political leadership had earned international recognition, while the country was receiving offers to play a mediatory role and had contributed to promote global peace through dialogue.

Ms. Rana attributed Pakistan's diplomatic achievements to the efforts of the military leadership, the prime minister and the government.—APP

PRCS takes community
climate concerns to COP31

Pre-COP31 Event brings together humanitarian partners, diplomats, academia, youth and volunteers to move "from Negotiations to Implementation"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), with the support of the German Red Cross, organized the Pre-COP31 Event, "Community Voice to COP31: from Negotiations to Implementation," at its National Headquarters. The event aimed to bring the experiences, concerns and aspirations of climate-affected communities into the global climate dialogue ahead of the 31st Conference of the Parties.

Welcoming the guests, Chairperson PRCS, Mrs. Farzana Naek, said: "Climate change is a growing humanitarian crisis, affecting lives, livelihoods, health, food security, water availability and human dignity. Community voices must not simply be heard at climate events; they must shape decisions, investments and implementation." She called for greater investment in preparedness, anticipatory action, climate adaptation and community resilience, and urged that progress be measured by "communities reached, risks reduced, livelihoods protected and lives made safer."

Secretary General PRCS, Mr. Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, said that the event was a chance to turn the experience of climate-affected communities into a clear voice ahead of COP31. He briefed participants on the event zones and PRCS's climate adaptation initiatives, and noted that under the Chairperson's leadership, the transformation of PRCS continues to make the Society more vibrant, transparent, accountable and sustainable. Mr. Emilio Teijeira, Regional Representative Asia, German Red Cross, appreciated PRCS's



climate action and said: "The German Red Cross is proud to stand with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society. Its work on community resilience, early action and adaptation shows what locally led climate action looks like in practice. As COP31 approaches, we must ensure that the voices of affected communities are reflected in its outcomes." Mr. Sajjad Kandhir, Head of the Climate Change Program, spoke on the program's importance and ongoing activities.

The event was organized across three zones. Participants watched a documentary on joint PRCS and German Red Cross initiatives and a theatre performance, "Tapish." A panel discussion brought together experts with backgrounds in humanitarian and emergency response, climate policy, climate finance and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction and resilience. They shared perspectives on strengthening community preparedness and turning climate commitments into local action, followed by an interactive question-and-answer session. Mr. Asif Aman of the German Red Cross in Pakistan thanked all the panelists for their valuable insights and contributions, and appreciated the participants for their active engagement. The Green Action Hub featured a Green Market with a Collection and Reward Booth, recycling booths for paper, plastic and metal, and a Climate Gallery asking what COP31 should deliver for communities facing calamities. Guests also placed their key asks and commitments on the My Climate Pledge Tree, and the programme concluded with the "Plant a Promise" plantation drive. The key takeaways and asks from the event will inform PRCS's Climate Message to COP31, to help turn global ambition into meaningful, measurable and sustainable local action.

IHRA
conducts
licensing
assessment
at CDA
Hospital

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) has conducted a licensing assessment at CDA Hospital to evaluate its compliance with the prescribed healthcare standards.

During the assessment, IHRA assessors evaluated the hospital against the Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) indicators and prepared a comprehensive assessment report. The exercise was part of the ongoing licensing process aimed at ensuring that healthcare establishments meet the required standards of patient safety, quality of care and public health before the issuance of a licence. IHRA's regulatory assessments are intended to promote compliance with established healthcare standards and improve the quality and safety of services provided by healthcare facilities in Islamabad. The authority continues to undertake licensing assessments as part of its mandate to strengthen healthcare regulation and ensure quality healthcare services for the public.—APP

Experts stress
osteoporosis
prevention

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Tuesday stressed the importance of osteoporosis prevention, early diagnosis, and appropriate medication to reduce the risk of fractures and protect bone health. On the occasion of World Osteoporosis Day, which is being observed worldwide today, they advised people to adopt healthy lifestyles, consume calcium-rich foods, ensure adequate vitamin D intake, and engage in regular physical activity to maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis. "Osteoporosis is often called a silent disease as it can progress without noticeable symptoms until a fracture occurs. Early assessment, timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment are essential to prevent complications," Dr Malik Imran, a health expert said. He emphasized that people at increased risk, particularly older adults, should consult healthcare professionals about bone health assessments and bone mineral density testing. He also highlighted the importance of taking prescribed medication regularly and following medical advice, cautioning against self-medication or discontinuing treatment without consulting a doctor.—APP

KP's worsening
security situation
demands action: Danyal

past statements were wrong or their current position was wrong. He said the people and the families of martyrs wanted answers to these questions at the earliest

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, on Tuesday said that conditions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been worsening for years, while the provincial leadership had failed to take effective measures against terrorism. Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, he said the government had continued negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) until the last moment in an effort to resolve the issue through dialogue. He said that governor's rule or emergency was the least preferred option for any democratic government, but the sacrifices of martyrs and the rise in terrorism had compelled the government to take this step.

He said that personnel of law enforcement agencies were being martyred daily in the fight against terrorism, while their families, widows and orphaned children repeatedly asked how many more children would be orphaned and how many more mothers would be separated from their loved ones.

He said PTI was repeatedly asked to give a practical commitment against terrorism, but no satisfactory response was received. He said that coffins draped in the Pakistani flag were arriving daily in Rawalpindi and other areas, while negotiations with terrorists and a policy of leniency had further worsened the situation. Barrister Danyal Chaudhry raised several questions regarding Maulana Fazlur Rehman and said that PTI had previously levelled various allegations against him, including those relating to permits, land of martyrs, training camps and support for terrorists. He asked whether those allegations were wrong at the time or whether Maulana Fazlur Rehman's current defence of PTI was wrong. He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman had described PTI in 2012 as the creation of Jews and Western powers, while in 2021 he alleged that PTI founder and his party had received foreign funding. He said that in 2023, Maulana had claimed that foreign agencies had used PTI founder to bring him into power. Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said Maulana Fazlur Rehman had alleged in November 2022 that foreign funding was intended to support the long march and to cancel the visit of the Chinese president. He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman had described the May 2023 incidents as an attempt to demoralize the martyrs of the armed forces and weaken Pakistan's military. He asked that if these statements were correct, what was the basis for standing in defence of PTI today. Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said that a sudden change in Maulana Fazlur Rehman's political position after two decades suggested some personal or political interest, as no such change could outweigh the funerals of martyrs, their sacrifices and national security. He said if Maulana's past statements were wrong, he should clarify his position before the nation. He said allegations that the government had taken mines and mineral "Madianities" or made a decision under any agreement were baseless, as governor's rule was imposed not because of any deal or political pressure, but in view of the sacrifices of martyrs, the increase in terrorism and the requirements of national security. Barrister called upon Maulana Fazlur Rehman to explain the difference between the situations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, saying that there were fundamental differences between terrorism, insurgency and the policies of the provincial governments in both provinces.

He said the Balochistan government had supported the state's position against terrorism, whereas the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had adopted a position driven by its political interests. He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman and his party would have to provide clear answers to all these questions, as either their past statements were wrong or their current position was wrong. He said the people and the families of martyrs wanted answers to these questions at the earliest.

Sooch Badlo by MAK
highlights AI-based edu

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Education experts, teachers and students from various cities across Pakistan attended the 2026 annual ceremony of Sooch Badlo by MAK, where the institution's Chief Executive, Muhammad Ahmed Khan, presented his vision for promoting quality education in Pakistan through artificial intelligence (AI), virtual laboratories and technology-driven teaching methods.

Addressing the ceremony, Muhammad Ahmed Khan said that Sooch Badlo by MAK was currently providing modern education to more than 10,000 students through innovative learning methods, including artificial intelligence and virtual labs for practical learning.

Highlighting the institution's academic achievements, he said its overseas students secured first position in the

Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) among overseas candidates, while Pakistani students achieved seventh position. He added that students from the institution had also demonstrated outstanding performance in the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT). He described Sooch Badlo by MAK as an international educational technology platform providing modern learning facilities to students in Pakistan and abroad. The ceremony also focused on using advanced technology to improve the learning process, fostering creativity and critical thinking among students, expanding access to quality education, and aligning traditional teaching methods with the demands of the modern era. As part of the event, cash prizes were distributed among outstanding students to recognise their academic achievements and encourage them to pursue further excellence in education.

Pakistan Girl Guides
Association celebrates
Int'l Day of the Girl

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Girl Guides Association National Headquarters celebrated the International Day of the Girl on Tuesday, bringing together more than 600 guides and students from across the country. The event was organized in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC). The celebration provided girls with engaging and interactive learning opportunities focused on health, nutrition, emotional wellbeing, and leadership development. Through hands-on activities and discussions, participants explored ways to build confidence, enhance their wellbeing, and become active contributors to their communities. Among the distinguished guests were Ms. Rabia Waseem Farooqi, Parliamentary Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training; Ms. Mary O'Neill, Ambassador of Ireland to Pakistan; Ms. Nadia, Member NCRC; and Mr. Elnur Aliyev, Chief of Social and Behavior Change and Officer-in-Charge for Gender and Development, UNICEF Pakistan. Welcoming the guests, Mrs. Maria Maud Sabri, National Commissioner, Pakistan Girl Guides Association, highlighted the transformative impact of Guiding on girls' lives. She emphasized that Guiding is preparing the leaders of tomorrow by equipping girls with the confidence, skills, and values needed to step forward whenever leadership is required. She noted that Guiding is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills but also about embracing an effective learning methodology. Through learning by doing and making learning enjoyable, girls internalize valuable lessons and develop into capable and responsible citizens. A key feature of the event was a panel discussion on the International Day of the Girl theme, "Invest in Her Today, Strengthen Her Tomorrow: A Pathway to End Child Marriage." The panel brought together Mrs. Farhana Azim, Honorary President of PGGA; Ms. Baela Raza Jamil, CEO, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi; and Ms. Barira Hanif, Gender Specialist at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.—DNA

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A New Balance in the Middle East



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

FOR decades, the politics of the Middle East has revolved around one familiar assumption: whenever a crisis becomes too dangerous, Washington eventually steps in. American aircraft, warships, intelligence networks and diplomatic pressure have repeatedly shaped the outcome of conflicts stretching from the Gulf to the Levant. That assumption is now being tested. The most important consequence of the current confrontation with Iran may not be the immediate military outcome. It may be the gradual emergence of a regional order in which Arab states are increasingly prepared to defend their interests themselves. Iran faces a serious economic problem. Its oil revenues have been sharply constrained for months, while sanctions and the American blockade have narrowed its ability to sell crude and bring foreign currency into the country. An economy already under pressure cannot indefinitely sustain the costs of military confrontation, regional operations and domestic security. Tehran therefore has a powerful reason to seek some form of accommodation if the economic pressure continues.

But Iran's economic difficulties are only one part of a much larger story. The more consequential development is that neighbouring states are no longer waiting for Washington to determine how regional security should be managed. President Donald Trump has repeatedly argued that the United States should not remain the permanent policeman of the Middle East. Whether Washington can maintain that position consistently is another question. American involvement in the region is too deep to disappear overnight. Yet even a partial American withdrawal creates pressure on regional governments to reconsider their own security arrangements.

For years, Riyadh relied heavily on American military support and intelligence cooperation to confront threats from Yemen and elsewhere. The war against the Houthis demonstrated both the strengths and limitations of that dependence. Saudi Arabia possessed considerable military resources, but the conflict also showed how difficult it is to defeat a determined adversary through air power alone. The present circumstances are different. The Saudis are increasingly taking direct responsibility for confronting the Houthi threat, while intelligence co-operation with Israel has reportedly become part of the wider regional picture. That development would have been difficult to imagine only a few years ago.

Saudi Arabia and Israel have no formal diplomatic relationship, and the Palestinian question remains a profound obstacle to a public strategic partnership. Yet security calculations have their own logic. Both countries regard the expansion



of Iranian influence and the activities of Iran-backed armed groups as major security concerns. The prospect of intelligence cooperation therefore reflects a convergence of interests rather than a disappearance of political differences. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to the United Arab Emirates, accompanied by representation from other Gulf countries, is another indication of this changing environment. Such contacts do not automatically create a unified regional alliance. Gulf monarchies have different priorities, and their relations with Iran vary considerably. Nevertheless, regular political and security contacts can gradually produce a common understanding of shared threats. This matters because Iran's regional influence has never depended solely on its conventional military strength. Tehran has built networks of armed and political partners across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. These relationships have enabled Iran to project power without relying exclusively on its own armed forces. The Gulf countries have learned that they cannot simply depend on an outside power to manage every crisis. The experience of Yemen, attacks on oil facilities and shipping disruptions have demonstrated the vulnerability of critical infrastructure. Economic diversification, stronger defence capabilities and closer intelligence cooperation are increasingly being treated as matters of national survival. There is, however, a danger in assuming that a regional security bloc will automatically produce stability. If the Middle East becomes divided into opposing camps, competition could become more dangerous rather than less. Iran may respond to growing regional cooperation by strengthening its own alliances and increasing support for non-state groups. A cycle of retaliation could follow. The Gulf states therefore face a delicate task. They need sufficient strength to deter Iranian intervention, but they also need channels through which disputes can be contained. Military power without diplomacy can produce temporary victories while leaving the underlying conflict unresolved.

For Pakistan, these developments deserve close attention. Islamabad has traditionally maintained relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran. That position has sometimes been difficult, but it remains strategically valuable. Pakistan cannot afford to become a party to a wider confrontation between regional powers. At the same time, developments in the Gulf directly affect Pakistan through energy supplies, remittances, trade and the welfare of millions of Pakistanis working in the region. The changing Middle East therefore requires careful diplomacy rather than automatic alignment. Iran's economic vulnerability may eventually push Tehran towards negotiation. But the larger transformation is taking place among its neighbours. Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Gulf states increasingly recognise that their security cannot permanently be outsourced to Washington. The Middle East may not be becoming peaceful. It may, however, be becoming more responsible for its own security. That could prove to be the most significant change of all. If regional states learn to combine deterrence with diplomacy, the gradual reduction of American policing need not create a vacuum. It could instead encourage the emergence of a regional balance in which states themselves carry a greater share of the responsibility for preventing conflict. The real test will be whether they use their growing power to prepare for the next war or to make the next war less likely.

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France and the Enduring Politics of Protest

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



France's foreign policy adds another dimension to this discussion. Its pursuit of strategic autonomy has frequently led Paris to maintain positions that do not entirely coincide with those of its allies. Its relations with the United States, its approach towards the Middle East and its dealings with Iran are shaped by a combination of national interests, diplomatic traditions and changing regional circumstances. An independent foreign policy can enhance a country's international standing, but it may also produce friction with partners whose strategic calculations differ

NATIONS are shaped not only by their institutions and constitutions but also by historical experiences that leave a lasting imprint on the collective mind. Some societies develop a particular sensitivity to injustice, while others acquire a deep suspicion of authority. In France, the memory of revolution continues to inform the relationship between the state and its citizens. More than two centuries after the overthrow of the monarchy, the French remain willing to challenge policies they regard as unfair, defend their economic interests and take their grievances to the streets. The circumstances have changed, but the underlying question remains familiar; how far can authority go before society refuses to accept its demands?

The French Revolution of 1789 was born of a profound crisis of legitimacy. The monarchy struggled under financial pressures, the privileged estates resisted meaningful reform, and ordinary people faced taxation, food shortages and economic insecurity. What began as a confrontation over political representation and the distribution of burdens soon developed into a challenge to the foundations of the established order. The storming of the Bastille became a powerful symbol of the rejection of arbitrary authority, while the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity acquired a significance that extended far beyond France.

The Revolution was neither a simple triumph nor an uninterrupted march towards democracy. It brought violence, instability and political excess, followed by authoritarian rule and imperial ambition. Yet its central challenge to inherited privilege transformed France and helped shape modern political thought. It established a principle that remains relevant today: the legitimacy of government cannot rest on authority alone; it must also depend upon its capacity to respond to the needs and expectations of the people. This historical inheritance offers a useful perspective on contemporary French politics. Strikes, demonstrations and mass protests have remained prominent features of public life, particularly when governments attempt to reform pensions, labour regulations or public services. Such resistance is often portrayed as an obstacle to economic modernisation. Yet the other side of the argument deserves equal consideration. When citizens believe that reforms impose disproportionate costs upon ordinary households, protest becomes a means of demanding accountability rather than merely an expression of hostility towards the state.

The comparison with 1789, however, has its limits. Contemporary France possesses democratic institutions,

constitutional safeguards and electoral mechanisms through which public grievances can be expressed. Disagreement over a pension reform is not equivalent to rebellion against an absolute monarchy. Nor should every demonstration be interpreted as evidence of an impending revolution. The continuity lies instead in a political culture that treats dissent as an established part of citizenship and regards the distribution of economic burdens as a matter of public justice.

The economic dimension is particularly important. Rising living costs, concerns over purchasing power, taxation and the sustainability of public services can weaken confidence in government even in relatively prosperous societies. Economic indicators may suggest stability, but they do not necessarily capture the anxieties of households struggling to meet everyday expenses. When people perceive that economic adjustments are demanded of them while the privileged remain protected, resentment becomes more than a question of material hardship. It becomes a question of fairness, trust and the moral authority of the state. Governments confronting such discontent face a difficult choice. They may engage with public concerns, explain the necessity of difficult decisions and distribute their costs more equitably. Alternatively, they may treat protest primarily as a threat to public order. The latter approach can provide temporary control without resolving the underlying dispute. A democratic government cannot be expected to abandon every reform in the face of opposition, but neither can it assume that electoral victory gives it unlimited discretion between elections. The durability of reform depends as much upon public confidence as upon administrative determination.

Domestic unrest also takes place within an international environment in which political crises rarely escape external attention. Rival states, ideological movements and competing political interests may seek to exploit internal divisions, amplify discontent or use instability to advance their own objectives. This is not peculiar to France, nor does it mean that popular movements are necessarily manipulated from abroad. Public grievances often have genuine domestic causes. The challenge is to distinguish authentic dissent from attempts to instrumentalise it for purposes unrelated to the concerns of ordinary citizens. France's foreign policy adds another dimension to this discussion. Its pursuit of strategic autonomy has frequently led Paris to maintain positions that do not entirely coincide with those of its allies. Its relations with the United States, its approach towards the Middle East and its dealings with Iran are shaped

by a combination of national interests, diplomatic traditions and changing regional circumstances. An independent foreign policy can enhance a country's international standing, but it may also produce friction with partners whose strategic calculations differ. Some interpretations of recent developments suggest that France may be facing political consequences for not aligning itself with particular positions concerning Iran. Such assertions, however, should be treated cautiously unless supported by verifiable evidence. Diplomatic disagreements and domestic unrest occurring at the same time do not establish a causal relationship. To attribute France's internal difficulties to external retaliation without demonstrating the connection would risk replacing analysis with speculation. The possibility of geopolitical pressure deserves scrutiny, but it must be examined alongside the economic, social and political factors that can independently generate public discontent.

The wider international order is itself in transition. Established alliances are under strain, regional conflicts are altering diplomatic priorities, and economic interdependence increasingly exists alongside strategic rivalry. In this environment, governments must reconcile international commitments with domestic expectations. A country's diplomatic freedom may be influenced by its relationships abroad, but its capacity to sustain an independent course also depends upon the confidence of its own people. France's experience therefore offers a lesson that extends beyond its borders. Political stability cannot be secured merely by controlling demonstrations, just as international influence cannot be measured solely by military or economic strength. Both depend upon the credibility of institutions, the fairness of public policy and the willingness of those in authority to recognise legitimate grievances. External actors may exploit divisions, but a society that addresses its internal weaknesses is less vulnerable to such interference.

The French Revolution should not be invoked casually whenever crowds gather in the streets. History does not repeat itself in identical form, and the France of today is fundamentally different from the kingdom of Louis XVI. Yet the Revolution's enduring significance lies in its reminder that public consent cannot be taken for granted. More than two centuries later, the French tradition of protest continues to underline a simple truth; governments may command institutions and enforce laws, but their lasting authority depends upon public trust. When that trust weakens, the streets become a forum in which the legitimacy of political decisions is tested—and no democracy can afford to ignore the verdict for long.

Rare Earths: Pakistan's Economic Promise (I)

Qamar Bashir



Neodymium and praseodymium are important inputs for powerful neodymium-iron-boron magnets. Samarium supports samarium-cobalt magnets used where temperature stability matters. Certain high-performance magnets also incorporate dysprosium or terbium. Developing these products involves concentration, separation, purification, metal production, alloying and precision manufacturing

RARE earths offer Pakistan an opportunity to change its economic destiny. Their greatest promise lies in connecting the country's geological wealth with the industries shaping modern life: electric vehicles, electronics, clean energy, advanced machinery and aerospace. Growing international interest can bring the capital, technology and markets needed for this transformation. Pakistan's task is to build partnerships that turn mineral deposits into lasting productive capacity, skilled employment and public prosperity.

America's chargé d'affaires in Pakistan, Natalie A. Baker, has described cooperation extending from geological assessment and extraction to workforce training, schools and transport infrastructure. Her reference to mineral potential reaching seven trillion dollars since within published estimates of \$6 trillion to \$8 trillion. The opportunity she outlined provides a basis for agreements that connect mining investment with local development and a wider industrial economy. Energy Update, citing the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan, reports mineral-bearing areas extending across approximately 600,000 square kilometres, with 92 known minerals, including 52 commercially exploited. SFA (Oxford) estimates recoverable rare-earth oxide potential at 100,000 to 500,000 tonnes. These estimates offer a starting point for systematic exploration, deposit assessment and investment planning.

My own association with this opportunity reaches back four decades. In 1986, while working as a news producer, I accompanied a visiting Chinese state minister during a tour connected with mineral deposits in Balochistan. The delegation's interest reflected an early appreciation of the region's potential. Subsequent Chinese involvement at Saindak established an important chapter in Pakistan's mineral development, providing experience upon which broader partnerships can build.

Reko Diq demonstrates the scale of Pakistan's documented copper-gold opportunity. Barrick's year-end 2025 disclosures identify 7.3 million tonnes of contained copper and 13 million ounces of gold attributable to its 50 percent interest. Project-wide quantities implied by these rounded figures are approximately 14.6 million tonnes of copper and 26 million ounces of gold. Federal Pakistani enterprises and Balochistan each hold 25 percent of the venture. Using illustrative prices of \$10,000 per tonne of copper and \$3,000 per ounce of gold, those quantities

represent approximately \$224 billion in gross contained-metal value. Commercial returns will emerge over decades through production, sales and expenditure. Pakistan's benefits will include agreed royalties, taxes, dividends, employment and domestic procurement. The volume of activity retained within the country will determine how widely these benefits spread. Rare earths create a related avenue for industrial development. Geological research identifies promising formations at Sillai Patti, Koga, Loe Shilman, Warsak and Jambil in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Studies document light rare-earth enrichment involving cerium, lanthanum, neodymium, praseodymium and samarium. SFA also identifies prospects around Skardu and Chilas, Chagai and the Makran coast, together with potential secondary recovery from Thar coal fly ash.

Research on Sillai Patti cites earlier sampled-material averages of approximately 314 parts per million of neodymium, 915 of cerium and 519 of lanthanum. A hyperspectral investigation identified portions of samples reaching approximately 1,000 parts per million of neodymium. Representative drilling, mineralogical analysis and processing trials can translate this scientific knowledge into project-specific quantities, recovery rates and commercial values.

Neodymium and praseodymium are important inputs for powerful neodymium-iron-boron magnets. Samarium supports samarium-cobalt magnets used where temperature stability matters. Certain high-performance magnets also incorporate dysprosium or terbium. Developing these products involves concentration, separation, purification, metal production, alloying and precision manufacturing. Each stage offers a possible link between Pakistan's resource base and a more technically capable economy. American engagement already has a practical foundation. In September 2025, Pakistan announced a US Strategic Metals partnership with the Frontier Works Organization, envisaging approximately \$500 million in initial investment and eventual development of a polymetallic refinery. USSM subsequently reported receiving antimony, copper concentrate and rare-earth material containing neodymium and praseodymium. The U.S. Export-Import Bank also lists \$1.25 billion in authorised financing for Reko Diq. Potential technical partners extend across the industrial chain. MP Materials operates in rare-earth processing and magnet manufacturing. Energy Fuels has demonstrated

separated neodymium-praseodymium oxide production, and Arnold Magnetic Technologies manufactures advanced magnets. Their capabilities suggest possible commercial matches as Pakistani projects become investment-ready. Chinese, Canadian, Australian and European expertise can likewise contribute through competitive, transparent arrangements. The economic scale is substantial. Barrick's 2025 feasibility plan envisaged Phase 1 ramping up to 240,000 tonnes of copper and 297,000 ounces of gold annually. At the illustrative prices above, this represents about \$3.29 billion in annual gross metal value. Its planned expanded operation's specified ten-year average would represent approximately \$6.16 billion annually on the same basis. Net national gains will depend on costs, financing and domestic value addition.

Barrick's April 2026 update provided for slower development and a review through mid-2027. This makes phased planning valuable: exploration, infrastructure, skills and industrial investment should advance through clearly financed stages. SFA's proposed rare-earth roadmap similarly progresses from initial exports toward processing and larger-scale mining. Timelines should guide coordination, with implementation measured through completed facilities and commercially qualified output.

Pakistan's strengths are its mineral base and growing international attention. Its development needs include geological data, processing capacity, dependable utilities and specialised skills. Opportunities encompass exports, technology transfer and manufacturing; threats include security disruption, price fluctuations and environmental pressures. This SWOT assessment points toward coordinated investment, strong institutions and community participation. The next step is to place industrial development at the centre of mineral policy. Agreements should connect extraction with infrastructure, Pakistani expertise and downstream production. That is the bridge from geological promise to economic transformation—and the question taken forward in Part Two: how Pakistan can use today's mineral opportunity to build industries that continue creating wealth long after individual deposits are exhausted.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
 Former Press Minister,
 Embassy of Pakistan to France
 Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
 Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Briefs

PHC seeks AG's response on PTI...

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The court subsequently issued the notice and adjourned the hearing until 10 November. Separately, the court sought responses from the government and relevant authorities on petitions seeking the recovery of now-dysfunctional KP chief minister Sohail Afridi, Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and PTI provincial president Junaid Akbar. During a hearing on a petition filed for the recovery of Afridi, Justice Arshad Ali issued notices to the provincial government, police and relevant officials, directing them to submit their response within two days. A two-member bench comprising Justice Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Jamsheed heard the petitions regarding the recovery of Swati and Akbar. The court issued notices to the government, the KP inspector general of police and other relevant authorities, seeking their responses to the petitions within 10 days.

PM Shehbaz ready to build...

FROM PAGE 01
"In 11 months, there was one apex committee meeting in which the KP CM was in attendance, and the way he was brought there, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi already spoke about it," Sanaullah said. Recalling the federal government's talks with the PTI earlier this month, Sanaullah said, "During the talks, we agreed on constituting a political committee comprising members from both sides; however, [...] the talks broke down on one single point — the PTI fulfilling its responsibilities and supporting the federal government in counterterrorism efforts." In the days preceding the imposition of governor's rule in KP, political tensions between the Centre and the opposition — including the PTI, which was in power in KP — had remained high since jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party announced a protest march to Islamabad to demand his release. Intense negotiations between the two sides a week before the imposition of governor's rule had failed to yield any results, with counterterrorism policy being one of the main reasons behind the breakdown of their talks. The PTI said it was being left out of security decisions concerning KP, which the Centre denied. It also called for reviewing the counterterrorism policy, while the latter criticised the KP government's efforts to combat terrorism in the province and objected to its stance on dialogue with the Afghan Taliban. Soon after, the Centre also authorised the deployment of Pakistan Army troops and assets in aid of civil power in KP.

Houthis provided with drone...

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Training Center on the outskirts of Ataq, the capital of Shabwa province in southeastern Yemen. Local authorities reported that the facility was struck by three ballistic missiles while newly recruited internal security personnel were undergoing training, leaving more than 70 people dead and over 200 wounded. In exclusive remarks to Asharq Al-Awsat, Al-Khulafifi said Houthi attacks would not break the resilience of Shabwa's residents but would instead strengthen their determination to confront the group. He said local authorities possess information confirming cooperation between the Houthis and terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaeda and ISIS, noting that the Houthis had enabled some of these groups to acquire drone technology. According to Al-Khulafifi, this cooperation is evident in attacks targeting security forces, the Shabwa Defense Forces and the Nation's Shield Forces as they pass through province en route to other governorates.

Pakistan, Bangladesh look to strengthen Football ties

Bangladesh High Commissioner Md. Iqbal Hossain Khan also highlighted the importance of sports diplomacy in fostering friendship and understanding between nations



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bangladesh are exploring new avenues to strengthen football ties, promote sports diplomacy and create greater opportunities for young talent, reflecting a shared commitment to cooperation and football development in South Asia. A meeting between Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Md. Iqbal Hossain Khan provided an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen football relations and explore avenues for future cooperation between the two countries. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani said football has the power to bring nations closer, unite young people and build lasting friendships beyond borders. He said closer engagement between the football communities of Pakistan and Bangladesh could create new opportunities for youth development, exchange of expertise, friendly matches and the promotion of football at grassroots and professional levels. "Football offers a powerful platform to bring people and nations closer. Pakistan is keen to strengthen its football ties with Bangladesh and explore opportunities that can benefit players, coaches and young talent in both countries," Mohsen Gilani said. Bangladesh High Commissioner Md. Iqbal Hossain Khan also highlighted the importance of sports diplomacy in fostering friendship and understanding between nations. "Sports provide a unique opportunity to strengthen people-to-people connections and promote goodwill between countries. Football, with its immense popularity among young people, can play an important role in bringing Pakistan and Bangladesh closer," the High Commissioner said.

Pak-China marine information workshop launched

HARBIN: Pakistan and China launched the China-Pakistan Marine Information Workshop (CPMI) to strengthen bilateral cooperation in marine research, joint ocean observations, data sharing and scientific capacity building. The workshop was inaugurated during the 6th Exchange Mechanism Conference of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Consortium of Universities at Harbin Engineering University, bringing together more than 120 representatives from over 40 universities and research institutions from both countries, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. CPMI aims to establish stronger institutional links between Pakistani and Chinese universities and research institutes, enabling researchers to conduct joint ocean observations, exchange marine data and

collaborate on scientific studies. It also seeks to build research capacity through expanded academic networks and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Held under the theme "Nurturing a Shared Future through Cooperation on High-Quality Development of Higher Education between China and Pakistan," the conference marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The conference reviewed progress in

academic exchanges, joint scientific research and human resource development under the CPEC Consortium of Universities, with discussions covering emerging fields including artificial intelligence, agriculture, mining, marine information and public health. Chairman of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, attended the opening ceremony alongside senior Chinese officials and representatives of academic and research institutions.



Participants also launched the Annual Development Report on the Exchange Mechanism of the CPEC Consortium of Universities, documenting progress in collaborative research, talent development and technical exchanges. Another key initiative was the launch of the High-Level Graduate Student Research Visit Programme for CPEC in Pakistan, which will provide Pakistani graduate students with opportunities to undertake research visits and joint training in China, strengthening academic mobility and practical research cooperation. The conference featured specialised forums on marine information, artificial intelligence and future development, advanced materials and intelligent manufacturing, and China-Pakistan youth cooperation. — APP

Tottenham's agonizing wait for Premier League win

DNA

LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur fans have been crying out for a bit of quality this season and they finally got it on Monday as the North London side claimed their first Premier League win in 148 days with a 3-1 home success against Coventry City. Tottenham are the last of the 92 clubs in England's football league to earn a victory this season and move off the bottom of the Premier League standings and into 16th with six points from seven games, one place ahead of Coventry. "We are very happy for the result and we played much better than in other games. It was important to get this win," Tottenham manager Roberto De Zerbi said. James Maddison started for the first time since May 2025 and marked the occasion with a superb opening goal that had the home faithful off their seats. But there was even better to come as Omar Marmoush netted his first for the club since his move from Manchester City with a rasping drive from 25 yards, before Ben Davies added a late third. "We knew we wanted to win and today was the day, so hopefully we can kick on from here," defender Jan Paul van Hecke said. "We needed to be patient. It was not an easy game for us with Coventry's low (defensive) block." Perhaps the biggest cheer of the night came when winger Dejan Kulusevski was introduced off the bench on his return from a lengthy injury spell that was ended with his first competitive action in 526 days. A first win of the season, the return of key players and a little more swagger in the side made this a potential turning point in the season for Tottenham, who had only scored three goals in the campaign before Monday's win.

Baniyas and Sharjah Self-Defence retain titles

DNA

ABU DHABI: Baniyas Jiu-Jitsu Club secured their second consecutive Gi title, while Sharjah Self-Defence Sports Club claimed a third straight No-Gi crown at the recently concluded third Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Jiu-Jitsu Championship at Mubadala Arena in Abu Dhabi. The final day of the eighth and final round featured athletes under 12, 14 and 16. In all, the season comprised eight rounds across the UAE, with five Gi and three No-Gi rounds. The format gave clubs and academies regular opportunities to compete and develop their athletes, with the titles decided by the total points earned in their respective rounds. In the overall Gi standings, Baniyas finished ahead of Al-Jazeera Jiu-Jitsu Club in second and Palms Sports — Team 777 in third. Sharjah Self-Defence topped the No-Gi standings, followed by ADMA in second and Palms Sports — Team 777 in third. Mohamed Salem Al-Dhaheeri, vice chairman of the UAE Jiu-Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts Federation, said in a recent press release: "The level of competition this season shows how clubs and academies continue to improve. The points system rewards teams that perform consistently throughout the season and keeps the competition strong. "Staying at the top takes consistent preparation and the ability to deal with the challenges of each round. The championship has helped narrow the gap in standards between clubs and academies and improve athletes' skills across all age groups."

Second Round of 2026 Saudi Toyota Championship

DNA

JEDDAH: The second round of the 2026 Saudi Toyota Championship Karting concluded at Jeddah Corniche Karting Circuit, under the supervision of the Saudi Automobile and Motorcycle Federation, the owner of the championship. The event was managed by Bakhshab Motorsport, in partnership with Jameel Motorsport, the official partner of the championship. The second round featured 25 drivers competing across three categories: Senior, Junior and Mini, with closely contested performances throughout the competition. In the Senior category, Khalid Alesayi claimed first place, followed by Jana Nujeiman in second and Mohamad Al Eid in third.

McCullum warns England of challenges in Pak ODI tri-series

RAWALPINDI: England must adapt quickly to subcontinent conditions and produce their best cricket against Pakistan and Sri Lanka to reach the final of the ODI tri-series, white-ball head coach Brendon McCullum has said. Speaking ahead of England's campaign in Pakistan, McCullum acknowledged the challenges of facing two strong opponents in conditions that demand flexibility and quick adjustments. Pakistan are a very strong side, obviously. When you come to this part of the world, you have to do things differently. Playing subcontinent teams in subcontinent conditions has its own challenges,' McCullum said. 'We want to be a team that can compete in all conditions against any opposition. That's a challenge we need to embrace. We need to make sure we're able to adjust to whatever the conditions are.' McCullum said the tri-series would test England's ability to adapt to different opponents, adding that his side would need to perform at its best to secure a place in the final. 'Particularly in a tri-series, you're going to have to bounce between two different oppositions as well. It's a real opportunity for us. We're respectful of how strong both Pakistan and Sri Lanka

are. We're going to have to be at our best to give ourselves a chance of making the final,' he said. The former New Zealand captain also expressed his pleasure at returning to Pakistan, praising the hospitality and competitive cricket the team had experienced during previous visits. 'Firstly, it's wonderful to be back in Pakistan. We have toured Pakistan a number of times over the last few years, and each time we have enjoyed not just the hospitality but also the hard-fought cricket,' he said. McCullum acknowledged that England had experienced both victories and defeats against Pakistan, describing the challenge of facing Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the tri-series as one his side was looking forward to. He also praised the weather and playing conditions, saying England were pleased to be back in the country. 'The weather is beautiful, the conditions are amazing, and the hospitality is always outstanding. We feel very pleased to be here,' he added. McCullum said England would not rely on a rigid formula but would instead focus on responding to the conditions and challenges presented by each match. 'I'm not really sure what that term actually means. For us, we just want to be a team that is competitive in all conditions against any opposition. — DNA

Field Marshal Asim meets President of Iran...

FROM PAGE 01

efforts to reduce regional tensions, and the importance of maintaining stability through dialogue. The talks also covered developments concerning the Strait of Hormuz, a key international maritime route, and the need to ensure the uninterrupted flow of global trade and energy supplies. Iranian media reports also noted that Pakistan's potential role in facilitating communication between Tehran and Washington was among the topics discussed during the visit. President Pezeshkian and Field Marshal Munir reportedly exchanged views on mediation efforts and broader regional developments. Pakistan has repeatedly called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the region and has emphasized the importance of keeping vital international shipping routes open, including the Strait of Hormuz, amid ongoing tensions.

Pak beat England in first ODI

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Banton continued to bat sensibly, building a steady partnership with Harry Brook to take England past the 100-run mark. During the stand, Banton also brought up his third ODI half-century. The right-handed batter eventually fell to Arafat Minhas in the 19th over after scoring a fighting 57 off 53 deliveries, including five boundaries and two sixes. His dismissal left England at 120-2 in 18.3 overs. In the 21st over, Minhas struck again to remove England captain Brook, who managed just five off seven deliveries. Sam Curran and Joe Root then attempted to revive the chase, building a partnership that took England past the 150-run mark. However, Naseem Shah provided Pakistan with a crucial breakthrough by bowling Root for 33 off 35 deliveries, including five boundaries. England were reduced to 165-4 in 28.5 overs.

Maldives President arrives in...

FROM PAGE 01

Dr Muizzu will be accorded an official welcome tomorrow at the Prime Minister's House. The visiting dignitary is on a state visit to Pakistan from October 20 to 22. During the visit, President Muizzu will meet his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari, who will also host a State Banquet in his honour. He will also hold restricted and delegation-level talks with PM Shehbaz. A Foreign Office spokesperson had earlier said that the two leaders would review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and explore avenues to further strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, health, education, tourism, agriculture, defence, maritime security, climate change and people-to-people exchanges. They will also exchange views on regional and international developments of mutual interest.

PTI rules out Achakzai's removal

FROM PAGE 01

leader was at Imran's discretion, adding that the PTI founder had named Achakzai and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas as leaders and directed the party to move forward under their guidance. "The PTI founder gave me instructions, and those are what we accept and follow," Gohar said, adding that neither opposition leader had been disrespected. He said everything was proceeding at the PTI founder's discretion, adding: "If there had to be a 'minus', it would have happened by now." Gohar also maintained that Imran could not be "minus", claiming that 90% of the nation currently stood with him. Separately, the PTI chairman said he had spoken to National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq about production orders for 10 arrested parliamentarians. He said lawmakers Adil Bazai and Chaudhry Imtiaz had been arrested and that the speaker had been informed about the arrests.

Pak-China joint venture in donkey business holds ceremony

DNA

GWADAR: The ground breaking ceremony of Shahzad and Shao Farm, a joint venture involving Pakistani and Chinese investors in donkey business, was held in the Gwadar Free Zone, marking a step forward in bilateral economic cooperation and efforts to promote local production, processing and exports. Shahzad & Shao Private Farm Co., Ltd. is an investment enterprise established in Pakistan's Gwadar Free Zone, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. It covers an area of approximately 16,500 square meters, with a building area of about 5,000 square meters. The total investment is estimated at around 52 million, and it is expected to create about 120 local jobs. On the occasion of the groundbreaking ceremony, Gwadar Port Authority Chairman Noor-ul-Haq Baloch said industrial development in the free zone would create new opportunities to access international markets through Gwadar Port. He highlighted the investment potential of Balochistan's agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors. Shao Yunfei, CEO of Shahzad and Shao Farm said that joint investment would create new employment and technical training

opportunities for local youth. Investment in agriculture and food-related sectors could help connect local resources with international markets, while the expansion of industrial and productive activities in the free zone remained a government priority. It is pertinent to mention that Shahzad and Shao (Private) business firm, a joint venture of Pakistan and Chinese companies, officially secured four acres of land in the



Gwadar North Free Zone to establish a donkey slaughterhouse and processing factory for exporting donkey meat and hides to China. In order to start the construction work for the donkey factory, initial soil testing was conducted as per set rules and regulations on August 10. In accordance with government guidelines, the company has also obtained a quota of 150,000 donkeys for slaughter per year. "The company

has already obtained all necessary licenses and no-objection certificates from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, the Animal Quarantine Department and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC)," a GPA official told Gwadar Pro. Efforts are afoot to develop donkey farms in collaboration with local donkey farmers in the areas of Sindh and Punjab, he added. Pakistan's first China-led top-notch construction of modern slaughterhouse for donkey meat and hide was completed at a cost of \$50 million last year. In China, there is a significant market demand for donkey meat and hides, particularly as donkey hides serve as a crucial raw material for Ejiao, a traditional Chinese medicinal product. Pakistan, the world's third-largest donkey-owning country, has a population of approximately 5.8 million donkeys. A GPA official revealed that having been catalysed with construction of donkey slaughterhouse and companies' operationalization in Gwadar North Free Zone, many other companies have applied for obtainment of lands. These companies include MLG Farms, Sang Yang Global Limited, Foshan Brothers and Sisters Trading Company.

Briefs

Sultan of Oman begins state visit to Britain

LONDON: King Charles III welcomed Sultan Haitham bin Tarik of Oman to Windsor Castle on Tuesday at the start of a three-day state visit as Britain seeks to bolster a strategically important ally. The sultan was greeted with a royal gun salute, a carriage ride through the town of Windsor and a military honor guard before a glittering state banquet Tuesday night at the palace. On Wednesday, the sultan will hold talks with Prime Minister Andy Burnham and give a speech to business leaders in London before his departure the following day.

Oman, a former British protectorate that gained independence in 1951, sits on the western shore of the Strait of Hormuz, making it key to international efforts to increase the flow of oil through the waterway that links the Arabian Gulf to world markets.

Oman has sought to remain neutral in the conflict between the US and Iran, working to broker a peace deal even though Iran has targeted the country with drones and missiles.

US President Donald Trump in August threatened to bomb Oman after Iran said it reached a deal with its neighbor over shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz.

Burnham's office said the sultan gave the prime minister an update on the situation in the strait when they spoke on Monday. The two leaders also discussed peace talks held last weekend in Pakistan and urged both parties to find a resolution to the conflict without further escalation.

"The prime minister also reiterated the UK's commitment to ensuring Oman's security," his office said in a statement.

Britain has maintained strong military ties to Oman ever since the country gained independence. Royal Air Force officers and non-commissioned officers continue to serve in a variety of roles in the Omani air force. The British Navy base at Duqm on Oman's Arabian Sea coast supports UK military operations throughout the Arabian Gulf region.—APP

UN says 19m Afghans facing acute food insecurity by April

GENEVA: The number of people facing acute food insecurity in Afghanistan is set to rise above 19 million during the forthcoming winter season, the United Nations warned on Tuesday.

The food crisis gripping Afghanistan is projected to affect millions of young children in 2027, the United Nations' humanitarian agency OCHA said. More than four million babies and children under six will need treatment for acute malnutrition next year, it warned.

Between September and October, 15.9 million people — or nearly one in three Afghans — were facing food insecurity at crisis levels or worse, including 3.4 million in emergency conditions, the agency said.

The outlook is set to deteriorate further during the winter lean season from November to April.

"The number facing acute food insecurity is projected to rise to 19.2 million, of which five million are expected to face emergency levels of hunger," which is "one step away from famine," said OCHA's Afghanistan spokeswoman Olga Cherevko. "We must act before winter, not after families have exhausted all the options." "That means getting food assistance to people in need, protecting livestock and productive assets, supporting farmers before critical planting windows close, and keeping essential health, nutrition and water services accessible." The latest snapshot of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification projects that more than four million children aged six months to five years old will need treatment for acute malnutrition next year. "Over one million of these children are expected to suffer severe acute malnutrition," Cherevko told a press briefing in Geneva, speaking from Kabul.—APP

Yousaf visits ICCI, responds positively to Hajj quota proposal

During the meeting, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that the government was making comprehensive arrangements for Hajj 2027 and remained committed to providing maximum possible facilities to Pakistani pilgrims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has taken up an important initiative to facilitate Islamabad's business community in performing Hajj by seeking a dedicated quota of 100 pilgrims through the Chamber. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf has responded positively to the proposal, indicating that it could be implemented from the next Hajj. The proposal was presented to the minister during his visit to ICCI on Tuesday to congratulate the Chamber's newly elected leadership.

During the meeting, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that the government was making comprehensive arrangements for Hajj 2027 and remained committed to providing maximum possible facilities to Pakistani pilgrims. He informed the participants that approximately 450,000 intending pilgrims had registered for Hajj over the next three years, while the annual Hajj quota stood at 180,000. He added that selection would be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

The minister appreciated ICCI's role in advocating ease of doing business and promoting the country's economic development. He acknowledged the Chamber's efforts to highlight the concerns of the business community and contribute to economic progress through constructive engagement with the government and relevant institutions. Member of the National Assembly Babar Nawaz Khan and Brigadier (Retd.) Shehzad Awan accom-



panied the minister during the visit. ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia briefed the minister on the Chamber's forthcoming initiatives aimed at promoting economic prosperity in Islamabad and the surrounding region. He highlighted ICCI's commitment to supporting the business

community and advancing initiatives that contribute to economic growth and community welfare. He also informed the minister that ICCI would soon organize a Naat Khawani programme and invited him to attend as the chief guest. ICCI Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and

Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan briefed the minister on the Chamber's working mechanism, key activities and major achievements. Former ICCI presidents, members of the Executive Committee and a large number of Chamber members were also present on the occasion.

Lebanon judge calls in two Hezbollah officials over explosives shipment

BEIRUT: A Lebanese judge on Tuesday ordered two Hezbollah officials to appear for questioning over their alleged involvement in a delivery of explosives seized by authorities this month, a judicial official told AFP.

Lebanese authorities had been carrying out investigations after arresting two suspected Hezbollah members accused of transporting half a ton of explosives, which the Iran-backed group subsequently said were part of its "capabilities" to be used against Israel.

They were caught on October 8 at a security checkpoint in Dahr Al-Baidar in Lebanon's east in a vehicle headed toward Beirut, with a source telling AFP that one was the son of a Hezbollah official and the other was also a group member. The judicial official, requesting anonymity, told AFP that the judge on Tuesday ordered two Hezbollah officials to appear for questioning "after initial investigations... established their identities."

Security agencies are working to locate them and take them into custody, the official added.

Last week, Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said the explosives belonged to the militant group, demanding the shipment be returned and calling for those arrested to be released, in a rare admission by the group. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio subsequently urged Lebanon not to return the explosives.

Lebanese authorities have announced the seizure of three large shipments of explosives this month alone. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has vowed that authorities "will deal with weapons outside the legal framework with the required firmness."

President Joseph Aoun on Saturday said the army and security forces were "implementing the government's decisions on extending the state's authority... and confiscating weapons and ammunition."

"Violators are referred to the judiciary, which carries out its duties fully in applying the law and the political authorities' decisions," he added.

Lebanese authorities last year committed to disarming Hezbollah after months of cross-border hostilities culminated in a 2024 war between the group and Israel. But Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war this year by attacking Israel, which responded with heavy strikes and a ground invasion.

In June, Lebanese and Israeli authorities signed a framework agreement which involves the disarmament of Hezbollah, a gradual Israeli withdrawal from territories it occupies, and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the area.

Hezbollah, the only militant group that refused to disarm after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, has rejected surrendering its weapons and the direct negotiations with Israel.—Agencies

UK, GCC urged to turn investment ambitions into projects

LONDON: The UK and Gulf states should do more to connect investment capital with business opportunities in each other's markets, with financial leaders calling for closer cooperation on project financing, procurement and access to international investors.

Speaking at the UK-GCC Strategic Dialogue at London's Guildhall on Oct. 20, representatives from Oman, Kuwait and the UK highlighted the potential for Gulf capital to support British industries while UK expertise and investment help the region diversify its economies.

Edward Prince, director of large corporates and international at UK Export Finance, said major projects increasingly rely on a combination of government funding, private investors, banks and export credit agencies, creating opportunities for businesses on both sides.

He said financing should be considered at the earliest stages of project planning, allowing developers to structure projects around available funding and identify opportunities for suppliers before procurement decisions are made.

The approach can help Gulf developers access a wider range of funding while giving UK companies a clearer route into major projects.

At the same time, Gulf investors can bring capital into British industries where investment is needed to expand capacity, develop new technology.—APP

Sudan army strike in disputed territory kills 53

KHARTOUM: A drone strike by the Sudanese army killed 53 people at a market in an area disputed between Sudan and South Sudan, local authorities said on Tuesday, the latest in a wave of deadly attacks.

Authorities in Abyei district said the strike hit Amiet market on Monday. They accused the army of launching 22 munitions during the attack, which also wounded at least 27 people. "The casualties comprise vulnerable civilian populations, including women, children, the elderly, local merchants, members of the host Ngok Dinka community, South Sudanese returnees, and Sudanese refugees who had sought sanctuary from the broader regional conflict," the authorities said.

Between Sunday and Monday, strikes across Sudan killed more than 100 people. The country is in the grips of a brutal war between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that began in April 2023. Abyei district is

claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan, which split from its northern neighbor in 2011 following decades of conflict. Parts of the district are controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a splinter from the organization that fought for Juba's independence. The group is itself split in two, with each faction supporting opposite sides in Sudan's war. Juba's foreign ministry said it had summoned the Sudanese ambassador over the attack, which it condemned "in the strongest terms possible."

It accused the Sudanese army of striking multiple locations within the market, which is used as a transit point for goods to areas controlled by the RSF. Sudan's war, which multiple outside powers have helped fuel, has triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises and killed hundreds of thousands of people. - Wave of strikes - The deadliest strike during the recent wave came near a market on Sunday evening in Al-Dibab town in the southwestern state of West Kordofan, which is controlled by the RSF. Residents and medical workers said a drone struck a transport hub where villagers had gathered after a market day to find rides home, killing 80 people.

Ahmed Abakar Wadi, a resident who helped bury victims, told AFP at least 50 bodies were recovered at the scene, including that of his brother. Another 47 wounded people were taken to the nearby town of Al-Mujlad where 30 later died from their injuries, according to a medical source.

"The drone struck once, and then came back 10 minutes later and struck again," Wadi told AFP.

ASEAN ministers to tackle cybercrime, scam hubs

MANILA: Southeast Asia's interior and security ministers met in Manila on Tuesday to jointly address cybercrime, human trafficking and online scams, a growing concern in the region. Over the past few years, Southeast Asia has been increasingly targeted as a hub for transnational organized crime and industrial-scale scam centers, which are defrauding victims globally with the use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, and have been trafficking people from dozens of countries to operate their infrastructure. "Reports have associated online scamming operations in parts of Southeast Asia with potential annual economic losses of approximately \$114 billion. Behind that number are families whose lives have been devastated by fraud, trafficking and exploitation," Philippine Interior Secretary Juanito Victor Remulla said in his address to the participants of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime. The meeting is hosted by the Philippines, which holds ASEAN's rotating chairship in 2026. "Cybercrime, online scams, trafficking in persons, forced criminality and money laundering feed each other, and they operate across multiple jurisdictions. Alongside them, illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and violent extremism, people smuggling and arms smuggling continue to threaten our region," Remulla said, as he called for advancing commitments to enable cooperation among law enforcement agencies.—APP

Egypt bus crash kills 13, injures 34

GIZA: A large truck crashed into a tour bus west of the Egyptian capital on Tuesday, killing 13 people and injuring 34, state media reported.

The Al-Ahram newspaper said "13 individuals were killed and 34 others injured in the tragic collision between the bus and the truck on the Cairo-Asyut Western Desert Road."

An AFP correspondent reported that authorities were clearing the highway. A crane lifted the large bus, the entire front section of which was ripped off, leaving behind mangled steel and debris.

Passenger seats were scattered by the roadside, while debris from the bus was visible on the rear of the truck. Al-Ahram reported that the injured were receiving treatment at a hospital in Giza, and an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash.

Road accidents are common in Egypt and are often blamed on reckless driving, poor maintenance and uneven law enforcement. Last year, nearly 6,000 people were killed in road accidents across the country, according to Egypt's state statistics agency. Last month, a bus crash in Sinai killed 22 people, including 10 Jordanian tourists.

In August, at least 18 people, many of them children, were killed in northern Egypt when two pick-up trucks carrying agricultural day-laborers crashed.—APP

Rubio arrives in India with trade deal, energy security on agenda

NEW DELHI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in India on Tuesday for talks on the ongoing negotiations over trade tariffs, defense cooperation and energy security.

Starting his trip in India's financial capital, Mumbai, Rubio was received by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and will hold meetings with business leaders.

"We shared views on further advancement of our ties, focusing on trade, energy, technology, defense and people-to-people ties," Jaishankar said after the meeting.

The visit comes days after US President Donald Trump waived potential tariffs on India for its Russian oil purchases, as the American administration pursues a bilateral trade agreement.

Rubio told reporters in Mumbai that the US was "very close" to finalizing the deal.

"I would say we're about as close as you can be without having executed the agreement. I think there's a small number of items left to wrap up, so I think that will happen shortly," he said.

On his two-day trip, he is scheduled to visit on Wednesday the Reliance Industries crude oil refining complex in Jamnagar, the world's largest such facility, which belongs to Mukesh Ambani, India's second-richest man.

"India is a refining superpower. They have the capability to refine heavy crude. They've done so in the past, and I think as more and more Venezuelan oil comes online, it's something they can do," Rubio said, asked if he would encourage Reliance to enter production in Venezuela, whose vast petroleum reserves have been managed by the US administration since it ousted the South American nation's former President Nicolas Maduro in January.

"I think what India has expressed repeatedly is its desire to diversify its energy portfolio, which is a smart thing to do ... We've discussed Venezuela and other countries, and I think it's in our interest to have strong allies with diverse energy portfolios."

It is Rubio's second India trip this year and follows his visit to Uzbekistan, where he met Central Asian business leaders.

According to Anil Raman, research fellow at the Takshashila Institution, the Asia tour, including India, is focused on economic and commercial negotiations ahead of the US midterm elections next month, where increasing grocery and fuel prices due to Trump's war with Iran are among Americans' top concerns.—Agencies

Can Pakistan Replicate Azerbaijan's ASAN and DOST Success?

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In the modern era, efficient public service delivery is a key indicator of good governance. Countries worldwide are adopting innovative administrative models to improve transparency, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a successful example through its ASAN Service and DOST Agency initiatives, which have transformed the relationship between citizens and government institutions. For Pakistan, a country striving to modernize public administration and enhance service delivery, the Azerbaijani experience offers valuable lessons and opportunities.

The ASAN Service, established in Azerbaijan in 2012, is a one-stop public service model designed to provide citizens with convenient access to a wide range of government services under a single roof. The term "ASAN" means "easy" in Azerbaijani, reflecting its objective of simplifying bureaucratic procedures. Citizens can access services related to identity documents, civil registration, property affairs, legal matters, taxation, immigration, and many other functions through integrated service centers. The system emphasizes transparency, efficiency, digitalization, and customer satisfaction.

One of the key strengths of ASAN Service is its citizen-centric approach. Traditional bureaucratic processes often involve multiple offices, lengthy procedures, and opportunities for corruption. ASAN minimizes these challenges by centralizing services, using digital technologies, and ensuring standardized procedures. As a result, it has significantly improved public trust in government institutions while reducing administrative burdens and costs. In addition to ASAN, Azerbaijan introduced the DOST Agency in 2018 to enhance social wel-

fare service delivery. DOST, which focuses on employment, social protection, labor relations, disability services, and welfare assistance, operates through integrated service centers similar to ASAN. The initiative aims to provide social services in a transparent, accessible, and efficient manner. By combining multiple services under a single system, DOST has improved the quality and accessibility of social support programs for vulnerable populations. Pakistan faces several governance challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, fragmented service delivery, limited digital integration, and public dissatisfaction with administrative procedures. Although the country has implemented significant reforms, such as digital governance projects, citizen facilitation centers, and e-government initiatives, many public services remain scattered across different departments. Citizens often encounter delays, lack of coordination, and procedural complexities when accessing essential services. The adoption of elements from the ASAN and DOST models could greatly benefit Pakistan. First, establishing integrated one-stop service centers would simplify citizens' interactions with government agencies.

These centers could provide services such as national identity registration, passport applications, taxation support, land records, business registration, and utility services. By reducing the need to visit multiple offices, citizens would save time and resources while enjoying greater convenience.

Second, Pakistan can further strengthen digital governance by adopting the technological framework that supports ASAN. Online applications, digital document management, electronic payments, and service tracking systems can enhance transparency and reduce opportunities for corruption. Integrating federal, provincial, and local government databases would improve coordination and service efficiency. Third, the DOST

model presents a valuable opportunity for Pakistan's social welfare sector. A unified social service platform could combine services related to employment, social protection, health assistance, disability support, and poverty alleviation programs. Such integration would improve accessibility for citizens while enabling more effective targeting of government assistance programs. However, successful implementation would require addressing certain challenges. Pakistan's larger population, administrative complexity, and resource constraints necessitate careful planning and gradual adaptation of the Azerbaijani model. Investment in digital infrastructure, staff training, legal reforms, and institutional coordination would be essential. Public awareness campaigns would also play a crucial role in encouraging the use of integrated service platforms. Furthermore, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan can facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building. Both countries enjoy strong diplomatic relations, providing a favorable environment for sharing best practices in governance and public administration. Study visits, technical assistance programs, and institutional partnerships could support Pakistan's reform efforts.

In conclusion, Azerbaijan's ASAN and DOST initiatives offer a successful model of citizen-focused governance and efficient public service delivery. Their emphasis on integration, transparency, and digitalization aligns closely with Pakistan's development objectives. By adapting these experiences to local needs and conditions, Pakistan can improve public sector performance, strengthen citizen trust, and accelerate progress toward modern and responsive governance. The Azerbaijani example demonstrates that innovation in public administration can significantly enhance the quality of services and contribute to sustainable national development.

Briefs

Russia, Iran have 'never' worked so closely: FM

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tuesday that Russia and Iran have "never" worked so closely, as Moscow seeks to play a mediating role in the Middle East war. Araghchi hosted his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Iran on Monday, in his first visit since the outbreak of the conflict. "We covered everything from Europe to West Asia, including Lebanon, Palestine, Ukraine and Yemen. Also focused on expansion of economic and nuclear cooperation," Araghchi wrote on X. "Never in our history have Iran and Russia worked as closely as now." Lavrov said ahead of the visit that Moscow's efforts "aimed at preventing the return of a large-scale war," with talks stalled between the United States and Iran. His visit came after Russian President Vladimir Putin told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian this month 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. — APP

UK to deploy fighter jets to protect Saudis

NEWS DESK

LONDON: British fighter planes will be deployed to help Saudi Arabia defend itself against increasing attacks from Yemen's Houthi rebels, the UK government announced on Tuesday. The defence ministry said the deployment formed part of "additional defensive military support" to Riyadh. "The UK will fly defensive counter air missions to support the protection of Saudi cities and critical national infrastructure against aerial attack, using RAF Typhoon fighter jets," the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said in a statement. "These aircraft will operate in a defensive role and will not conduct offensive strikes against the Houthis." Britain will also deploy a military transport aircraft "to support the movement of defence material within Saudi Arabia alongside UK military advisers to support Saudi staff officers," the statement added. "The continuing attacks from the Houthis on our ally Saudi Arabia are absolutely despicable," said Defence Minister Wes Streeting. "The targeting of the airport in Riyadh in particular shows the lengths the Houthis are going to (to) escalate the situation in the region," he added. The Saudi capital's international airport has been targeted by strikes 20 times since the beginning of the month, with a recent attack killing 13 people and wounding more than 300.

France to impose new curfews where necessary, says PM

French business lobby group accuses state of having "failed" during unrest that hit at least 3,000 businesses

NEWS DESK

PARIS: France will impose new curfews in areas where needed on Tuesday, Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu said, adding that the measures introduced in several cities the previous day had "helped keep the night calm". France was rocked on Saturday by some of its worst rioting in recent years, just six months before the country elects a successor to President Emmanuel Macron. Accused of failing to anticipate and contain the street violence, the government has pledged to restore order, and had announced partial curfews in Paris and some other cities on Monday. "Targeted curfews have contributed to calm overnight," Lecornu wrote on X. "Tonight new curfews will be decided where the situation requires it. These decisions will be made on the ground, by the prefects, in coordination with the mayors," he said. Police confirmed the night had

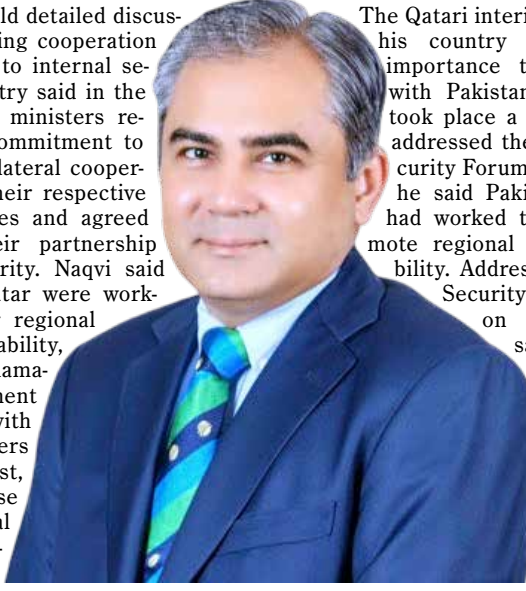
Pakistan, Qatar agree to deepen internal security cooperation

Interior Minister Naqvi says Islamabad and Doha working together for regional peace and stability

DNA

DOHA: Pakistan and Qatar have agreed to strengthen their security partnership and expand bilateral cooperation in internal security, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior on Tuesday.

The two sides held detailed discussions on expanding cooperation in areas related to internal security, the ministry said in the statement. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation between their respective interior ministries and agreed to enhance their partnership in internal security. Naqvi said Pakistan and Qatar were working together for regional peace and stability, reaffirming Islamabad's commitment to working with Doha on matters of mutual interest, particularly those related to internal security and regional stability.



The Qatari interior minister said his country attached great importance to its relations with Pakistan. The meeting took place a day after Naqvi addressed the 8th Global Security Forum in Doha, where he said Pakistan and Qatar had worked together to promote regional peace and stability. 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 come amid mounting regional tensions, as Yemen's internationally recognised government forces continue to fight Houthi rebels, who are also targeting Saudi Arabia. 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. 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. "Peace cannot be achieved in a single meeting. It requires patience, trust and continuous efforts," Naqvi said, underscoring the need for sustained diplomatic engagement to resolve conflicts.

South Korea to withdraw some Ukraine embassy staff

SEOUL: South Korea's foreign ministry said Tuesday it will withdraw some staff from its embassy in Ukraine, as a diplomatic row deepens over the transfer of North Korean prisoners of war to Seoul. The announcement came more than a week after South Korea's ambassador to Ukraine returned home following President Volodymyr Zelensky's disclosure of the prisoner transfer last month, which Seoul said put their families in North Korea at risk. The recall of Seoul's ambassador to Ukraine has met with "no positive response from the Ukrainian side," Park Doo-soon, the spokesperson for Seoul's foreign ministry, told reporters Tuesday. And in "light of the persistent threat of air strikes throughout the country, which makes ensuring the safety of personnel difficult, the government has decided to withdraw some of its diplomatic mission staff," Park Doo-soon, the spokesperson for Seoul's foreign ministry said. — APP

Beijing ready to cooperate with Yemen

DNA

SANAA: Shao Zheng, chargé d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy to Yemen, rejected reports that equipment and components linked to the Houthi group's missile programs had been supplied by Chinese companies, dismissing the allegations as baseless. He stressed that Beijing maintains strict controls on exports of dual-use materials and complies with relevant UN Security Council resolutions. In an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat, Shao said China was prepared to receive any information or reports provided by the Yemeni government concerning the allegations and conduct a comprehensive investigation. He explained that Beijing had repeatedly informed the Yemeni government of its willingness to examine any evidence or reports related to the matter and investigate them thoroughly. The Chinese diplomat also said his country was closely monitoring military developments in Yemen and continued to support the internationally recognized Yemeni government, as well as the country's sovereignty.

Afghanistan faces worsening hunger crisis

DNA

GENEVA: The United Nations has warned that Afghanistan is heading toward a worsening food security crisis, with millions more people expected to face acute hunger during the upcoming winter lean season. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity is projected to increase to 19.2 million between November and April, a period when food availability declines and harsh weather conditions make access to assistance more difficult. Speaking at a press briefing in Geneva on

Tuesday, OCHA spokesperson for Afghanistan Olga Cherevko said that around five million people are expected to face emergency levels of hunger during the winter months. She described the situation as deeply concerning, noting that emergency-level food insecurity is "one step away from famine." The warning highlights the continuing humanitarian challenges faced by Afghanistan, where years of conflict, economic instability, climate-related shocks, and widespread poverty have left millions dependent on humanitarian assistance. Despite some improvements in local agricultural production in certain areas, many Afghan families continue to struggle to meet their basic food needs. Humanitarian agencies fear that the arrival

of winter will further worsen conditions, particularly in remote and mountainous regions where snowfall often cuts off access to communities. Rising unemployment, reduced household incomes, and limited economic opportunities have compounded the difficulties faced by vulnerable families. The United Nations and aid organizations have repeatedly called for increased international support to prevent the crisis from escalating. Humanitarian workers emphasize that timely funding is essential to provide food assistance, healthcare, shelter, and other critical services to those most at risk. Aid agencies warn that children, women, elderly, and people displaced by conflict are among the most vulnerable groups.

Trump blames French unrest on immigration

WASHINGTON, United States: US President Donald Trump on Monday again blamed immigration for protests and violence that have rocked France in recent days, urging Europe and French President Emmanuel Macron to tighten borders. "What's happening in France has to do with immigration, not schools, not anything," Trump told reporters in Washington, echoing his comments from the day before. "It's immigration, and I told President Emmanuel Macron, close up your borders." Weekend demonstrations over soaring prices were held in Paris and other cities, degenerating into some of the worst street violence France has seen in recent years. Trump recounted a conversation with Macron, telling him "a long time ago, you're making a big mistake in France." — DNA

Alberta votes to remain part of Canada

DNA

ALBERTA: Alberta residents voted to remain part of Canada in the province's first-ever referendum on separation, in a much-needed win for Prime Minister Mark Carney as he attempts to unify the country amid a trade war with the US. CBC News, Canada's government-funded national broadcaster, called the result late Monday after 33 per cent of the vote had been counted. At the time of the call, 76pc of tallied votes were in support of the "remain" side versus 23pc in favour of the province moving forward with a binding vote on separation. The referendum was nonbinding. "Albertans made a clear choice," Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement.

"They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other." "Canada is greater than the sum of its parts," he said. Pollsters and analysts had repeatedly dismissed the possibility of a separatist victory, citing data that showed about one-third of residents in the western province supported a future referendum on leaving. Alberta Premier Danielle Smith announced the referendum in May, saying it was time to have a vote, understand the will of Albertans on this subject, and move on. Late Monday, Smith issued a statement on social media saying she was "very pleased" that early results show widespread support for remaining in Canada. She said she would address Albertans on Tuesday to discuss the results and "where our province goes from here."



ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

Witkoff, Kushner to take part in Ukraine talks in Oslo

OSLO: US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner will take part in talks in Oslo Tuesday with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and the leaders of Norway and Finland, Norway's government said. "Ukraine has requested that US special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner join the meetings. I am pleased that they are able to participate," Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said in a statement. Witkoff will travel to Oslo and take part in person while Kushner will participate remotely, Norway said. Store and Finnish President Alexander

Stubb will also take part in the talks. "Diplomatic efforts have previously taken place in several countries, and Norway and Finland are pleased to be able to continue this work. The aim is to put diplomatic efforts on a more constructive path," Store said. During his visit in Oslo, Zelensky will also meet with Norway's king and visit parliament. News outlet Axios had earlier cited an anonymous US official as saying that Witkoff would then travel to Russia, "where he hopes to meet with President Vladimir Putin and present ideas." The White House did not immediately respond to an AFP request for confirmation. — APP

Killer's three-day physical remand

DNA

LAHORE: A Multan court on Tuesday granted police three-day physical remand of a suspect accused of killing a 15-year-old boy in the city. The suspect has been accused of hitting the victim, who used to work for him, with his car. The suspect was arrested yesterday and presented before Judicial Magistrate Saadia Aslam on Tuesday. Police requested the judge for the suspect's 14-day physical remand for investigation. However, the judicial magistrate granted him his three-day remand. Later, Multan City Police Officer (CPO) Akhtar Farooq said while speaking to the media that raids were being conducted for the arrest of a second suspect. "We all are in deep pain," the CPO said, adding that the orphan boy had been "subjected to barbarity". The incident occurred in Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Multan. CCTV footage of the incident shows a boy running on the road after spotting a car. The car is seen swerving and chasing the boy, eventually hitting him. The boy, who fell, then rams into the gate of a nearby house and dies on impact. A case has been registered on the state's behalf at Multan's DHA police station. The first information report (FIR) names two suspects and invokes Sections 302 (intentional murder) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code.





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