



Islamabad POST

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KP to be purged of terrorists, says Field Marshal Asim Munir

Detailed News On Page-08

Senate Chairman says relations with KSA excellent

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Azerbaijan keen to diversify Pak relations

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10 militants killed, civilian martyred in Gwadar: ISPR

India-backed militants attempted to carry out terrorist activities in Gwadar on Thursday, says military's media wing

DNA

QUETTA: At least 10 terrorists, including a female terrorist, were killed and a civilian was martyred during separate engagements with security forces in Balochistan's Gwadar district, the military's media wing said on Friday. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that on October 22, 2026, India-sponsored Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists attempted to carry out terrorist activities in district Gwadar, in the general areas of the Gabd Border Crossing and Gwadar city. "By targeting these locations, terrorists sought to harm the very people they claim to represent and wanted to obstruct the development and prosperity of Balochistan. To protect residents and clear the area, Security forces launched clearance operations in and around Gwadar city," the ISPR said. The military's media wing said that in separate engagements, security forces foiled the terrorists' designs and their bid to undermine the writ of the state and spread their misconstrued agenda. "In the ensuing exchanges of fire, ten terrorists, including one female terrorist, were sent to hell. During the terrorist attacks, one civilian embraced martyrdom, and few vehicles were damaged. Operations were concluded without any loss to security forces, restoring order and writ of the state," it added. The military said that coercion of a Baloch woman into this attack is a crime not only against the state but against the hurmat [honour] of Baloch women. "It exposes the terrorists' cynical exploitation of Baloch women as an instrument of propaganda, intended to inflame public sentiment and lend false sanctity to their campaign," the press release stated. "Such tactics are contrary to Baloch and Islamic traditions, which hold women in the highest honour, adding that the people of Balochistan have consistently rejected those who shed blood in their name, and they will see through this deception as well," it added.

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At least 25 killed in road accident

NEWS DESK

KHUZZAR: At least 12 passengers were killed and around two dozen injured when a minibus and a passenger coach collided head-on near Zero Point in Uthal on the Quetta-Karachi Highway in Balochistan on Friday, police said. Police officials said the coach was travelling from Gwadar to Karachi, while the minibus was heading to Karachi from Bela. "The tragic incident took place near Bela when the passenger coach hit the minibus," the officials said, adding that seven passengers were killed on the spot, while five others succumbed to their injuries in hospital. In-charge of the Edhi Centre in Bela Abdul Hakeem Lasi, said around 22 injured passengers were shifted to hospital by Edhi workers before being moved to Karachi for treatment. He said the condition of seven injured passengers was serious. Most of the casualties occurred in the minibus, he added. The accident occurred two days after 10 people were killed and 44 others injured when a passenger bus overturned after hitting a road divider in Rajanpur district's Rojhan tehsil on the Indus Highway on Wednesday, according to Rescue 1122. A similar accident occurred last month when two people were killed and 15 others injured in a head-on collision between a passenger coach and an LPG bowser near Balochistan's Kharkhera Customs on the main

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Briefs

'No one sleeps Hungry in Pak': minister

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah has dismissed concerns over Pakistan's standing on Global Hunger Index (GHI), saying people should not fall prey to "propaganda" based on such reports. Sanaullah made the remarks while speaking to Geo News in Islamabad when asked who should be held responsible for Pakistan ranking 106th out of 122 countries on the index, compared with India at 100th. "My request is that you should not fall prey to this propaganda," Sanaullah told the reporter, pointing towards what he described as a strong tendency among Pakistanis to help people in need. He questioned whether people could be seen sleeping on footpaths in Pakistani cities or suffering the kind of deprivation caused by hunger witnessed in other countries.

Imaan Mazari case hearing

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A state-appointed counsel on Friday cross-examined all prosecution witnesses in a security breach case against lawyers Imaan Zainab Hazir-Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha. Imaan and her husband, Hadi, are facing a jail trial in a 2024 case pertaining to the alleged disruption of an international cricket team's security route and incitement to public unrest. The couple, accused of removing barriers from the route, was indicted on Oct 7. Anti-terrorism court Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra presided over the hearing held inside Adiala jail on Friday, during which state counsel Atif Mehmood cross-examined a prosecution witness. On Saturday, the court will provide Imaan and Hadi with questionnaires under Section 342 of CrPc to record their statements.

Ratification of Makkah Pact

R4 bloc, European powers discuss Gulf developments

According to the Foreign Office (FO), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar participated in the first meeting between the R4 and France, Germany, Italy and the UK

DNA

ANKARA: Developments in the Gulf region amid the US-Israeli war on Iran came under discussion as the R4 foreign ministers – Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye – met with their counterparts from France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The R4 group, comprising Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, emerged in March and has been focusing on regional security and mediation efforts between the United States and Iran. According to the Foreign Office (FO), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar participated in the first meeting between the R4 and France, Germany, Italy and the UK. "The meeting provided an opportunity for exchange of views on regional developments in the Gulf region, their social and

Continued on Page 06

'Attack on Iran will deepen crisis'

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Türkiye says renewed attack on Iran would expand conflict, diplomacy only way to achieve peace Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan says a renewed attack on Iran could exacerbate tensions and further expand the conflict, adding that diplomacy and dialogue were the only way to end the war, Reuters reports. Speaking after meeting his counterparts from Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Britain and Italy in Istanbul, Fidan said none of the countries in the meeting approve of another military intervention or attack on Iran.

Russia signals readiness to resume trilateral peace talks

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia has indicated its readiness to resume trilateral negotiations with the United States and Ukraine, potentially between November 10 and 19, as part of efforts to establish a long-term security framework following the end of the conflict. Speaking after Russian President Vladimir Putin's meeting with US President Donald Trump's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov said the nearly three-hour discussion was "substantive and frank" and focused on prospects for achieving a lasting and sustainable peace. According to Ushakov, President Putin praised the mediation efforts of President Trump, the US administration, and American special envoys in seeking mutu-



ally acceptable solutions to the conflict. The two sides reportedly discussed in detail the possible resumption of trilateral talks involving representatives of Russia, the United States, and Ukraine. Ushakov stated that Russia remains prepared, in principle, to restart the negotiations, with the primary objective being the development of a post-conflict security architecture for both Russia and Ukraine. He said Steve Witkoff welcomed the proposal and indicated that President Trump would view such a move positively. The Kremlin aide also reiterated Moscow's position that previous plans to resume negotiations were disrupted following large-scale attacks launched by Ukraine after Russia's State Duma elections. He said the latest discussions reviewed the situation in light of recent communications from Washington. Ushakov revealed that President Putin asked Witkoff to convey his appreciation to US First Lady Melania Trump for her

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NATIONAL DAY OF HUNGARY



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Faisal Kairm Kundi Governor KP, Ambassador of Hungary Zoltan Varga, State Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajih Qamar, Fahd Haroon PM Special Assistant on Digital Media and former Federal Minister Syed Navid Qamar posing for a picture on the occasion of the National Day of Hungary. – DNA

Kundi says Pak values ties with Hungary

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has said that Pakistan highly values its relations with Hungary and is keen to further strengthen bilateral cooperation. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held to mark the National Day of Hungary, where he attended as the chief guest. The governor said Pakistan and Hungary enjoy excellent relations based on mutual respect and cooperation. He expressed confidence that ties between the two countries would continue to grow in the years ahead. Faisal Karim Kundi noted that Hungarian companies are performing well in Pakistan and contributing to various sectors of the economy. He said there is significant potential to

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PM sets indicative wheat price at Rs4,500 per maund for 2027

"Over the past years, farmers have faced financial difficulties due to inflation and rising agricultural expenses while Pakistan has also had to import wheat in the last two years," he said

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday set the illustrative price for wheat at Rs4,500 per maund for 2027, raising the procurement price set last year by Rs1,000. "In view of the increase in production costs, the price had been raised by Rs1,000 per maund compared to last year," a statement by the PM's Office (PMO) said. It quoted the premier as saying that the decision was taken with the guidance of President Asif Ali Zardari and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and in consultation with the chief ministers of Punjab and Sindh. The PMO statement added that the prime minister's decision was aimed at "promoting agriculture sector in the country, protecting farmers' economic interests

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Insulin product in short supply

DNA

KARACHI: An insulin product used by patients with Type 1 diabetes is in short supply in Pakistan after its German manufacturer halted supplies while upgrading its products, Parliamentary Secretary for Health Nelson Azeem said on Friday. Responding to a matter raised by MNA Syeda Amna Batool in the National Assembly, Azeem said there had been no shortage until June, with stocks available until September. However, supplies from Germany were disrupted in October, leading to the current shortage.

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Student engagement vital for public health initiatives

RAWALPINDI: Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza, reaffirmed the institution's unwavering commitment to supporting national public health initiatives, emphasizing that student engagement remains vital to achieving a polio-free Pakistan.

In her message on the eve of World Polio Day, Dr. Bushra Mirza said that a healthy population forms the fundamental foundations of national progress and economic development. She highlighted that university students represent the dynamic core of the country's youth, playing a pivotal role as health advocates in driving community awareness and ensuring positive public response toward vaccination campaigns across the country.

The vice chancellor said that FJWU regularly organizes health-focused seminars, workshops, capacity-building lectures and awareness walks to educate students on preventive healthcare and civic responsibility.

She affirmed that the university will continue to collaborate closely with public sector health institutions and international partners in future campaigns to support sustainable health outcomes.

She highlighted FJWU's proactive public health advocacy, under which the university's Character Building Society (CBS) and Health & Wellbeing Society (HWS) recently organized comprehensive World Polio Day activities on campus in collaboration with the District Health Authority Rawalpindi, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Punjab. —APP

Pakistan pays tribute to frontline polio workers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Polio Eradication Initiative marked World Polio Day 2026 on Friday by honouring frontline workers for their dedication and sacrifices in protecting children against the crippling disease.

The event, held under the theme "Shukriya Polio Frontline Workers - Celebrating the Champions of a Polio-Free Pakistan," was attended by Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq, development partners, donors and more than 100 frontline workers from across the country. Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath paid tribute to Pakistan's more than 400,000 polio frontline workers for their tireless efforts to protect every child against the disease. Reaffirming the government's commitment to polio eradication under the leadership of Prime Minister, he stressed the importance of sustained vaccination campaigns, effective disease surveillance and collective action to achieve a polio-free Pakistan. He also reiterated the government's commitment to supporting and safeguarding frontline workers as they continue their efforts to protect children and build a healthier future. —APP

Gilani for stronger defence, trade ties with Saudi Arabia

Recalling his tenure as Federal Minister for Railways in 1986, Mr Gilani referred to the railway project connecting Al-Hofuf and Dammam in Saudi Arabia, reflecting his own association with the development of transport links between the two cities

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani met Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Dr Rajeh Tami Albugamy, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today and called for further strengthening the long-standing fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, with particular emphasis on defence cooperation, trade, investment and economic partnership. Gilani said the two countries share deep-rooted ties based on common faith, mutual respect and brotherhood. He reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity with the Kingdom and support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, expressing concern over the regional situation and emphasising the need for dialogue and diplomacy. Gilani underscored the importance of translating the longstanding friendship into stronger economic partnerships, increased investment and mutually beneficial business opportunities.

He underscored the contribution of the 2.5 million Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia to the Kingdom's development. He also noted the significant contribution of remittances from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan's economy.

Recalling his tenure as Federal Minister for Railways in 1986, Mr Gilani referred to the railway project connecting Al-Hofuf and Dammam in Saudi Arabia, reflecting his own association with the development of transport links between the two cities.

Ambassador Dr Rajeh Tami Albugamy said he regards Pakistan as his second home adding that the Saudi leadership has valued relations with Pakistan from the outset. He said the brotherly ties between the two countries rest on a solid foundation and expressed his resolve to build on this relationship, particularly in business, trade and investment.

Mr. Gilani expressed confidence that bilateral relations would gain further momentum during the Ambassador's tenure.



PC Board advances key transactions, approves major decisions

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board on Thursday reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the government's privatisation programme through transparent, competitive and professionally managed transactions, aimed at attracting credible domestic and international investment, improving operational efficiency and service delivery.

The Board met under the chairmanship of Muhammad Ali, Adviser to Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission, and approved key measures relating to the privatisation of Islamabad Electric Supply Company Limited (IESCO), Faisalabad Electric Supply Company Limited (FESCO), Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (TZBL), and State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC). The Board approved the prequalification of 10 Inter-

ested Parties (IPs) for IESCO's privatisation, reflecting strong participation from domestic and international investors.

The Interested Parties, which were prequalified included Aktor Elektrik Enerji Yatirimlari San. ve Tic. A.S., Türkiye, Genera Enerji A.S., Türkiye, Cengiz Enerji Sanayii ve Ticaret A.S., Türkiye, Engro Energy Limited, Artistic Milliners (Pvt) Limited Consortium, comprising The Lake City Holdings, Fatima Capital Limited, Din Ventures (Pvt) Limited and Fazal Cloth Mills Limited. The Hub Power Holding Limited Consortium, comprising Lucky Cement Limited, Kohat Cement Limited and Metro Ventures (Pvt) Limited, Sapphire Fibers Limited, Novatex Limited, Bestway Cement Limited, Hasnaat Brothers Construction Co. (Pvt) Limited Consortium, comprising Dhilal Holding Group,

Pak Steel, Bio-Labs (Pvt) Limited and Farid Steel Casting (Pvt) Limited.

The prequalified parties include three Turkish energy companies, alongside prominent Pakistani business groups and investment consortia, reflecting strong domestic and international investor interest in Pakistan's electricity distribution sector and confidence in the Government's ongoing privatisation programme.

The 10 prequalified Interested Parties will now proceed to the next stage of the transaction in accordance with the approved process, including access to the Virtual Data Room (VDR) to undertake detailed buy-side due diligence.

IESCO forms part of the first batch of power distribution companies (DISCOs) identified for privatisation, alongside FESCO and Gujranwala Electric Power Company Limited (GEPCO). —DNA

Expert on SRHR competency framework discussed

ISLAMABAD: World Health Organization (WHO) and the Health Services Academy (HSA) have convened an expert consultation to finalize a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) competency framework for nursing, midwifery, public health and pharmacy graduates.

Held at HSA, the consultation focused on preparing health professionals to provide quality, equitable, person-centred and rights-based care while upholding confidentiality, informed decision-making, dignity and ethical standards.

The expert panel was headed by Dr Samina Naeem Khalid, who facilitated discussions on strengthening the framework and ensuring its relevance to Pakistan's

healthcare and education systems.

The consultation brought together experts from medical universities, healthcare institutions and development organisations, including Prof. Dr Syeda Batool Mazhar, Prof. Dr Naila Azam, Ms Ayesha Salma of Ipas, Dr Batool Ali of Jhpiego, Dr Saima Zubair, Prof. Dr Khola Noreen, Prof. Dr Sajida Naseem, Prof. Dr Muhammad Tahir Aqeel and nursing and midwifery representatives.

Participants reviewed proposed revisions, discussed interprofessional collaboration and referral pathways, and identified outstanding technical issues requiring further consideration.

The consultation also outlined the next steps for technical validation, formal endorsement and integration of the framework into pre-service education.

The initiative aims to establish a practical, nationally relevant framework that defines both shared competencies and the distinct professional responsibilities of nursing, midwifery, public health and pharmacy graduates.

The framework is expected to contribute to strengthening health professions education and preparing a competent, ethical and collaborative healthcare workforce to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in Pakistan. —DNA

Kids' literature, joint publishing explored

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) of Pakistan and Azerbaijan's Kritika Publishing have explored opportunities for cooperation in promoting children's literature, translating selected books and developing joint publishing initiatives.

In this regard, Murad Ali Mohmand, Director (Headquarters) of the National Book Foundation, met with Zaur Hasanazade, a representative of Kritika Publishing, on the sidelines of the Baku International Book Fair 2026, held at the Baku Expo Center in Azerbaijan.

During the meeting, Murad Ali Mohmand presented the NBF's catalogue of children's publications and proposed an initial pilot project involving two or three selected Pakistani books. Under the proposal, the Azerbaijani publishing house could be granted complimentary publishing rights to facilitate their translation into Azerbaijani and subsequent publication in Azerbaijan, according to a message received here on Friday.

The initiative aims to introduce Pakistani children's literature to international readers while familiarising young audiences with Pakistan's literary and cultural traditions.

The discussions also highlighted a children's book published by Kritika Publishing, which attracted particular interest from the NBF.

Murad Ali Mohmand proposed translating the book into Urdu for publication in Pakistan under a joint publishing (co-publishing) arrangement between the NBF and Kritika Publishing.

The proposed collaboration would also include co-branding, featuring the names and logos of both institutions, while utilising the NBF's nationwide book distribution network to make the publication accessible to young readers across Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Murad Ali Mohmand reaffirmed the NBF's commitment to cultivating reading habits among the younger generation, providing access to quality and informative literature, and strengthening partnerships with international publishers to promote Pakistani literary works globally.

He expressed hope that reciprocal translation initiatives would enable children in both countries to develop a deeper understanding of each other's languages, cultures and literary traditions.

The representatives also discussed the need for further consultations to finalise the selection of titles, translation and publishing rights, and other relevant arrangements before proceeding with the proposed initiatives. —APP

Ulemas support strengthens community trust in vaccination in KP

PESHAWAR: Support from influential religious scholars in 54 underserved union councils (UCs) and several high-risk border areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has helped strengthen community trust in vaccination and improve routine childhood immunization against 13 vaccine-preventable diseases. Implemented by the Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF) in partnership with the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gavi Vaccine Alliance, the initiative aimed to bridge immunization gaps by addressing cultural sensitivities, navigating local social norms, and engaging communities through trusted religious leaders. The project covered 54 underserved union councils across Peshawar, Khyber, Karak and Kurram districts, combining community engagement with efforts to strengthen frontline immunization services. "The Ulema did not replace our health workforce; they stood alongside them and created a safe,

trusted space for dialogue, enabling our outreach workers and vaccinators to perform their duties effectively," said Dr. Junaid Khan, Project Manager at MERF. Under the initiative, around 170 influential religious scholars participated in structured dialogues with health professionals to discuss the safety, efficacy and importance of routine childhood immunization against 13 vaccine-preventable diseases. Equipped with scientific evidence, the scholars emerged as community advocates for vaccination. Through Friday sermons, religious edicts (fatwas) and recorded video messages, they addressed misconceptions and presented immunization as a means of protecting children, families and the wider community. The initiative complemented community-level awareness efforts with accessible vaccination services, ensuring that vaccinators and vaccines were available when parents were encouraged to seek immunization for their children.

To address gaps in frontline service delivery, MERF also deployed 96 vaccinators and 85 dedicated Community Outreach Workers (COWs) to support immunization activities and community engagement.

Between July 2025 and October 2026, the targeted union councils recorded increases in vaccination coverage.

According to the EPI Management Information System (MIS), coverage for the third dose of the pentavalent vaccine (Penta-3) rose from 60 per cent to 89 per cent, while coverage for the first dose of the measles-rubella vaccine (MR-1) increased from 56 per cent to 83 per cent. MERF outreach workers also identified 9,154 zero-dose infants, of whom 7,584 were successfully vaccinated, bringing 84 per cent of them into the routine immunization network. In addition, defaulter-tracking activities helped bring 55,184 under-immunized children up to date on critical vaccines. —APP

ASEAN ENVOYS MEET NEW FS



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmed received the ASEAN Ambassadors. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening its partnership with ASEAN. They discussed expanding cooperation in different areas. — DNA

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Azerbaijan holds vast potential for trade with Pakistan

The ambassador stated that around 4,000 companies were operating in Azerbaijan, highlighting the potential for Pakistani businesses to explore investment and commercial opportunities in the country. He identified logistics, telecommunications, oil and gas exploration, construction and other sectors as promising areas for collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Emphasizing the need to translate the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Azerbaijan into tangible economic gains, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Irfan Davudov has called for stronger trade, investment and industrial cooperation between the two countries. During his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), he stressed the importance of structured business-to-business (B2B) meetings, sector-specific engagement and stronger private-sector linkages to unlock untapped opportunities and develop mutually beneficial partnerships in agriculture, tourism, healthcare and other key sectors.

The ambassador stated that around 4,000 companies were operating in Azerbaijan, highlighting the potential for Pakistani businesses to explore investment and commercial opportunities in the country. He identified logistics, telecommunications, oil and gas exploration, construction and other sectors as promising areas for collaboration. He reaffirmed the Azerbaijani Embassy's commitment to facilitating business contacts and supporting initiatives that could strengthen economic relations and promote closer people-to-people ties between the two countries.

ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia emphasized that sustained B2B engagement was essential to converting the strong bilateral relationship into practical business outcomes. He said ICCI was ready to facilitate business delegations, connect entrepreneurs and promote joint ventures between Pakistani and Azerbaijani companies. He noted that such partnerships could encourage investment, technology



transfer and industrial development, adding that peace and stability in the region, particularly in Afghanistan, were important for strengthening regional trade routes and economic connectivity. Former ICCI President Zafar Bakhtawari described Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Türkiye as three brotherly nations bound by enduring ties of friendship, solidarity and mutual support. He highlighted the role of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry in promoting bilateral commercial relations, observing that coordinated initiatives, stronger institutional linkages and regular business interaction

could help entrepreneurs from both countries explore new markets and investment opportunities. ICCI Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha stressed that regular business meetings and effective coordination between relevant organizations could help identify viable projects, address commercial challenges and establish long-term partnerships, providing fresh momentum to bilateral trade and investment.

ICCI Executive Committee Member Sadaf Asim Abbasi highlighted opportunities for student exchanges, educational cooperation and women's economic empowerment,

Abrar ul Haq emphasized the potential for collaboration in information technology, while Mohammad Khurshid highlighted opportunities to strengthen tourism cooperation and promote greater people-to-people interaction between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by former ICCI President Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi; Executive Committee Members Abbas Hashmi, Mohammad Arif, Mazher Hussain, Malik Rashid Tufail, Israr Mishwani, Mohammad Nouman; and senior ICCI members Waseem Chaudhry, Noman Bhatti and Dr. Johria Azhar.

16th int'l public health moot held

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA) has acknowledged the support of national and international development partners in successfully organizing its 16th Annual International Public Health Conference 2026. Held under the theme "Digital Health Innovation for Better Healthcare Outcomes," the conference provided a platform for public health experts, policymakers and development partners to discuss the role of digital technologies, research and collaboration in improving healthcare delivery and public health outcomes.

HSA acknowledged the support of Minister of State for National Health Services Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharat, Gilgit-Baltistan Health Minister Iqbal Hassan and World Health Organization (WHO) Representative Dr Luo Dapeng.

The academy also recognized the contributions of development partners and participating organisations, including GAIN, Jhpiego, UNICEF, UNFPA, Nutrition International, Pakistan Digital Authority, AJ Vaccines Denmark, PMS and the District Health Office Islamabad.—APP

IRM celebrates power of possibility

ISLAMABAD, Oct 23 (APP):Institute of Rural Management (IRM) celebrated the achievements of young Muslim and Christian girls from underserved communities titled "The Power of Possibility," at the graduation ceremony of its Smart STEP Digital Marketing & E-Commerce Training Programme here Friday.

The event recognized the resilience and accomplishments of young women, including orphaned and vulnerable girls, while highlighting IRM's commitment to empowering them through digital skills, entrepreneurship, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. The ceremony brought together distinguished representatives from the banking sector, corporate organizations, development institutions and faith-based communities, reflecting a shared commitment to inclusive skills development and women's economic empowerment, said a press release issued here on Friday.

Distinguished participants included Brigadier Tahir Ali Malik (Retd.), Head of Administration and Coordination, Attock Refinery Limited; Dr. Bakht Sarwar, Chairman, Rehab Initiative; Shahrukh Nusrat, Former Federal Secretary; Chaudary Nasir, Social worker/ Ex Member UC- Tarlai Kalan, representatives from Qadam ba Qadam, Nasira Bedar, representative of KBL; Farhat Ul Ain Qureshi, Senior Deputy Chief Manager, State Bank of Pakistan; Pastor Nasir Farooq; and Pastor Sunil Yaqoob.—APP

New gallery space for US alumni artists

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), and the Pakistan-US Alumni Network on October 22 opened the first 'Shahkaar Fankaar Alumni Artist Showcase' in a new gallery space in the USEFP building in Islamabad, a press release by the US embassy said on Friday.

"This gallery space will feature the achievements of US government-sponsored exchange program alumni in the arts," it said. The release added that the first exhibition was a solo show by Lahore-based artist Minaa Haroon, an alumna of a US Department of State exchange program on cultural preservation. Haroon "showcased artwork utilising inherited jewellery and accessories as carriers of memory,

identity, and lineage, starting with her mother's jewellery," the embassy said, noting that the opening marked "decades of US education and exchange programs and spotlights an alumna whose achievements reflect the mutual partnership between the United States and Pakistan." Haroon is a visual artist and Assistant Director of Fine Arts at the Lahore Arts Council, the embassy said. It added that in April 2024, the artist traveled to the US as a visiting scholar in the Cultural Preservation Professional Exchange Program run by the US government. "My participation as a visiting scholar in the US deepened my reflection on cultural inheritance," she said. Haroon added, "Through visits to museums and galleries, I encountered different ways in which histories and traditions are preserved, interpreted,

Mango pulp exports fetch \$1.13m

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan exported mango pulp worth \$1.13 million to 13 international markets during FY26, with total shipments reaching 1.53 million kilogrammes. According to official trade figures available with Wealth Pakistan, Libya emerged as the largest buyer in both value and volume terms, followed by Turkey and Angola in export earnings. Libya dominated Pakistan's mango pulp exports, purchasing consignments worth \$587,664, with a total quantity of 890,400 kilogrammes. The country accounted for 51.95% of Pakistan's total mango pulp export earnings and 58.16% of the overall quantity shipped during the period. Turkey and Angola also featured prominently among the leading buyers. Exports to Turkey amounted to \$129,294.87, involving 131,160 kilogrammes, while Angola imported 202,019.66 kilogrammes valued at \$127,354.10. Together, Libya, Turkey and Angola generated 74.64% of Pakistan's total mango pulp export earnings, while the remaining 10 markets accounted for 25.36%.—APP

CDA extends solid waste management services to rural areas

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and under the leadership of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has extended solid waste management services to the rural areas of Zones IV and V of Islamabad for the first time in its history. This landmark initiative aims to address longstanding sanitation challenges and provide residents of farflung and previously underserved areas with a cleaner, healthier environment. Under the new rural sanitation services, 65 Union Councils, primarily located in Zones IV and V. Bhara Kahu and other rural and suburban areas falling within these zones have also been included to ensure improved sanitation facilities for local residents.

CDA has awarded the contract for these services to a Turkish company equipped with state-of-the-art machinery, modern vehicles and trained personnel. Under the initiative, the company will manage approximately 342 tonnes of solid waste daily, deploying between 1,300 and 1,610 personnel and approximately 103 to 104 vehicles and machinery units.

The deployment of modern machinery, trained staff and an organised operational system is aimed at improving waste collection, transportation and proper disposal across these areas. The initiative seeks to address longstanding gaps in sanitation services, reduce environmental pollution and extend improved municipal facilities to rural and suburban communities. Citizens have appreciated CDA's cleanliness drive in Bhara Kahu and other areas of Zones IV and V, particularly in farflung communities that have historically received limited sanitation services. The extension of formal solid waste management services to these areas marks an important step towards improving cleanliness and ensuring better municipal services for rural residents. Under the direction and vision of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and under the leadership of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, CDA is working to ensure that sanitation services are extended beyond the central sectors of Islamabad to rural and suburban communities.—DNA

Workshop held on substandard medicines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), has organized a national workshop to strengthen capacity for sampling and recalling substandard and falsified medicines.

The workshop aimed to reinforce regulatory mechanisms for identifying and responding to medicines that fail to meet required quality standards, helping protect public health. Speakers emphasized that ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of medicines and vaccines was essential to safeguarding public health and protecting families from potentially harmful medical products. They said initiative reflects continued collaboration between the two organisations to strengthen Pakistan's medicine regulatory system and improve the detection and management of substandard and falsified medical products.

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Briefs

ITP road safety awareness activities

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) conducted road safety awareness activities near Zia Masjid and in Bhara Kahu to educate citizens and students about traffic rules and safe road crossing. An official told on Friday that, on the special directions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Kainat Azhar Khan, the ITP Education Wing team guided citizens near the overhead bridge at Zia Masjid on the importance of using pedestrian bridges while crossing roads. He said citizens were advised to use overhead bridges instead of crossing busy roads directly to avoid traffic accidents and protect precious human lives. Meanwhile, the ITP Education Wing, in collaboration with Islamabad Model School for Boys, Bhara Kahu, organised a road safety awareness walk for students. During the activity, informative pamphlets on traffic rules and road safety were distributed among students and citizens to encourage responsible behaviour on roads. The official said the awareness walk aimed to promote respect for traffic laws, a sense of responsibility and safe road practices among students and the general public. He added that such awareness activities were aimed at preventing road accidents and promoting a safer travelling environment for all road users.—APP

SSP Operations reviews security

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza on Friday visited Faisal Mosque and various Imambargahs to review security arrangements made by the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police during Friday prayers. An ICT police official told APP that during the visits, he met police officers deployed on security duty and checked the arrangements made for the safety of worshippers. The SSP Qazi directed the officers to remain fully alert, ensure effective checking, and maintain strict security at all entry and exit points. He instructed the police personnel to perform their duties with vigilance and ensure the safety of citizens during Friday prayers.—APP

Hepatitis C screening camp

ISLAMABAD: Dr Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital (ANTH) Islamabad has organized a hepatitis C screening camp at Iqra University as part of the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C. The screening camp was organized with an aim to promote early diagnosis, public awareness and timely treatment of the disease. The camp was jointly inaugurated by Dr Zia Ullah Khan Dawar, Project Director of the Prime Minister's National Hepatitis Programme; Yasir Khan Niazi, Group CEO of GAK HealthCare International; and Prof. Eitazaz Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Iqra University Islamabad. Maj. Gen. (Retd) Prof. Dr Muhammad Aslam, Vice Chancellor of City University Islamabad, and Dr Areej Neyazi, Director of Hospitals at GAK, also attended the event, along with faculty members and students. Students from the Community Medicine and Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) departments of Islamabad Medical and Dental College (IMDC) actively participated in the screening activities. Yasir Khan Niazi appreciated Iqra University's leadership for facilitating the initiative and supporting the national campaign against hepatitis C. He reaffirmed ANTH's commitment to the Prime Minister's programme through screening, early diagnosis, public awareness and collaboration with educational institutions to support efforts towards a hepatitis-free Pakistan.—APP

China leads Pak's Rs 8.1t foreign-funded uplift portfolio

Similarly, the Islamic Development Bank is associated with three projects carrying a total estimated cost of Rs851.969 billion. Expenditure on these schemes reached Rs224.728 billion by June 2026, while Rs40.31 billion has been allocated for the ongoing fiscal year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China accounts for the largest share of Pakistan's Rs8.099 trillion foreign-funded development portfolio, with six China-supported projects carrying a combined estimated cost of Rs2.539 trillion, representing approximately 31.4% of the total value of 98 projects being managed by the country. According to official donor-wise figures for the fiscal year 2026-27, a copy of which is available with Wealth Pakistan, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has listed 98 foreign-funded development projects with a combined estimated cost of Rs8.099 trillion. The figures show that China leads all individual donors in terms of total project cost despite supporting only six of the 98 schemes. Estimated expenditure on these projects stood at Rs57.229 billion as of June 30, 2026, while the recorded throw-forward amounted to Rs2.482 trillion, indicating substantial expenditure remaining on the projects. For the current fiscal year, the government has allocated Rs31.7 billion for China-supported projects, comprising Rs25.829 billion in rupee cover and

Rs5.872 billion in local funding. The International Development Association (IDA) ranks second in terms of total project cost, with nine schemes valued at Rs2.279 trillion, accounting for approximately 28.1% of the overall portfolio. Estimated expenditure on these projects reached Rs695.401 billion by June 30, 2026, while Rs60.075 billion has been allocated for 2026-27. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports the highest number of projects among all donors, with 31 schemes involving a combined estimated cost of Rs1.131 trillion. Estimated expenditure on these projects stood at Rs396.357 billion, while the allocation for the current fiscal year amounts to Rs65.89 billion. Similarly, the Islamic Development Bank is associated with three projects carrying a total estimated cost of Rs851.969 billion. Expenditure on these schemes reached Rs224.728 billion by June 2026, while Rs40.31 billion has been allocated for the ongoing fiscal year. The donor-wise statement also identifies four projects under the multiple-donor category, involving a combined cost of Rs331.813 billion. These projects have received the highest annual allocation of Rs80.284 billion for 2026-27,

including Rs23.584 billion in rupee cover and Rs56.7 billion in local funding. Saudi Arabia supports three projects valued at Rs255.705 billion, while the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is associated with two projects costing Rs237.77 billion. Their respective allocations for the current fiscal year stand at Rs3 billion and Rs9.4 billion. France is associated with seven projects worth Rs112.154 billion, with an allocation of Rs10.766 billion for 2026-27. South Korea also supports seven projects, carrying a combined estimated cost of Rs98.171 billion and an annual allocation of Rs12.02 billion. Separate entries for the World Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) cover eight and six projects, respectively. The eight projects listed under the World Bank category have a combined estimated cost of Rs90.649 billion, while the six IBRD projects are valued at Rs40.482 billion. The government has allocated Rs12.679 billion for projects listed under the World Bank category and Rs12.198 billion for IBRD-supported schemes during the current fiscal year. Other development partners include Japan, the United States, Germany, Kuwait Fund, Italy and UN-Habitat, supporting

projects of varying sizes across the development portfolio. According to the official figures, estimated expenditure across all 98 foreign-funded projects reached Rs1.981 trillion by June 30, 2026, while the total recorded throw-forward stood at Rs5.294 trillion. For fiscal year 2026-27, the government has allocated Rs345.625 billion for foreign-funded development projects, comprising Rs255 billion in rupee cover and Rs90.625 billion in local funding. The highest allocation of Rs80.284 billion has been made for projects under the multiple-donor category, followed by Rs65.89 billion for ADB-supported schemes and Rs60.075 billion for IDA projects. The figures indicate that while China dominates the total estimated cost of Pakistan's foreign-funded development portfolio, annual budgetary allocations are distributed across a broad range of multilateral and bilateral development partners. China's substantial share of the portfolio also reflects the scale of development co-operation between the two countries, although the donor-wise statement does not provide a project-level breakdown of the sectors covered by the six China-supported schemes.

Collaboration on eco empowerment, climate resilience

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan Finance Minister Muhammad Ali Akhtar on Friday visited Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) head office to explore avenues of collaboration on economic empowerment, sustainable livelihoods and climate resilience. He was accompanied by Ali Akbar Baig, a prominent social and political figure from Gilgit-Baltistan.

FGP Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Anwar welcomed the minister, while Shafqat Aziz, Senior Policy Advisor at FGP, was also present. During the meeting, Akhtar stressed the need for coordinated efforts among government institutions, civil society and development organizations to create sustainable livelihood opportunities and strengthen communities against growing economic and environmental challenges. He emphasized translating development priorities into practical initiatives that benefit local communities, particularly young people and economically vulnerable groups. The minister highlighted the importance of partnerships that align public-sector priorities with community needs, promote entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities, and enhance local capacities to address climate-related challenges. He also underscored the role of civil society organizations in supporting sustainable development through community engagement, technical expertise and locally driven initiatives.—APP

60% marks requirement for medical admissions

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has clarified that the requirement of at least 60 per cent marks in FSc (Pre-Medical) or an equivalent qualification remains mandatory for admission to MBBS and BDS programmes across the country. In a clarification issued in response to reports circulating on digital media, the council said the eligibility requirement had not been relaxed. According to PM&DC admission regulations, candidates must secure a minimum of 60 per cent marks at the intermediate level or in an equivalent examination to qualify for admission to public and private medical and dental colleges, in addition to fulfilling other prescribed regulatory requirements. The council reiterated that admissions must be conducted in accordance with the applicable regulations and eligibility criteria.—APP

Envoy Dr Oumer explores digital media coop with Fahd



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Dr. Oumer H. Oba, called on H.E. Fahd Haroon, Minister of State / Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Digital Media, at his office in Islamabad. During the meeting, views were exchanged on Ethiopia-Pakistan relations and avenues for cooperation in digital media and public communication came under discussion. Both sides underscored the importance of continued engagement and dialogue to further strengthen bilateral relations and promote closer cooperation between the two countries.

Centralized portal to issue detection bills

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari has taken strict notice of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) imposing excessive and unjustified detection bills on consumers, warning DISCOs that no incorrect or arbitrary detection bill will be charged to any consumer in the future. Addressing an important meeting with the Boards of Directors of DISCOs on Friday, the minister issued formal directives to implement a stringent and comprehensive reform framework, said a press release. He underlined that while curbing electricity theft remains an unquestionable national priority, arbitrarily burdening innocent citizens will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Under this framework, the discretionary authority of field staff is being strictly regulated to protect consumers while ensuring that no hurdle is created for honest of-

ficers performing their duties against power theft. In light of the Federal Minister's directives, the Power Division is mandating that all DISCOs issue detection bills exclusively through the centralized online portal developed by PITC. A complete ban has been enforced on the issuance of manual and discretionary detection bills by field staff or SDOs. Issuing manual bills will be officially treated as severe misconduct, liable to strict disciplinary proceedings and major penalties against the responsible officials and staff.

Under this framework, comprehensive proposed amendments to the Consumer Service Manual (CSM) will be submitted in the coming days to bind every process within clearly defined timelines.

Under the new framework, replacing defective or burnt meters immediately or within a maximum of two billing cycles has been made mandatory, while average billing during this period will be restricted strictly to a maximum of two months. In cases where a meter is established to be running slow or fast, recovery or credit adjustments will be confined strictly to the preceding two billing cycles. Similarly, bringing the duration of detection billing under strict regulation, the chargeable period for illegal abstraction by general consumers is proposed to be fixed at three billing cycles. The maximum chargeable period of detection will be capped at six months for registered consumers and twelve months for unregistered consumers.—DNA

IMCG Korang Town hosts investiture ceremony

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Model College for Girls (IMCG), Korang Town, celebrated a landmark day of leadership, innovation, and academic excellence as it hosted its Annual Investiture Ceremony presided by the worthy Principal Dr. Munazza Faheem. The occasion was graced by Director Colleges Prof. Ihsan-ul-Haq, as the Chief Guest, alongside Ex-Director Colleges Prof. Shahid Mehmood Abbasi, Ex-Principal Prof. Fakharruzia Kamal, and Prof. Sharafat Ali, Principal IMCB Pakistan Town, as Guests of Honor. The guests were warmly welcomed by Head Mistress Shagufta Fareed, Vice Principals Afifa Naem, Ruqaiyah Hameed and Tahira Rasheed. Munazza Faheem, then formally welcomed the distinguished Chief Guest and the Guests of Honor. In her address, she highlighted the institution's recent infrastructure upgrades and top academic and co-curricular achievements. The highlight of the entire event was the solemn investiture ceremony, where student leaders stepped forward to accept

their constitutional and organizational roles in an inspiring gesture, the Honorable Chief Guest administered the oaths of office by all the newly inducted council members.

Chief Guest administered oath from President Mariam Shoaib, Vice President Zoha Batool, General Secretary Bareeha Babar, Finance Secretary Ayesha Batool, CBS society President Almah Khan, Vice President Aminah Muqadas and the secretaries of all the societies.

Prof. Ihsan ul Haq commended IMCG Korang Town in his address advised the young leaders to exercise empathy, integrity, and humility, noting that genuine leadership lies in serving the community. In closing, he praised the current leadership and faculty for upholding this proud heritage, expressing full confidence that the newly inducted Student Council would honor this legacy with integrity.

The ceremony concluded on a high note of institutional pride with a vote of thanks presented by the newly elected student leadership, followed by the solemn rendition of the National Anthem which instilled a deep sense of responsibility and unity.

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US must incorporate Houthi threat into its Iran strategy

DR. MAJID RAFIZADEH

THE intensification of Houthi military operations across Yemen and into Saudi Arabia in recent weeks highlights the need for a more decisive element within US policy toward Iran's regional network. The Iran-backed Houthi forces have this month launched missile and drone strikes on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, killing more than a dozen people and wounding hundreds, targeted Saudi Aramco facilities, struck the presidential palace complex in Aden and hit Yemeni government training camps, with one attack killing as many as 73 recruits. On Wednesday, two people were killed in an attack on King Fahd International Airport in Dammam. These actions have reignited fighting in Yemen, deepened an already severe humanitarian crisis and added volatility to global energy markets and shipping routes. When the US devises its strategy toward Iran, it is essential that the Houthis are not treated as outside the core parameters of that strategy. A central pillar must recognize that the Houthi function as an operational extension – an arm – of the Iranian government. When a terrorist or militia group reaches the stage of systematically attacking civilians, expanding operations across borders and employing sustained violence, limited defensive measures or a purely diplomatic approach are insufficient to produce restraint. Groups that operate at this level of aggression respond most clearly to the credible prospect of being stopped. Groups that operate at this level of aggression respond most clearly to the credible prospect of being stopped. Silence or waiting for exhaustion does not alter their trajectory. If they perceive that they are advancing, they tend to increase the scale of their actions. A strong military response capable of thoroughly degrading their capacity to project force therefore becomes a necessary component of any effective approach. The US has previously demonstrated the military capability to impose meaningful costs on the Houthis. During earlier periods of concentrated operations, particularly those conducted in coordination with partners, Houthi attack rates were reduced and some operational patterns were disrupted. That record shows that American forces, working with European allies, the internationally recognized Yemeni government and regional partners including Saudi Arabia, possess the means to degrade Houthi capabilities substantially. A focused, coordinated campaign of this kind could achieve decisive results in a matter of days by targeting command nodes, weapons production and storage sites, and launch infrastructure. For the US, this tactical requirement is directly

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linked to the broader strategic objective of countering Iran and bringing it to the negotiating table. As long as Iranian allies and proxies such as the Houthis retain the ability to conduct attacks of this nature, Iran itself will continue to feel emboldened. Tehran has little incentive to negotiate seriously and in good faith or to make concessions on issues such as its enriched uranium stockpile while its forward proxies continue to operate with effect. The US ought to recognize the fact that when Iran's proxies remain strong, Tehran feels strong and is less inclined to back down. Weakening those proxies is therefore equivalent to weakening Iran. There is no serious dispute that Iran, through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, has acted as a sponsor of the Houthis. The Wall Street Journal this week detailed how Iranian support has included the provision of targeting intelligence, training and tactical guidance and related assistance that has enabled Houthi strikes against Saudi Arabia and its partners. Iranian officers have been described as contributing to the identification of targets and the direction of operations. The tactics the Houthis have employed – striking countries that are not the primary parties to a direct conflict with Iran and focusing on civilian and economic infrastructure – parallel methods long associated with Iranian regional practice. Saudi Arabia, which was not a party to the war, did not initiate offensive operations against Iran or its proxies and had instead sought to promote peace and regional stability through diplomatic efforts. It has now absorbed repeated missile and drone attacks on its airports and energy facilities. This pattern of externalizing pressure while limiting direct risk to Iranian territory remains a consistent feature of the approach. A firmer US posture does not need to involve open-ended commitments. It can take the form of clear prioritization by treating Houthi military capacity as a core component of the Iranian threat network. Therefore, the US can coordinate kinetic pressure with partners who share the operational burden, interdicting residual flows of Iranian materiel and expertise, and sustaining focused efforts long enough to produce lasting degradation of attack capacity. Iranian officers have been described as contributing to the identification of targets and the direction of operations. Such an approach would reinforce freedom of navigation through critical maritime chokepoints, strengthen regional stability, enhance the credibility of deterrence and improve the prospects for any durable diplomatic outcome with Tehran. Recognizing the Houthis as an integral arm of Iranian power projection, and acting accordingly, strengthens rather than complicates the overall strategy. In conclusion, the Houthis are increasing their aggression in ways that inflict damage domestically within Yemen, regionally across the Arabian Peninsula and globally through disruptions to energy markets and maritime commerce. It is therefore important that the US fully incorporates the Houthis into its Iran strategy. The Houthi function as an extension of the Iranian government. Allowing continued Houthi aggression would embolden Iran itself, reducing incentives for Tehran to negotiate or restrain its broader activities. For these reasons, the US needs a firmer stance against the Houthis. Past operations have already shown that Washington possesses the military capability to stop or significantly degrade them. Working with partners – including the internationally recognized Yemeni government, regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and European partners – the US can bring an end to Houthi aggression and the killing of innocents in a very short period of time.

Europe's Muslim Invasion Myth – Part I

Qamar Bashir



Postwar migration was also shaped by European demand for workers. Former colonial powers and other European states sought labour to sustain their economies. Britain recruited from the Commonwealth. Under West Germany's agreement with Turkey, approximately 870,000 Turkish workers arrived between 1961 and 1973; around 80 percent performed demanding physical work in construction and manufacturing

A Muslim who cleans a European railway station is useful. His daughter who seeks to run the railway becomes, in the language of exclusion, evidence that the country is being taken over. That contradiction lies at the heart of the "Muslim invasion" narrative: minorities are welcomed as labour but too often treated as intruders when they claim equal standing. Immigration presents legitimate questions about housing, public services, borders and integration. Governments must address them. But describing Muslims collectively as invaders replaces policy with religious suspicion. It blurs distinctions between citizens and foreigners, workers and refugees, peaceful believers and violent extremists. A population becomes an accusation. Donald Trump helped normalise this language long before returning to the presidency. On December 7, 2015, his campaign demanded a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." The proposed distinction was explicitly religious. A Muslim doctor and a Muslim child were placed within the same category of exclusion, regardless of their conduct. At the United Nations on September 23, 2025, Trump warned European leaders: "Your countries are going to hell." He linked migration and energy policies to Western Europe's destruction. His broad attack on migration portrayed demographic change as civilisational collapse, providing fertile ground for those who define Muslim presence itself as a threat. The pattern has continued. Le Monde reported on October 19, 2026, that Trump and Russian officials portrayed unrest in France as evidence of immigration-driven decline, although its reporting identified education and living-cost grievances among the protesters. This illustrates why claims about migrants must be checked against the actual causes of events, rather than accepted as political explanations. European examples are equally revealing. Germany's Alternative für Deutschland states in its programme that Islam does not belong to Germany and presents the growing Muslim population as a danger. The same programme acknowledges that many Muslims are law-abiding and integrated. Its position leaves a fundamental contradiction between accepting individual Muslims and declaring their faith alien to national life. The historical irony is considerable. European empires carried their languages, institutions, religions and commercial systems across continents through conquest and unequal power. English, French, Spanish and Portuguese remain global languages partly because colonial rule reorganised administration, education and opportunity.

Those histories should encourage humility when European politicians portray cultural change as an intolerable injury. America's colonial foundations included a substantial trade in convicted prisoners. Between 1718 and 1775, British courts banished approximately 50,000 convicts to the American colonies, including people convicted of theft and other offences. Britain used transportation to remove people its authorities considered undesirable, while colonial employers purchased their labour. Penal exile and commercial exploitation were joined in a system that helped build the colonies. Enslaved Africans were separately transported by force and subjected to hereditary racial slavery. For Indigenous peoples, European colonisation and American expansion brought catastrophic population loss and dispossession. Demographic research summarised by J. David Hacker and Michael R. Haines places the population decline in the area of the contiguous United States between 1492 and 1900 at more than 85 percent under commonly used estimates. Epidemics, warfare, massacres, forced removal and the destruction of livelihoods contributed to this catastrophe. The scale of land seizure is equally stark. A 2021 study published in Science found that Indigenous nations in the contiguous United States had lost 98.9 percent of their historical land base. These histories of forced labour, mass death and territorial dispossession should weigh heavily on political rhetoric that depicts families seeking work and safety as invaders. [7] Postwar migration was also shaped by European demand for workers. Former colonial powers and other European states sought labour to sustain their economies. Britain recruited from the Commonwealth. Under West Germany's agreement with Turkey, approximately 870,000 Turkish workers arrived between 1961 and 1973; around 80 percent performed demanding physical work in construction and manufacturing. Approximately half a million returned to Turkey by 1973. France recorded 211,775 permanent-worker arrivals from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia during 1971–1975 alone. These were substantial labour movements serving European economic needs. Employers and governments helped create movements later portrayed as entirely unwanted. There is a profound moral difference between arriving to conquer a population and arriving to work within its laws. The presence of mosques, halal shops or Muslim elected representatives does not establish territorial conquest. Equally, European Muslims cannot all be described as recent arrivals. Some belong to longstanding communities; others were born in the countries whose belonging politi-

cians now question. My understanding of these communities comes from direct professional engagement. During four years in France as a public policy and media adviser to Pakistan's ambassador, I maintained close contact with the Pakistani community. Professional assignments also took me to almost twenty countries, where I met Pakistanis living and working abroad. Over the past two years in the United States, I have continued those conversations with Pakistani and other Muslim communities. Across the communities I encountered, the recurring picture was of people earning their living through demanding, modestly paid work. They served in restaurants, drove taxis, painted buildings, worked on construction sites, cleaned premises and laboured in agriculture. Their days revolved around employment, rent, family obligations and their children's future. This was the world I knew through sustained contact, rather than the imagined army of religious expansion portrayed in hostile political speeches. In those circles, high-level professionals were a very small minority. My own impression would place them at around one percent of the people I encountered. Some appeared socially distant from the wider immigrant community, finding greater acceptance and prestige through their employers and the majority population. Their language, communication skills and professional networks opened doors unavailable to many manual workers. That contrast shaped my understanding of the divisions within immigrant life. The pattern I observed was not confined to Pakistanis. Conversations with other Muslim communities repeatedly brought me back to poverty, restricted opportunity and the enduring economic inequalities associated with colonial histories. People sought a place where their labour could sustain a household. In my experience, their overriding ambition was a decent living and a secure future, rather than a campaign to convert Europe or replace its laws. The history of recruitment and the lives I encountered lead to a question that reaches beyond immigration: what happens when the children of those workers seek the education, influence and authority their parents rarely possessed? Part Two follows that transition, examining how fear and discrimination confront educational advancement, and whether Western constitutional promises can deliver equal belonging

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

Pakistan's Quality Assurance Dilemma

Dr. Muhammad Bilal Tahir

Pakistan's evolving quality assurance framework offers an opportunity to address these concerns. HEC's Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines (PSG-2023), including provisions for reviewing the effectiveness of accreditation bodies, provides a foundation for strengthening accountability. Accreditation councils should increasingly examine demonstrated learning outcomes, graduate competencies, employer feedback, professional performance, and sustained institutional improvement. However, impact assessment must remain context-sensitive. Graduate employment, for instance, depends partly on economic conditions beyond universities' control

A University proudly displays its accreditation certificate. Its laboratories have been inspected, faculty credentials verified, curricula reviewed, and hundreds of documents examined. The visiting accreditation team leaves satisfied. Yet an uncomfortable question remains: Are its graduates genuinely better prepared to solve real-world problems? This question deserves serious attention as Pakistan continues strengthening its higher education quality assurance system. Accreditation is intended to protect students, safeguard professional standards, strengthen institutional accountability, and promote continuous educational improvement. It assures society that academic programmes meet established quality requirements. However, accreditation should never become an achievement measured primarily by certificates, inspection reports, and completed checklists. Pakistan has an extensive accreditation framework involving the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), National Computing Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC), National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC), and several other professional and discipline-specific bodies. Their responsibilities extend beyond institutional inspection. Engineering accreditation should help produce competent engineers. Medical accreditation must safeguard clinical education and patient safety. Computing accreditation should encourage graduates capable of developing reliable technologies. Teacher education accreditation should ultimately contribute to better classroom instruction. But who measures whether these expectations are actually being achieved? Consider two engineering programmes. One possesses sophisticated laboratories, comprehensive documentation, and impressive infrastructure. Another operates with fewer resources but produces graduates demonstrating stronger problem-solving abilities, innovation, and professional competence. Which programme delivers better education? Infrastructure and qualified faculty are indispensable, but they represent conditions for educational quality, not necessarily evidence of its achievement. Pakistan's engineering accreditation experience provides an instructive example. In June 2017, Pakistan, represented by PEC, achieved full signatory status under the Washington Accord, an international agreement recognizing substantial equivalence among accredited engineering qualifications. This followed reforms introducing Outcome-Based Education and Accreditation, emphasizing

graduate attributes, practical competencies, complex engineering problems, and continuous improvement. The achievement was significant. It strengthened international recognition of qualifying Pakistani engineering degrees and established a framework for greater professional mobility. PEC subsequently retained its signatory status for another six years in 2024. This demonstrates how accreditation reforms can generate identifiable benefits beyond administrative compliance. Yet international recognition and improved educational performance are not identical. Has outcome-based accreditation measurably improved graduates' technical competence, innovation capacity, employability, and professional performance? The distinction matters. International recognition demonstrates confidence in an accreditation system; sustained educational impact requires additional evidence from graduates, employers, professional practice, and longitudinal assessments. Such evidence should be central to the next phase of reform. International discussions are increasingly addressing this challenge. The recent ANQAHE Forum in Doha highlighted the relationship between compliance and impact in higher education accreditation. Importantly, these concepts are not necessarily competing approaches. Compliance asks whether established standards have been met. Impact asks what meaningful difference meeting those standards has made. If accreditation standards incorporate measurable educational outcomes, demonstrating impact becomes part of compliance itself. Pakistan must therefore examine whether accreditation processes consistently improve teaching effectiveness, student learning, research relevance, ethical conduct, and graduate competencies. Another important question concerns academic disciplines without dedicated professional accreditation councils. Does the absence of specialized accreditation mean programmes in physics, mathematics, chemistry, humanities, or other disciplines necessarily provide inferior education? Educational excellence cannot be reduced to the existence of a regulatory body. Competent faculty, rigorous assessment, academic leadership, research culture, and institutional accountability remain essential regardless of specialized accreditation arrangements. Nevertheless, disciplines without dedicated councils must receive equally credible quality assurance through appropriate institutional and programme-level mechanisms. The administrative burden of accreditation also deserves attention. Universities invest substantial faculty time and insti-

tutional resources in preparing self-assessment reports, maintaining evidence, arranging inspections, and responding to observations. These activities are justified when they support improvement. They become counterproductive when documentation overshadows teaching, research, and student engagement. A university should not become better at preparing accreditation files than at educating students. Pakistan's evolving quality assurance framework offers an opportunity to address these concerns. HEC's Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines (PSG-2023), including provisions for reviewing the effectiveness of accreditation bodies, provides a foundation for strengthening accountability. Accreditation councils should increasingly examine demonstrated learning outcomes, graduate competencies, employer feedback, professional performance, and sustained institutional improvement. However, impact assessment must remain context-sensitive. Graduate employment, for instance, depends partly on economic conditions beyond universities' control. Similarly, research-intensive institutions and universities serving underserved communities may contribute to society in fundamentally different ways. Universities should therefore have reasonable autonomy to define mission-aligned impact indicators within nationally recognized quality standards. Equally importantly, accreditation councils must themselves undergo independent effectiveness evaluations. How many institutional improvements resulted from accreditation recommendations? Were identified deficiencies subsequently resolved? Did repeated evaluations produce measurable educational gains? Students, employers, and professional organizations should participate meaningfully in answering these questions. Pakistan does not necessarily need more accreditation requirements. It needs smarter standards, stronger evidence, proportionate regulation, and greater emphasis on educational outcomes. Accreditation must remain a safeguard against unacceptable standards, but its highest purpose should be continuous improvement. The ultimate measure is not how many programmes receive accreditation, how many visits are conducted, or how many reports are submitted. It is whether students learn better, graduates perform better, institutions improve, and society benefits. Until these outcomes become central to accreditation, we risk confusing regulatory compliance with educational excellence. Pakistan must move beyond asking whether its universities are accredited and begin asking whether accreditation is making its universities better.

Briefs

10 militants killed, civilian martyred...

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The military said that the counter-terrorism campaign under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam, as approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan, will continue at full pace. Security forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) remain resolute in eliminating foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country. The statement comes hours after Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir resolved that the Pakistan Army will hit India-backed terrorists "hard" as he visited Corps Headquarters, Peshawar, the military's media wing said earlier in the day. Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly in KP and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021. Pakistan recorded its highest monthly number of militant attacks in 12 years during September 2026.

R4 bloc, European powers...

FROM PAGE 01
economic impacts, and the urgent need to foster diplomatic engagement to resolve regional challenges of peace, security and stability," it said. "Dar briefed his counterparts on the diplomatic and mediatory role Pakistan continues to play in de-escalating tensions, preventing resumption of hostilities and promoting peace. All ministers agreed for continued engagement in this format," it said. The R4 bloc also held a separate meeting. According to the FO, Dar participated in the sixth R4 foreign ministers' meeting alongside Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. The ministers reviewed developments in the region since their last meeting in New York in September, with "particular focus on the situation in the Middle East and related security challenges and conflicts," the FO said. They expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia and reaffirmed their support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The FO added that the ministers also condemned the Houthis attacks targeting Saudi Arabia and underscored the importance of respecting state sovereignty. "They discussed ways to strengthen regional coordination and advance diplomatic efforts to promote lasting peace, security, and stability," it said. Bilateral meetings Dar earlier held bilateral meetings with the Turkish and Egyptian foreign ministers, on the sidelines of the R4 meeting and a meeting between the R4 and European diplomats in Istanbul, the FO said.

Russia signals readiness...

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humanitarian initiatives, particularly efforts aimed at reuniting children with their families and assisting in resolving humanitarian issues in Altyoshki, a town in Russia-controlled Kherson Region. Beyond Ukraine, the leaders also exchanged views on developments in the Middle East, particularly the situation surrounding Iran. Russia reaffirmed its readiness to assist in finding political and diplomatic solutions to outstanding issues involving Tehran. The meeting also addressed growing international speculation over a possible first-ever summit involving the leaders of Russia, China, and the United States on the sidelines of the upcoming APEC Summit in Shenzhen, China, scheduled for November. Ushakov noted that none of the three capitals, Moscow, Washington, or Beijing, has rejected the idea. He added that Chinese authorities, as hosts of the summit, are making preparations and could include such a trilateral meeting in the official program if circumstances prove favorable.

Pakistan, Canada Medical Institutions sign MoU

During the visit, the College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) and the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening cooperation in postgraduate medical education and professional training

DNA

OTTAWA, October 22, 2026: The High Commission for Pakistan in Ottawa hosted a visiting delegation from the College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP), led by its President, Prof. Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, and a delegation from the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), headed by its Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Christopher Watling, during a ceremony held in the Canadian capital. During the visit, the College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) and the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening cooperation in postgraduate medical education and professional training. The agreement provides a framework



for collaboration in areas including postgraduate medical education, clinical training, capacity building, faculty development, and the exchange of best practices in fields of mutual interest. The partnership is expected to facilitate greater academic engagement and professional cooperation between the two prestigious medical institutions. Speaking on the occasion, representatives of both organizations expressed confidence that the MoU would contribute to enhancing the quality of medical education and specialist training while promoting closer institutional ties between Pakistan and Canada. The signing ceremony marks an important step toward expanding international cooperation in healthcare education and fostering the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and professional experience between the medical communities of the two countries.

Haider Ali calls for Recognition of Para-Athletes

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's decorated para-athlete Haider Ali has appealed to the federal and Punjab governments to provide greater recognition and support to para-sports, saying that despite winning major international medals for the country, he has yet to receive the appreciation and backing he believes his achievements merit. "I have always faced injustice in this regard. I have not received the love and government support that I should have been given," Haider Ali said in a message following his silver-medal performance in the discus throw at the 2026 Asian Para Games in Nagoya, Japan. The four-time Paralympic medallist urged authorities to recog-

nise his accomplishments on a par with those of other celebrated Pakistani athletes, stressing that sustained institutional support was essential to help him continue competing at the highest level.

"Everyone can see the attention being given to sports in Punjab. I want the chief minister to extend similar attention to the National Paralympic Committee and para-athletes," he said, also appealing to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to ensure greater support for athletes with disabilities. Ali pointed to his record of international success, including a gold medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, a bronze at Paris 2024 and gold at the previous Asian Para Games. He noted that his earlier Asian Para Games gold was Pakistan's only gold medal at that edition, yet he felt

his achievements had not received adequate recognition. Despite his disappointment, Ali acknowledged the Pakistan Sports Board's cooperation and expressed gratitude to Pakistan WAPDA, his federation and the National Paralympic Committee for their support. He also thanked the media for highlighting para-athletes' performances, saying coverage helped motivate athletes and bring their achievements to the public's attention. The athlete revealed that an injury sustained during training had threatened his participation in Nagoya. He specifically thanked ACTIVIT CEO and Director National Hospital DHA Lahore, Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed for facilitating his treatment, which enabled him to recover and compete.

Top clubs chase Jiu-Jitsu President's Cup title in Abu Dhabi

DNA

ABU DHABI: Top clubs and academies from across the UAE are set to compete for the Jiu-Jitsu President's Cup at Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies Sports Academy in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, Oct. 24. Organized by the UAE Jiu-Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts Federation, the event will feature athletes in the adults and U21 categories. Al-Wahda Jiu-Jitsu Club, returning to defend the title they won in December 2025, will be up against strong competition from Banyas Jiu-Jitsu Club and Al-Ain Jiu-Jitsu Club. Mohamed Salem Al-Dhaheri, vice chairman of the UAE Jiu-Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts Federation, said,

PCB opens direct signings window for PSL teams, announces pre-season roadmap

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday opened the direct signings window for all eight HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchises and unveiled the pre-season roadmap for the 12th edition of the tournament, which will be held from March 18 to May 2 next year. The player-movement cycle has begun with immediate effect, with the Player Auction scheduled for Jan 23 next year. HBL PSL 12 will feature 44 matches, comprising 40 league fixtures and four playoffs, over 46 days. For the first time in the league's history, matches will be played across five to six venues. Under the direct signings rules, each franchise will be allowed to sign one marquee player who did not feature in either HBL PSL 10 or HBL PSL 11. The window will remain open until Nov 23. A workshop involving the franchises next week will finalise retention deadlines, the pre-auction trade window, auction regulations and playing conditions. In a significant development for domestic cricket, the PCB has formally aligned the National T20 Gold and National T20 Silver tournaments with the PSL pre-season calendar. The two competitions will now serve as the primary talent-identification pathway, providing outstanding domestic performers with a clearer route into the franchise league and potentially earning them selection for the national team. - APP

Lawyers' club inaugurated in Gwadar

A prayer was offered for the club's success. After the inauguration, lawyers gathered and pledged to resolve matters through consultation and consensus

GWADAR: A lawyers' club was inaugurated in Gwadar by Saeed Faiz, president of the Makran High Court Bar Association, and Rustam Baloch, president of the Gwadar Bar Association. Among those present were Gwadar Bar Association General Secretary Ghulam Murtaza Muhammad Hasni and several former presidents of the association, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Speaking at ceremony, Faiz welcomed the club, saying it could strengthen ties and promote professional cooperation among lawyers. He said club could provide a place for lawyers to meet, exchange views and hold discussions outside working hours. He also urged lawyers to show mutual respect and work together to protect their shared interests. A prayer was offered for the club's success. After inauguration, lawyers gathered and pledged to resolve matters through consultation and consensus. Participants also expressed hope that club would improve communication and coordination within legal community. - APP

China, Pakistan join forces to strengthen water rescue capabilities

LAHORE: A joint water rescue training program, featuring the "Ark of Life" initiative by China's Blue Sky Rescue team and Pakistani emergency responders, was held from October 10 to 15, equipping 65 Punjab rescue officers with specialized skills to tackle water-related emergencies. Managing incidents involving rivers, canals, low-lying areas and urban flooding requires highly trained personnel, advanced equipment and a rapid, coordinated response - capabilities that the training aimed to strengthen among local responders, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The training concluded with a closing ceremony and aimed to improve local preparedness for monsoon rains and floods in the region. The six-day program covered the establishment of safety lines, the preparation of improvised rafts for casualty evacuation, and boat handling and rescue operations. Experts from Blue Sky Rescue delivered hands-on instruc-

tion designed to build proficiency in swift-water rescue, boat operations, safety protocols, rope techniques and coordinated team response. The training culminated in a practical water rescue exercise conducted by the Emergency Services Academy. Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Khawaja Sal-

man Rafique said the exercise adhered to standards set by the United Nations' International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). Addressing the closing ceremony, Rafique thanked the Chinese expert team for sharing specialized water rescue techniques, saying these skills would help save lives. - DNA



Beyond Mountains and Seas: From early struggle to the Chinese dream

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The China Program at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), in collaboration with China Media Group (CGTN Urdu), held a seminar titled "Yan'an Journal: A Dialogue Beyond Mountains and Seas." Mr. Chen Peng, Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan, attended as Guest of Honour. The panel featured Mr. Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Chief Executive Officer of the Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development (AIERD), and Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, Associate Professor at Bahria University, Islamabad. The seminar was moderated by Senior Research Analyst and Head of the China Program at IRS, Nabila Jafer. In her opening remarks, she noted that 2026 marked the 90th anniversary of the Long March of 1934-35, a defining episode in modern Chinese history, as well as the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. She observed that the idea that every generation has its own Long March ran through the film featured at the seminar and invited the panelists to reflect on how the values of perseverance, unity, integrity and service to the people guides the vision for Party building in the New Era and China's broader goals of national rejuvenation, harmony between humanity and nature, and a community with a shared future for humankind. Describing Pakistan-China friendship as exemplary, she said the seminar offered

another opportunity to deepen mutual understanding beyond mountains and seas. The seminar opened with a 20-minute documentary produced by CGTN Urdu. The film follows international visitors, including Mr. Ramay, as they retrace the Long March and visit Yan'an, recalling the hardships endured by the Red Army before turning to contemporary China. Among the stories it features is that of a young graduate who returned home to expand his family's apple business through e-commerce. In his message on the occasion Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi stated that preserving historical heritage is not limited to safeguarding historical sites and artefacts; it is equally important to pass on the experiences, stories, and values that shape a nation's identity to future generations. Emphasizing the importance of highlighting historical events such as the Long March through documentaries, he noted that such initiatives play a vital role in conveying history and the associated spirit of commitment, sacrifice, and perseverance to the younger generation. Shakil Ramay said the Chinese maxim that every generation has its own Long March reflected a genuine commitment to a cause, the people and the country. Of the 86,000 people who embarked on the historic march, he said, only about 6,000 survived. The Long March, he argued, helped forge a new Communist Party of China, instilling ideological commitment, fearlessness, equality between leaders and comrades, discipline and a distinct collec-

tive identity. He cited the rules of conduct laid down by Chairman Mao Zedong for the Red Army—including speaking politely and paying for anything taken—as examples of a people-centred approach. Turning to the present, Ramay said the current generation's responsibilities included building a modern socialist country with Chinese characteristics, advancing national rejuvenation, strengthening ideological commitment and national identity, and promoting a community with a shared future for humankind. These ambitions, he said, required sustained efforts to strengthen Party building in the New Era. He also urged Pakistani students pursuing higher education in China to learn the Chinese language. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt stressed that dialogue between nations should be candid and open, and that lasting friendship depended on mutual understanding. Such engagement, he said, needed to extend beyond official meetings to include cultural centres and the media. Reflecting on China's transformation over fewer than four decades, Dr. Butt attributed its progress to pragmatic leadership, policy continuity, a vision shared by the public and a whole-of-government approach. He cautioned that development alone could not guarantee peace, but argued that inclusive development could provide a stronger foundation for it. He also underscored the middle class's role as an engine of economic growth. Counsellor Chen Peng thanked IRS for organising the seminar and highlighted the historical significance of the Long

March. He described the construction of the Karakoram Highway in the 1960s as another long march—one undertaken jointly by China and Pakistan. About 130 Chinese engineers lost their lives during its construction, he said, with 88 buried in a cemetery in Gilgit. Chen characterised the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), launched in 2013, as a further stage in the two countries' shared journey. He said 43 projects had been completed, attracting approximately US\$25 billion in investment. Seventeen energy projects had added 8,900 megawatts of electricity-generating capacity and created about 200,000 direct jobs. CPEC, he added, was now entering its second phase, with a focus on industrial cooperation, modern agriculture, the digital economy and green energy. He also noted that the Khunjerab Pass remained open throughout the year and that approximately 36,000 Pakistani students were studying in China. During the question-and-answer session, a participant asked how Pakistan's younger generation could draw inspiration from the spirit of the Long March. Mr. Chen said harmony and peace lay at the heart of Chinese culture and that success depended on uniting ordinary people around a shared belief. The panelists urged young people to embrace struggle and hard work, emphasising the importance of transforming information into knowledge and wisdom. Dr. Butt identified productivity, long-term policy continuity and skills development as essential to progress, urging Pakistan's youth to set their sights on 2047 as a milestone for a more prosperous country.

At least 25 killed in road accident

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National Highway in Wind-er. In February, five people, including a local journalist, were killed in two separate road accidents in Wind-er and Khuzdar districts.

Kundi says Pak values ties with...

FROM PAGE 01
expand cooperation in trade, investment and other areas of mutual interest. The Ambassador of Hungary also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the friendly relations between the two countries. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to further enhancing bilateral cooperation and strengthening people-to-people contacts. The ceremony was attended by diplomats, government officials and members of the business community.

Insulin product in short supply

FROM PAGE 01
"The impact of the shortage is being felt not just here, but across Asia, as well as in Australia and Europe," Azeem said. "The product will be available as soon as international supplies are restored." The secretary further said alternative insulin products with the same dosage and mode of action were readily available in Pakistan and that patients could switch to them on their doctors' recommendation. "The product is manufactured in Germany. It is an issue that we are trying to resolve," he said. However, Batool expressed concern about the difficulties patients could face in switching treatments. She said the alternatives were at least 20 per cent more expensive and that many patients did not have access to doctors. "Currently, around 34.5 million people in Pakistan have Type 1 diabetes, including children," she said. "Alternatives are not readily available. Has the health ministry or the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drac) ensured their easy availability?" +

PM sets indicative wheat...

FROM PAGE 01
and increasing wheat production next year". Moreover, the statement quoted PM Shehbaz as saying that the government's objective behind increasing the proposed wheat procurement price was to provide relief to farmers amid rising production and fuel costs, as well as inflation pressure. "Providing farmers with an incentive to cultivate wheat is among the key objectives of the decision," the prime minister said. He expressed hope that the new proposed price would help farmers cover their production costs and earn profit. "Over the past years, farmers have faced financial difficulties due to inflation and rising agricultural expenses while Pakistan has also had to import wheat in the last two years," he said, adding that the decision to increase the illustrative price would prove to be an important step forward in "strengthening the country's food security, encouraging local production, and bringing stability to the agriculture sector". "The government expects that the determination of the proposed price will generate greater interest among farmers in wheat cultivation, resulting in ample sowing of wheat in the upcoming season and brighter prospects for increased national production. "This step taken by the prime minister will prove to be an important milestone in the efforts to improve the economic well-being of farmers, stabilise the agricultural economy and make the country more self-reliant in meeting its nutritional needs. It is hoped that 2027 will bring positive results for Pakistan's agricultural sector and its farmers," the PMO statement said. It added that the prime minister expressed gratitude to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her cooperation in the consultative process for the decision, as well as to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah for his cooperation.

Briefs

EU chief says 'deeply alarmed' by 'Russian escalation'

BRUSSELS: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said Friday she was "deeply alarmed" after Russia was blamed for a new drone attack that sank a ship in the Black Sea near Romania.

"Deeply alarmed by yet another Russian escalation in the Black Sea. A civilian vessel carrying Ukrainian and Azerbaijani crew has been struck off the coast of Romania. These reckless attacks target innocent lives and openly defy international law," von der Leyen posted online.—APP

Clashes erupt in Tunisia after deaths allegedly linked to police

TUNIS: Clashes between protesters and police erupted in two Tunisian towns after the deaths of men in incidents locals say involved security forces, media reported Friday. In Ettadhamen, a suburb of the capital Tunis, protesters burned tires and blocked roads overnight following the death of a young man the day before, according to reports. Security forces used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, media said. Radio station Mosaïque FM reported that the man was beaten by police officers during his arrest, citing his father.

But the same media also cited a police source as saying the man had swallowed drugs during a raid, which led to his death, without giving details. In Jebeniana, in the Sfax region, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) south of the capital, confrontations also broke out after a young man died in a police chase, local media reported.

Videos, which AFP could not verify, showed protesters blocking roads after setting tires on fire and clashing with police in the central Tunisian city.

It was unclear whether the clashes in either city led to casualties or if any arrests were made.—APP

AtkinsRealis contender to build nuclear power plant

ISTANBUL: Canadian engineering company AtkinsRealis is in the running to help build Türkiye's third nuclear power plant, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said. NATO allies Canada and Türkiye upgraded their relations to a "strategic partnership" during the first bilateral visit by a Canadian prime minister on Thursday, as Carney seeks new global trade partners to reduce reliance on the United States. The new partnership signed in Ankara focuses on trade and investment, defense, security and energy. It aims to create jobs and opportunities for Canadian and Turkish companies to do more business together.

Asked about talks on Canadian involvement in Türkiye's planned third nuclear power plant — over which Ankara has also held talks with South Korea, Russia, China, and Japan — Carney said the decision would ultimately be made by the Turkish government but he believed Canada had better odds now.

"If you would have asked us a year ago how we would have pegged the chances, they would have been very low. Now there are good chances. There's real competition, of course," Carney told reporters in Istanbul, adding that there may be a decision on the issue before year-end. He said the strength of Canada's CANDU technology, partnership with some Turkish businesses, including on the construction side, and the ability to build out elements of the supply chain make it "quite a compelling proposition." Rosatom, Russia's state nuclear energy company, is building Türkiye's first nuclear power station at Akkuyu in the Mediterranean province of Mersin under a \$20 billion accord from 2010. It said last week that it expected a year-end nuclear start-up at the site.

Türkiye plans to build a second nuclear power plant in the Black Sea region of Sinop, with the third planned in the northwestern region of Thrace.—APP

Pak's envoy to China presents his credentials

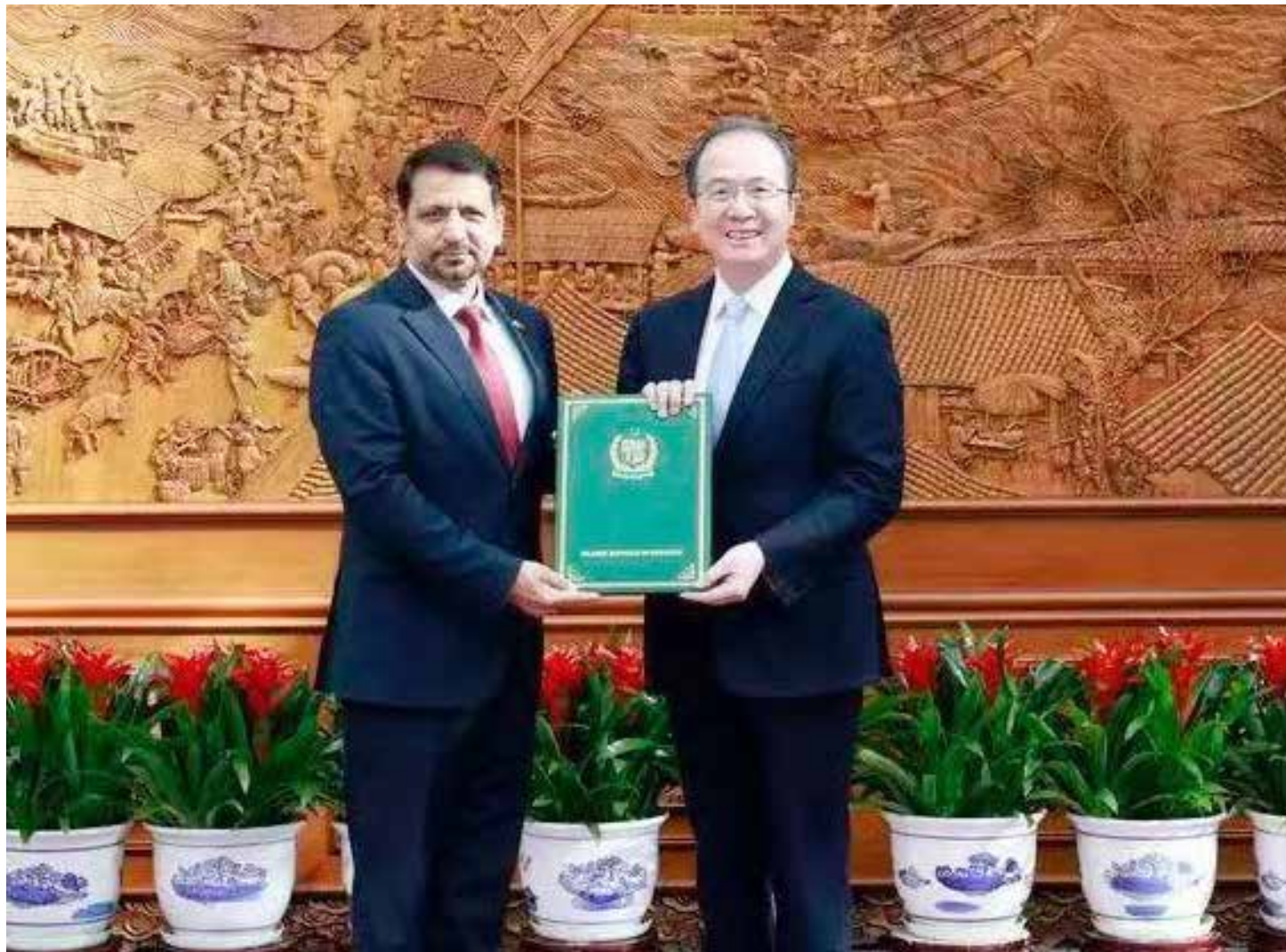
Ambassador Gillani expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to him and reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the Chinese side to further strengthen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China

DNA

BEIJING: Dr. Syed Ali Asad Gillani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, presented a copy of his credentials to H.E. Mr. Hong Lei, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and Director-General of the Protocol Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Gillani expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to him and reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the Chinese side to further strengthen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China.

He underscored the importance of building on the longstanding friendship between the two countries and advancing bilateral cooperation across areas of mutual interest.

Ambassador Gillani looks forward to working with Chinese counterparts to further deepen the enduring bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and China which a generation of leaders from both countries have worked very hard to build.



Pakistan set up Billie Jean King Cup Final against Iran

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan qualified for the final of the Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group III after defeating top seeds Maldives 2-1 in their final Group A tie at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Tennis Complex Islamabad. The hosts will face Iran in the title-deciding final on Saturday (Today) with Pakistan aiming to cap an impressive campaign by lifting the Group III trophy on home soil.

Pakistan's experienced players, Ushna Suhail and Mahin Aftab Qureshi, delivered commanding performances in the singles matches to secure the team's place in the final. Ushna Suhail defeated Keyara Usama 6-2, 6-3, while Mahin Aftab Qureshi overwhelmed Aishath Karin Saizan 6-1, 6-0 to give Pakistan an unassailable 2-0 lead. In the doubles, Romaisha Malik and Hajra Sohail went down fighting against Aishath Karin Saizan and Nayara Usama Ali, losing 4-6, 4-6, as Maldives claimed their only point of the tie.

Pakistan reached the final after defeating Bahrain, Bhutan and Maldives in the group stage, demonstrating consistency and strength across their campaign.

Iran, meanwhile, booked their place in the final with a comprehensive 3-0 victory over Qatar in Group B. Yasaman Yazdani defeated Dana Khalifa 6-0, 6-0, while Kimia Sagheb Tehrani overcame Mubarak Al Naimi 6-2, 6-1. The Iranian doubles pair of Meshkatolzahra Safi and Hana Soltani completed the clean sweep with a 6-2, 7-6(2) win over Hind Almudahka and Khadija Gassama.

The final promises an exciting contest between two teams eager to finish the tournament with the title. Pakistan will look to capitalise on home-court advantage and the support of local fans, while Iran will pose a formidable challenge after their convincing performance in the group stage. With a place at the top of the Group III standings at stake, Pakistan will be aiming for a memorable victory in front of their home crowd.

OGDC ranks first among top 104 listed companies

OGDC's perfect score in anti-corruption disclosures reflects the transparency of its measures in this area

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDC) has ranked first among Pakistan's 104 top publicly listed companies in Transparency International Pakistan's Transparency in Corporate Reporting Assessment (TRAC) 2026, with an overall score of 92.71%.

The report recognised OGDC's strong public disclosure practices across key areas of corporate governance, accountability and responsible business conduct. The company achieved a perfect score of 100% in four assessment categories: anti-corruption programmes, organisational transparency, domestic financial reporting, and gender, non-discrimination and disability inclusion. OGDC achieved an overall score of 92.71%, placing the company in the "Significantly Transparent" category. The overall average across all 104 companies was 66.73%. OGDC scored 81.25% in human rights and corporate responsibility and 75% in environmental, social and governance (ESG) disclosures.

The Transparency International assessment evaluated how much information companies make publicly available about their policies, governance structures, and operations. OGDC's perfect score in anti-corruption disclosures reflects the transparency of its measures in this area. The report particularly cited the company's Code of Conduct as an example of good practice for providing employees with secure and confidential two-way communication channels to report unethical behaviour. In organisational transparency and domestic financial reporting, OGDC also achieved 100% scores. These categories assess the disclosure of corporate structures and governance information, as well as key financial details relating to a company's domestic operations. The company also achieved the highest score in gender, non-discrimination and disability inclusion, along with Interloop and Sazgar Engineering. The assessment examines public commitments against harassment and discrimination, equal-opportunity recruitment and promotion, disability inclusion, and formal mechanisms for addressing workplace discrimination.

OGDC's score of 81.25% in human rights and corporate responsibility and 75% in ESG disclosures also reflects the company's performance in the broader assessment of corporate reporting. OGDC also scored 100% in Procurement Related to Government Contracts/Tenders, ranking first in that section. The TRAC 2026 assessment covered 104 listed companies across Pakistan's corporate sector. The report recorded an average score of 53.41% for anti-corruption programmes, 92.49% for organisational transparency, 92.50% for domestic financial reporting, 68.11% for gender, non-discrimination and disability inclusion, 45.98% for human rights and corporate responsibility, and 47.84% for ESG disclosures. OGDC's top ranking and performance underscored the company's commitment to comprehensive public reporting in strengthening corporate accountability and stakeholder confidence.—DNA

BOA okays Karachi Industrial Park as special eco zone

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired the 11th meeting of the Board of Approvals (BOA) for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to discuss the key measures to facilitate industrial investment, improve infrastructure provision and promote the effective utilisation of industrial land. The Board confirmed the minutes of its 10th meeting and considered three substantive agenda items. The Board approved the application for Karachi Industrial Park (KIP) as a Federal Special Economic Zone. The proposed zone aims to attract export-oriented industrial investment, promote technology transfer and value addi-

tion, and generate employment. The Board also approved the General Eligibility Criteria for the provision of utilities and allied services up to the designated zero point of privately established SEZs through government funding, under the SEZ Act, 2012. The criteria establish a framework for considering the provision of road access, utilities and other essential facilities at government expense on a case-by-case basis. The Board further approved the Land Lease Policy for Public Sector SEZs and Industrial Estates in Punjab. The policy promotes industrial investment through long-term leasing, reducing upfront land costs and ensuring optimal use of public-sector industrial land, while encouraging investment in key industrial sectors and emerging industries with high export potential. The decisions reflect the Government's continued focus on facilitating industrialisation, improving the investment environment and

strengthening the framework for Special Economic Zones. The measures are intended to support greater private-sector participation, encourage export-oriented production and ensure that public resources and industrial land are utilised effectively. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Board of Investment Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh; Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Mr. Ahsan Iqbal; Federal Minister for Commerce Mr. Jam Kamal Khan; Adviser to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan; and Punjab Minister for Industries, Commerce and Investment Mr. Shafay Hussain. Senior officials from the Finance Division, Board of Investment, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Federal and Provincial Special Economic Zones Authorities, relevant federal ministries and provincial departments, as well as representatives of the relevant sectors, also attended.



Istanbul: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar with the Foreign Ministers of Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and their counterparts from France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Indonesian food companies seek Saudi expansion

JAKARTA: Indonesian food companies are planning to expand their businesses with new outlets in Saudi Arabia, their representatives told Arab News, as they seek to widen the global reach of Indonesia's diverse culinary offerings.

Sundanese food brand Bumi Aki Group signed a preliminary agreement with Saudi-based Indonesian company BKP Limited earlier this week as part of a plan to open its first international outlet in Madinah. Two other Indonesian food brands, Baso Gejrot Indonesia and Al Na'im Fried Chicken, are working with another Indonesian-owned company in the Kingdom, Syarikah Makan Al Na'im, or SMAN, to boost their presence in Makkah.

"It will likely take us between one and two years to fulfill all the requirements, including those related to taxes and permits," Bumi Aki Group president director Dr. Anisha Desiliana said at a press conference in Jakarta, adding that the recent agreement will help speed up the process and allow the restaurant to start operations next year.

"We are planning to do this in stages, while consistently maintaining the quality of our products and services that have been the foundation of our consumer's trust ... We want to expand our market (in Saudi Arabia) and are ready to adjust our menu to fit the market," SMAN, meanwhile, is looking "to introduce the diversity of Indonesian culinary traditions."

The company took part in a symbolic signing ceremony last week for their cooperation agreements with Baso Gejrot Indonesia and Al Na'im Fried Chicken, on the sidelines of Indonesia's flagship trade event, Trade Expo Indonesia.

"Baso Gejrot Indonesia draws on the familiar flavors of Indonesian meatball dishes, distinctive seasonings and the country's rich food culture. Al Na'im Fried Chicken offers a fried-chicken concept featuring a specially developed spice profile intended to appeal to a broad range of consumers," Sandi Hasyono, SMAN's public relations manager, said in a statement to Arab News.

"For us, food is more than a commercial product: it is an accessible expression of cultural identity and Indonesian creativity. Our objective is to preserve each brand's character while adapting service, presentation and operations to local consumer expectations."

Baso Gejrot Indonesia already has an outlet in Makkah, while Al Na'im Fried Chicken is preparing to open one as soon as November.

SMAN may look into potentially expanding the two brands in other Saudi cities, including Jeddah, Madinah and Riyadh, as well as the wider Middle East and North Africa region, Hasyono added.—APP

Taiwan shuts down as Typhoon Champi approaches

TAIPEI: Most shops and schools were shut across Taiwan on Friday as Typhoon Champi neared the island, forcing hundreds of people to leave their homes ahead of the powerful storm. The typhoon is expected to sweep past Taiwan's northeast as it moves toward China and Japan, triggering the cancellation of hundreds of flights in the region. At least one person has been killed in Taiwan after being swept away by waves whipped up by the typhoon, authorities said. More than 160 others have been injured. Champi is the latest in a busy Pacific storm season turbocharged by the El Nino weather phenomenon that has caused unprecedented warming in the equatorial Pacific. The storm was briefly a super typhoon as it crossed the ocean, with reported maximum sustained wind speeds of nearly 300 kilometers (186 miles) per hour, but has since weakened.

It gathered strength as it neared Taiwan on Friday afternoon and now has maximum speeds of 194 kph (120 miles per hour), according to the latest update from the Joint Typhoon Warning Center.—APP

Briefs

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Yemen
military
reports 780
strikes against
Houthi targets

ADEN: Yemeni government forces carried out 780 strikes against Houthi targets over a 24-hour period, "neutralizing" more than 500 militia fighters in an operation that spanned several fronts, the Yemeni Armed Forces said on Thursday. Spokesperson Col. Majed Al-Nuzaili said in a message posted on social media platform X that troops continued to push back Houthi fighters on northern, southern and western fronts, including in Al-Jawf, areas west of Marib, and in Al-Bayda, as part of Operation Dawn of Yemen. The strikes targeted Houthi field commanders, troop concentrations, reinforcements, heavy weapons positions and fortified sites, as well as vehicles used to transport fighters and supplies, he said. The attacks disrupted Houthi forces and prevented them from reinforcing forward positions, allowing government troops to press their offensive, Al-Nuzaili said. - APP

Trump for
Ilham's
resignation

DUBAI: US President Donald Trump has called for Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's immediate resignation, claiming she used a fake name to enter Congress. A federal court filing submitted Wednesday by the office of US Attorney Jeanine Pirro referred to the congresswoman as "Ilhan Nur Said Elmi, a/k/a Ilhan Abdullahi Omar." Trump seized on the allegation during campaign rally in Iowa, while discussing Omar and longstanding allegations surrounding her former marriage. The filing concerns efforts to keep materials sealed in relation to the federal search warrant for Omar's Washington, DC-area home.

"It was just revealed that Ilhan Omar's name is not Ilhan Omar, the one she used to get elected and sworn into Congress, but rather, it's an entirely different name, Ilhan Nur Said Elmi, and that her last name is, incredibly, also the exact name of her brother, Ahmed Nur Said Elmi, the person they said she married and had children with. When asked whether or not she married her brother, she said, "Not to my knowledge," Trump posted on his TruthSocial account. "In other words, she somehow didn't know? Therefore, because she used a fake name to be sworn in, I assume she must IMMEDIATELY resign from Congress. - APP

Field Marshal vows continued
action against terrorists

Addressing the officers and troops, Field Marshal Munir commended their high morale and professionalism. He directed them to maintain continuous vigilance and uphold the highest standards of operational readiness to effectively counter existing and emerging threats



DNA

RAWALPINDI / PESHAWAR: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), visited Corps Headquarters, Peshawar, where he was briefed on the prevailing security situation in the province, ongoing counter-terrorism operations, border management measures, and the operational preparedness of formations deployed in the area.

Upon arrival, the COAS & CDF was received by the Commander Peshawar Corps. During the detailed briefing, senior officers apprised him of the current threat environment, the progress of intelligence-based operations against terrorist networks, and the measures in place to strengthen border security along the western frontier. The briefing also covered the state of readiness of troops and the challenges posed by cross-border terrorism. Addressing the officers and troops, Field

Marshal Munir commended their high morale and professionalism. He directed them to maintain continuous vigilance and uphold the highest standards of operational readiness to effectively counter existing and emerging threats. Under-scoring the military's resolve, he stated that the campaign against Indian-sponsored terrorist outfits would continue to the fullest, with forces prepared to hit them hard wherever they are found. The COAS & CDF also paid rich tributes

to the sacrifices of the people of Pakistan, including the Shuhada and Ghazis of the security forces. He affirmed that, with the unwavering support of the people, Pakistan would surely inflict total defeat upon the terrorists and their perverted ideology. His remarks reflected the military's long-standing position that sustained public backing remains essential for the success of counter-terrorism efforts.

The visit comes at a time when security forces remain engaged in multiple operations aimed at eliminating residual terrorist presence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and along the border regions. Officials have repeatedly highlighted the role of external sponsorship in sustaining militant activity, a point the Field Marshal reiterated during his interaction with the troops.

Field Marshal Munir's visit is being viewed as a demonstration of the top military leadership's direct oversight of the security situation in the province and its continued focus on both kinetic operations and border management. The Peshawar Corps remains at the forefront of these efforts, given the province's strategic location and historical exposure to cross-border threats. No further details of the operational discussions were released. The visit concluded with the COAS & CDF expressing full confidence in the ability of the troops to meet the challenges ahead.

Romania
launches
rescue
operation

NEWS DESK

BUCHAREST: Romania launched a rescue operation on Friday after a ship sent a distress signal, the latest in a spate of incidents in the Black Sea, where suspected Russian drones have hit several vessels off Romania and Bulgaria. "Rescue vessels have managed to recover nine people alive, and one body from the water," the Romanian Naval Authority said in a press release, adding that three crew of the Khorv - which was "in distress outside Romanian territorial waters" - were missing. It did not give the cause of the emergency.

South
and North
Koreas talk

DNA

SEOUL: South Korea proposed on Friday military talks with North Korea to "mutually confirm the precise location" of their border and discuss restoring communication channels, after an explosion in the DMZ further strained relations. Tensions between the two Koreas have soared since the South last month blamed the blast inside the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the countries on land mines laid.

Political parties not supporting fight
against terrorism will be 'minus'

No discussion has taken place on proposed 28th constitutional amendment, says Rana Sanaullah

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah said on Friday that political parties that do not join the agenda to eliminate terrorism from the country will be "minus", stressing that the entire nation should unite against the menace. Sanaullah made these remarks in response to a question on Geo News programme 'Geo Pakistan' about the long-term political future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and whether PTI would continue to play a role in the province or be considered "minus". "Those who do not join the agenda to eliminate terrorism will be minus," the PML-N senator said. His remarks come a day after PM Shehbaz chaired federal apex committee in Peshawar to review the security situation. The

PM arrived in Peshawar for his first visit to the province since the governor's rule and the emergency imposed on October 11. Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir, KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, federal ministers and newly appointed provincial advisers attended the meeting. Addressing the participants, the prime minister lashed out at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over the worsening security situation in the province, saying the province had become a "cradle of peace" a few years ago. He also vowed that the federal government, currently overseeing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under governor's rule, would make every possible effort to restore progress in the province. However, speaking on Geo News morning programme today, Sanaullah said the elimination of terrorism was the government's priority, adding that people's lives could not improve without ending the menace. He said any political party that did not stand wholeheartedly with the security forces in the fight against terrorism would also be sidelined. The PML-N leader added that the KP Governor Kundi had sought Rs160 billion, which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved immediately.

Lahore ranks top
among world's
most polluted city

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Lahore topped the ranking of the world's most polluted major cities on Friday, with an air quality index (AQI) of 344, as doctors advised residents to wear masks to protect themselves from hazardous air pollution. According to data recorded at around 8am, the Swiss air quality monitoring website IQAir placed Lahore at the top of its live ranking, with the city's AQI falling in the hazardous category. IQAir reported Lahore's main pollutant as cancer-causing particulate matter PM2.5, recorded at 57 times higher than the World Health Organisation's annual guideline. These microscopic particles are small enough to enter the bloodstream, increasing the risk of stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and severe chronic respiratory illnesses.

Just across the border, India's Delhi ranked second among the world's most polluted major cities, with an AQI of 244, classified as very unhealthy. Among other cities in the ranking, Dakar in Senegal recorded an AQI of 184, while India's Mumbai and Kolkata registered readings of 179 and 172, respectively. The air quality in all three cities was classified as unhealthy. Air pollution levels varied across Lahore, with Iqbal Town recording the highest AQI of 535, according to the data. Airwash on Bedian Road recorded an AQI of 497, while Kahna registered 446 and Defence Phase 5 recorded 360. The AQI was recorded at 350 in Model Town and 253 on Barki Road, highlighting varying levels of pollution across different parts of the city. Cooler seasonal air traps pollutants close to the ground, forming a deadly winter mix of crop-residue smoke, traffic emissions, industrial fumes and construction dust. Delhi is frequently ranked among the world's most polluted capitals, with authorities often attributing the annual smog crisis to farmers burning crop stubble in neighbouring Punjab and Haryana. Unicef cautions that polluted air puts children at heightened risk of acute respiratory infections, while a 2023 study found air pollution can cut life expectancy by more than five years in parts of South Asia.

President Zardari for boosting
Pakistan-German cooperation

DNA

BERLIN: President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed on the imperative of realising available potential for expanding existing political, economic and defence cooperation between Pakistan and Germany with greater focus on economy and trade, emerging technologies, climate resilience, skills development, people-to-people and cultural exchanges during meeting with Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin today. President Zardari thanked President Steinmeier for his invitation and the warm hospitality extended to him and his

delegation. He said the visit reflected Pakistan's commitment to deepening its longstanding cordial, friendly relations with Germany and readiness to translate existing relations into a more stronger, robust and mutually beneficial partnership through sustained constructive engagement. The President noted with profound appreciation that this landmark visit is now taking place after 23 years defining a significant chapter in bilateral relations as the two countries commemorate 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations this year. He stated that Pakistan highly values Germany as a major European partner, and greatly admires German support towards women empowerment, social protection and human development. President Asif Ali Zardari stated that Pakistan stands prepared for expanding bilateral cooperation beyond traditional areas into innovative and mutually beneficial collaboration with Germany in scientific development, healthcare and education, vocational training and technological advancement, trade and investment, agriculture, commerce and industry, and climate resilience through enhanced government-to-government, business-to-business, and experts level interactions. President Asif Ali Zardari expressed his gratitude to President Frank-Walter Steinmeier for German acknowledgement of Pakistan's sincere mediation role in US-Iran conflict. He stated that Pakistan views resolution of conflicts through sustained dialogue and constructive negotiations for the sake of regional as well as global peace and stability. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier warmly welcomed President Zardari's visit to Germany on the momentous occasion of 75th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Germany this year. He also extended his condolences on the tragic death of children during school roof collapse in Peshawar recently. The German President expressed the hope that Pakistan and Germany will continue to engage with reinforced efforts in the business and trade fields for promotion of bilateral business, education collaboration and technological cooperation.

Strong earthquake hits China's
Tibet, killing 16 people

Eleven people were seriously injured and 21 sustained minor injuries in powerful earthquake in Tibet, reports Xinhua

A MAGNITUDE 7 earthquake struck China's Tibet region on Thursday night, killing at least 16 people and injuring 32 others, state news agency Xinhua reported, citing Nagqu City's emergency management bureau.

As of 2:25 am on Friday, 11 of the injured were in serious condition, while 21 sustained minor injuries, Xinhua reported.

Local authorities found at least two people injured in a village near the epicentre, with some houses in villages closest to the epicentre showing cracks, the state broadcaster said. The quake was the strongest to hit China since January 2024.

The epicentre was in a sparsely populated, high-altitude county in Nagqu, northern Tibet, at a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). The average elevation within 5 km of the epicentre is about 4,864 metres (15,960 feet), data from the China Earthquake Networks Centre (CENC) showed.

Videos released by local state-run media showed people leaving their homes and seeking shelter outside or in cars parked on the street. One resident reported being awakened by the strong quake and hearing the house creaking during the tremor.

The quake was clearly felt in the local area, CENC said. The epicentre was around 400 km from the Tibetan capital, Lhasa.

Local fire and rescue teams have been mobilised and are heading to the affected region, state media said.

A series of smaller tremors of around magnitude 3 and 4 were recorded in surrounding regions following the magnitude 7 earthquake, CENC data showed.

In 2010, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck Yushu in neighbouring Qinghai province, killing at least 2,698 people and leaving nearly 300 missing. - APP

WATER
JUST GOT
BETTER!!

MURREE
SPARKLETT'S

Bottled Drinking Water

Carbonated Water Also Available in Glass Bottle.

f /Mureesparkletts o /officialmureesparkletts