



Islamabad POST

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China, Pakistan ties growing with each passing day: Mao

Detailed News On Page-08

Cuba envoy all praise for Pak support, role

Detailed News On Page-07



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says no new provinces

Detailed News On Page-01



Houthi official says

Egypt's support for Saudi Arabia amounts to 'Declaration of War'

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia emphasized its commitment to regional security and stability. According to Saudi state media, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman chaired a meeting of the Council of Ministers in Riyadh on Tuesday, during which participants reviewed the outcomes of the discussions held in Tehran

DNA

SANAA/RIYADH: A senior Houthi official has strongly criticized Egypt's decision to authorize military support for Saudi Arabia, describing the move as a "declaration of war" against Yemen amid rising regional tensions and diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation in the Middle East. Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi political bureau, made the remarks in a statement posted on Telegram on Tuesday. The comments came in response to Egypt's parliamentary approval for military assistance to Saudi Arabia and followed high-level regional talks held in Tehran aimed at reducing tensions in the region. "It is truly remarkable that while these people go to discuss what they call peace in the region, Egypt and its parliament declare support for the so-called defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and, in doing so, declare war against the Republic of Yemen," al-Houthi said. The Houthi leader also reacted to a diplomatic initiative involving Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Türkiye.

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Iranian Supreme leader meets security chief

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who has yet to appear in public since he took office in March, has met with security chief Mohsen Rezaei to discuss regional security and the Strait of Hormuz, his office said Tuesday. Mojtaba was chosen in March to succeed his father and longtime ruler Ali Khamenei, who was killed in US-Israeli strikes on February 28 in central Tehran alongside senior military commanders, and was said to have been injured in the same attack. He has only communicated through written messages since his appointment, some of them published in handwriting attributed to him. During the meeting, the first publicly announced encounter between Rezaei and the leader, they discussed "strengthening bilateral relations with neighboring countries"

and "safeguarding national and regional security through the management of the Strait of Hormuz," Khamenei's office said in a statement. Khamenei "emphasized the need to safeguard the rights and interests of the Iranian nation and the resistance front by adhering to the conditions set by the country's authorities, with the aim of ending the war and the state of neither war nor peace," it added. Their meeting was announced a day after Rezaei held talks with senior officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan – countries which recently signed the mutual defense Mecca Pact. Neither the date nor the location of the meeting was disclosed. Iran claims control over the strait and regularly targets vessels that attempt to cross without its authorization, while the United States has imposed a naval counterblockade on Iranian ports.

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ISLAMABAD: Newly-appointed Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmed hosted Ambassadors/Heads of Missions of the European embassies, based in Islamabad. – DNA

India hosts Arab League diplomats

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Diplomats from Arab League member states are undergoing training this week at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi as part of the inaugural program of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum. The forum is a high-level diplomatic platform that guides and strengthens relations between India and the 22 member states of the Arab League. The framework was formally established in December 2008, with the India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting serving as the forum's main institutional mechanism of the forum.

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Pakistan-Iran trade resumes

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Thousands of trucks remain stranded on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border despite the resumption of limited overland trade between the two countries, southwest Pakistan business representatives told AFP on Monday. Mir Naveed Jan Kalmati, president of the chamber of commerce for Gwadar city on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast, said the frontier with Iran was "only partially open" to trade, with a vast backlog of vehicles at the border. There were "three to four thousand trucks" stranded on the border, he said.

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New FS meets envoys

EU-Pakistan relations in focus as Ambassadors hold talks in Islamabad

Romania Pushes for Stronger Economic Links with Pakistan at EU Diplomatic Meeting

DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ambassadors of European Union member states, including the Ambassador of Romania, met with Pakistan's newly appointed Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, in Islamabad to discuss ways to further strengthen political and economic relations between the European Union and Pakistan. The meeting focused on enhancing political dialogue, expanding trade and investment opportunities, and maximizing the benefits available under the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) framework. Participants exchanged views on shared priorities and explored opportunities for deeper cooperation across a range of sectors. Senior Pakistani officials attending the discussions included Additional Secretary Ayesha Ali, Director General Europe I Ish-tiak Ahmed Akil, and other senior diplomats. During the meeting, the Ambassador of Ro-

mania reaffirmed Romania's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Pakistan, emphasizing both political engagement and economic cooperation. Particular importance was attached to advancing cooperation between the ports of Constanța and Karachi, a project viewed as a significant step toward improving trade connectivity and commercial exchanges between the two countries. "Building stronger partnerships through dialogue, trade and connectivity is the way forward," the Romanian Ambassador said. The discussions underscored the European Union's continued interest in deepening engagement with Pakistan and highlighted the importance of practical initiatives that foster stronger political, economic, and people-to-people relations. Romania also reiterated its support for closer EU-Pakistan cooperation and its readiness to promote projects that contribute to greater connectivity, increased trade flows, and mutually beneficial partnerships between Europe and Pakistan.

UN inquiry says Israel kept committing genocide in Gaza

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Israel continued to commit genocide in Gaza after last October's US-brokered ceasefire in the enclave, a UN commission said in a report published on Monday. The report by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, examined violations against Palestinian civilians, including children, since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas on October

7, 2023, up to September this year. It said Israeli authorities had kept committing "genocidal acts with the genocidal intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Palestinians in Gaza", and that the situation had also continued to deteriorate in the occupied West Bank. Another report by the commission in September last year found that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza and that top Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, incited these acts – accusations that Israel called scandalous.

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Briefs

Iran President, Qatar Emir meet in Moscow

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian met on Tuesday with Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Moscow on the sidelines of an energy forum, Iranian state media reported. "The two sides reviewed the current state of relations between Tehran and Doha and emphasized the importance of deepening political and economic ties and making use of existing potential to strengthen bilateral cooperation," state television said. There was no mention of a discussion of the Middle East war, triggered by US-Israeli strikes on February 28 on Iran. – APP

Bilawal calls for 'full stop' on talk about new provinces

When asked about ongoing conversations regarding a 28th constitutional amendment and whether the government had spoken to him in this regard, Bilawal simply replied: "No."

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday called for a "full stop" to conversations regarding the creation of new provinces. He made the remarks while speaking to the media at Spencer Eye Hospital in Karachi's Lyari alongside Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. Reiterating his party's stance in response to a question over "pressure" the PPP was facing regarding the creation of new administrative units and the possibility of rolling back

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PTI ties 28th amendment support to Imran release

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentary party announced on Tuesday that it will only support the proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment on the strict condition of immediate release for party founder Imran Khan. The decision was finalized during a high-level parliamentary body meeting convened to deliberate on ongoing constitutional updates and the party's strategic political stance. Senior leaders reiterated that any political consensus or constitutional engagement with the government remains contingent upon the withdrawal of legal actions against

Sri Lanka beat Pak in tri-series match

This result also ended England's campaign without a victory

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Sri Lanka secured their place in the ODI tri-series final with a comfortable eight-wicket win over Pakistan in the fifth match at Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday. This result also ended England's campaign without a victory. Set a modest target of 111, Sri Lanka chased it down in the 19th over, losing just two wickets. Openers Kamindu Mendis and Avishka Fernando laid the foundation for the emphatic win with a dominant partnership. The duo brought up a 50-run opening partnership in the seventh over of the innings, adopting an aggressive approach from the outset while chasing the below-par target. However, Pakistan captain Shaheen Afridi broke the stand by dismissing Avishka Fernando, who scored 16 off 17 deliveries, including two boundaries. Sri Lanka then suffered an unusual setback when Arafat Minhas dismissed captain Kusal Mendis for eight off six deliveries, including two boundaries. The batter was bowled after the ball deflected off his bat and crashed into the stumps. Kamindu Mendis led from the front with an impressive knock, bringing up his fifth ODI half-century. He survived a potential dismissal when Ghazi Ghori took a catch off his shot but stepped on the boundary rope, resulting in a six. Mendis and Pavan Rathnayake stitched together a decent third-wicket partnership, helping Sri Lanka cross the 100-run mark in the 17th over. The Lankan side sealed the match with more than 30 overs to spare, with Kamindu Mendis remaining unbeaten on 62 off 60 deliveries, including eight fours and two sixes. Rathnayake also made a valuable contribution with a 23-run knock. Earlier, Sri Lanka's bowlers dismissed Pakistan for just 110 in 25.3 overs in the fifth match of the ODI tri-series at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday. Batting first, Pakistan made another poor start as out-of-form opener Fakhar Zaman was dismissed by

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Strong local governments essential for democratic stability

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Tuesday stressed the need for constitutional protection of local governments and effective devolution of powers to the grassroots, saying strong local institutions were essential for democratic stability and resolution of public issues. He was addressing the launch ceremony of the Task Force Report on Reforms in Local Governance, prepared by the BNU Centre for Policy Research (BCPR), where he attended as the chief guest. The speaker said the benefits of democracy could not reach ordinary citizens without empowering local governments with adequate authority and resources. He observed that local institutions in Pakistan had been unable to perform their effective role due to the concentration of powers at the provincial level. He said strengthening local governments was essential to completing the democratic system envisaged under the Constitution of 1973. Devolution of powers, he added, was not merely an administrative requirement but a fundamental aspect of citizens' participation in governance. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said Pakistan's administrative structure continued to retain features of the colonial system and stressed the need for making governance more responsive to public needs, enabling citizens to take meaningful decisions about local affairs. He said effective local autonomy and public representation were vital for national cohesion, adding that empowered local governments could address grievances arising from resource constraints and a sense of deprivation by resolving public issues closer to citizens. The speaker said members belonging to various political parties in the Punjab Assembly had jointly contributed to efforts to strengthen local governance. He disclosed that more than 80 members had voluntarily expressed their willingness to join the Parliamentary Caucus on Local Governments. He also said the Punjab Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution calling for constitutional protection of local governments. Referring to the debate on the creation of new provinces, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said the issue was important, but an effective local government system was equally necessary. He observed that creating new provinces alone would not meet public expectations without a robust system of local governance and meaningful devolution of powers. The speaker appreciated the BNU Centre for Policy Research for bringing key issues concerning local governance into the national discourse. He expressed confidence that the recommendations of the Task Force report would help improve the performance of local government institutions and advance the devolution of powers.—APP

Participation in Kashmir Black Day Solidarity Walk Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: In connection with the observance of Kashmir Black Day, officers of NHMP (PLHQ) participated in a solidarity walk arranged by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan. The walk was held from Radio Pakistan Chowk to D-Chowk, Islamabad, to mark protest against Indian occupation and to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering support for the right to self-determination of Kashmiri people.—DNA

Pak striving to end tensions between US, Iran: Qaisar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has said that Pakistan is continuing its diplomatic efforts to help ease tensions between Iran and the United States and promote peace and stability in the region. He observed that the effects of conflict are being felt across regional economies, trade and public life, urging all parties to exercise restraint. Speaking to the media during a medical camp in the Khokhran Wala area of Chiniot, the Federal Minister said that Pakistan's economy was already facing multiple challenges. Following trade disruptions with Afghanistan and India, further regional tensions could place additional pressure on the national economy. He emphasized that restoring trade routes with countries in the region, including Iran, was important for Pakistan, as it could create new opportuni-

ties for trade, investment and exports, said a release issued here on Tuesday. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that the protection of holy sites, including Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah, was a shared responsibility of the entire Muslim Ummah. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment in this regard and stated that the country would continue to play its role in promoting peace in the region. Expressing concern over reports of hepatitis cases in Chiniot, the Federal Minister said that repeat tests were being conducted to verify the cases. He noted that several factors, including inadequate access to clean drinking water, could contribute to the spread of diseases. He stressed the need for an accurate assessment of the situation and sustainable measures to address its underlying causes. He said that the relevant authorities and the government

would be apprised of the situation to ensure that local residents had access to quality medical treatment, medicines and specialist doctors. He added that, where necessary, healthcare facilities should be expanded and additional medical camps established to provide treatment to people at their doorstep. The Federal Minister further emphasized that investment in children's health and education was essential for Pakistan's brighter future. He called for effective measures to improve healthcare and educational facilities in underdeveloped areas and ensure the timely diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh reaffirmed his commitment to continued efforts for public welfare and the provision of basic facilities, emphasizing that improved access to healthcare was essential to building a healthier, better-educated, and more prosperous society.—DNA

CDNS, mobilises Rs 40b through Islamic investments

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has mobilised Rs 40 billion through Islamic financial investment bonds, reflecting its efforts to expand Shariah-compliant investment opportunities and promote the Islamic economy in the country. The institution has set a target of Rs 85 billion for mobilising funds through Islamic finance bonds during the fiscal year 2026-27, as part of its strategy to broaden the range of interest-free investment products and attract more investors. A senior CDNS official told that the institution had mobilised Rs 61 billion through Islamic investment products during the first 11 months of FY2025-26, surpassing its annual target of Rs 55 billion. The official said the encouraging response from investors demonstrated growing interest in Shariah-compliant financial instruments, prompting the institution to place greater emphasis on Islamic finance and introduce measures to expand its outreach. The CDNS has been working to strengthen its Islamic investment portfolio by offering products designed to meet the financial requirements of investors seeking investment opportunities in accordance with Islamic principles. Islamic investment bonds and Shariah-compliant savings certificates have emerged as important components of this portfolio, providing alternative investment avenues while helping channel domestic savings into productive economic activities.

According to official figures, the CDNS mobilised Rs 24 billion through Islamic investment products during FY2024-25, while nearly Rs75 billion was raised through Islamic bonds in FY2023-24. The official said the institution was pursuing further reforms to improve access to Islamic financial products and make investment procedures more convenient for individuals and other investors. These initiatives include digital transformation, improved customer services and the introduction of new savings instruments to facilitate wider participation in Islamic investment schemes. The CDNS aims to make Shariah-compliant investment options more accessible, particularly to investors who prefer financial products structured in accordance with Islamic principles. The official expressed optimism that the expansion of Islamic financial products would help mobilise domestic savings, diversify investment opportunities and support the development of Pakistan's Islamic financial sector. The initiative is also expected to contribute to broader financial inclusion by encouraging more people to participate in formal savings and investment channels. With the new mobilisation target of Rs85 billion for FY2026-27, the CDNS intends to build on the performance of previous years and strengthen the role of Islamic finance in the country's financial system.—APP



Rawalpindi: Tanveer Noshai addressing the audience during a corner meeting of candidate for General Councilor of UC 35 Malik Shakeel Akhtar UC 35 . DNA Photo.

REITs can channel property wealth into investment

ISLAMABAD: Regulated Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) can help bring property into the formal economy and connect it with capital markets, but their growth depends on transparent valuations, sound governance and simpler tax rules, speakers said at an SECP Talk Series session. Commissioner Imtiaz Haider, who welcomed participants, said REITs could mobilize private investment for infrastructure such as motorways, bridges, energy parks and logistics hubs. He also suggested exploring REITs to unlock value from existing public assets and finance development projects, said a press release issued by the SECP here on Tuesday. Presentations cited 29 REIT schemes registered in Pakistan by March 2026, with an aggregate fund size of Rs173.1 billion in December 2025. Globally, 1,021 listed REITs had a combined market capitalization of US\$2.04 trillion at the end of 2024. Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman of ISE REIT Management Company Limited, highlighted the US\$2.04 trillion global REIT market and presented the Rs5.67 billion ISE Towers Rental REIT as a local example. He also outlined potential rental, developmental, hybrid and parking REIT opportunities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Muhammad Ejaz, Chief Executive, Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited, presented Dolmen City REIT and Globe Residency REIT as local examples. He cited Dolmen City REIT's market capitalization at Rs86.88 billion as of September 30, 2026—APP

More than 600 rural women delegates urge edu, equality

DNA

ISLAMABAD: More than 600 delegates from around 100 districts on Tuesday called education the most effective safeguard against discrimination against girls and women, and a foundation for their civic and economic empowerment. This was the highlight of the opening day of the three-day 19th Annual Rural Women Leadership Training Conference, organised by PODA-Pakistan, which will conclude on Thursday, 29 October. Welcoming the rural women leaders, PODA Board Member Mumtaz Esker congratulated rural women for their advocacy for legislation to end child marriage, particularly in Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). She urged effective implementation of the Child Marriage Restraint Acts adopted in three provinces and ICT, as well as the Christian Marriage Act. She noted that Sindh became the first province to legislate against child marriage in 2013, followed by Balochistan and ICT, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has yet to enact similar legislation. She also emphasized the importance of family planning for the health of mothers and children. ED-PODA Sameena Nazir urged them to work hard, following the passage of child

marriage legislation, to develop effective mechanisms to ensure protection and safeguard young girls. During a session titled "Protection from Child Marriage Through 12 Years of Compulsory Education," MNA Dr Shahida Rehmani, Secretary of the Women Parliamentary Caucus, described education as an agent of change essential to national progress. "Rural women are vital to Pakistan's social and economic development, contributing significantly to agriculture, food security, household economies, and community resilience. How-

ever, many continue to face barriers to education, healthcare, property ownership, legal protection, economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making. Recognizing their contributions must go hand in hand with ensuring their rights, dignity, and equal opportunities," she said. Afshan Tehseen, CEO of Human Capital Pakistan and former founding chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), highlighted the damaging impact of early marriage on girls' health, education and independence.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days	
OCTOBER	
Oct 01/China	National Day
Oct 01/Cyprus	National Day
Oct 01/Republic of Korea	Armed Forces Day
Oct 01/Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Oct 02/Guinea	National Day
Oct 03/Germany	Unification Day
Oct 03/Republic of Korea	National Foundation Day
Oct 05/Indonesia	Armed Forces Day
Oct 06/Egypt	Armed Forces Day
Oct 09/Uganda	Independence Day
Oct 12/Spain	National Day
Oct 23/Hungary	National Day
October 24/United Nations	United Nations Day
Oct/25/Romania	Armed Forces Day
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Water Tank

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Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad, Dr. Abrar Associates sign MoU

Addressing the ceremony, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan congratulated both organizations on the partnership and welcomed Dr. Abrar Associates into the Mövenpick and Centaurus family of partners; Nicolas Verdun , General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad, welcomed Dr. Abrar Associates as a valued partner and expressed confidence that the collaboration would benefit both organizations and their clients

SAIFULLAH ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step toward enhancing healthcare support and guest services, Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad and Dr. Abrar Associates, one of Pakistan's leading dental healthcare institutions, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday to provide quality medical and dental services to hotel guests, staff, and associated clients. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Centaurus Group and the Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism. The event brought together senior representatives from both organizations and marked the beginning of a strategic partnership aimed at improving access to healthcare services through collaboration between the hospitality and medical sectors. Addressing the ceremony, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan congratulated both organizations on the partnership and welcomed Dr. Abrar Associates into the Mövenpick and Centaurus family of partners. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between different sectors to improve service standards and promote Pakistan as a modern and welcoming destination. "As Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism, I can assure you that the government is taking all possible measures to promote tourism in Pakistan. The country possesses immense tourism potential, and partnerships such as this contribute positively to enhancing visitor confidence and improving service delivery," he said. Sardar Yasir further noted that international-standard hotels and quality healthcare facilities play an important role in creating a favorable environment for tourists, business travelers, and investors. Speaking on the occasion, Nicolas Verdun , General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad, welcomed Dr. Abrar Associates as a valued partner and expressed confidence that the collaboration would benefit both organizations and their clients. "We are delighted to enter into this partnership with Dr. Abrar Associates. At Mö-



venpick Hotel Islamabad, guest comfort, well-being, and safety remain our highest priorities. This agreement will help us further strengthen the services available to our guests and employees. We look forward to a successful and long-term partnership," he said. Nicolas added that the hotel would continue to remain committed to providing world-class hospitality standards while ensuring that quality healthcare support is available whenever needed. Meanwhile, Dr. Abrar-ul-Hasnain, representing Dr. Abrar Associates, thanked the management

of Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad and Centaurus Group for their trust and cooperation. He said the partnership reflects a shared commitment to excellence and customer care. "We are honored to collaborate with one of Pakistan's premier hospitality brands. Through this MoU, we aim to provide high-quality dental and medical services while ensuring convenience, professionalism, and patient-centered care for all beneficiaries," he said. He highlighted the importance of preventive healthcare and professional medical support in the hospitality sector,

adding that Dr. Abrar Associates would strive to deliver the highest standards of healthcare services under the agreement. The ceremony concluded with the formal exchange of documents and a commitment from both organizations to work closely in implementing the agreement. Participants expressed optimism that the partnership would serve as a model for future collaborations between Pakistan's healthcare and hospitality sectors, ultimately benefiting customers, employees, and visitors alike.

SC acquits murder convict over contradictions in evidence

ISLAMABAD :The Supreme Court has acquitted Manwar Hussain in the Saima Bibi murder case, setting aside the trial court and high court judgments awarding and upholding his life imprisonment, respectively, after extending him the benefit of the doubt due to contradictions in the prosecution evidence and post-mortem report. The court converted the convict's petition into an appeal and allowed it, directing that he be released if he was not required in any other case. During the hearing, counsel for the complainant argued that Manwar Hussain had murdered 25-year-old Saima Bibi by slitting her throat with a knife. He said the accused was the victim's neighbour and had an improper interest in her. According to the counsel, the victim's husband, brother-in-law and

another person had witnessed the incident. Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan observed that, according to the FIR, the accused was alone at the scene, while three witnesses were allegedly present. He questioned why the victim's husband, brother-in-law and the third witness had not tried to stop the accused, asking whether they had remained silent spectators while the victim's throat was being slit. The complainant's counsel stated that the victim had been tied to a charpoy by placing a dupatta around her neck before the murder. Justice Shakeel Ahmad observed that the medical report did not mention any marks caused by the dupatta. He also questioned why the dupatta had not been sent for forensic examination. Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan further ob-

served that the high court had not considered the evidence regarding the accused's alleged improper interest in the victim and the recovery of the knife to be reliable. He noted that the complainant and witnesses had stated that the incident took place at 6:30 a.m., whereas the post-mortem report indicated that the victim had died before that time. The complainant had not challenged the post-mortem report, he added. After examining the evidence, the Supreme Court allowed the appeal, set aside the judgments of both lower courts and acquitted Manwar Hussain. Saima Bibi was murdered with a knife in a village in Faisalabad in 2016. The trial court had sentenced Manwar Hussain to life imprisonment, a decision subsequently upheld by the high court.—APP

Russian psychotherapist receives diploma from HSA

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA) has awarded a postgraduate diploma in Public Mental Health (PGD PMH) to Mr. Leonid Kadis, a practicing psychotherapist at the St. Basil the Great Center in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Vice Chancellor HSA Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan presented the diploma to Kadis during a ceremony at the academy. The achievement highlights international interest in public mental health education and the role of cross-border academic engagement in strengthening professional knowledge and skills in mental healthcare. The Department of Public Mental Health and the academy's faculty supported the diploma programme. Meanwhile, admissions for the fourth batch of the PGD in Public Mental Health are open, with lectures scheduled to begin in the first week of November 2026.—APP

Kashmir chowk underpass to be completed in 30 days: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project early in the morning to review construction work and assess progress on the project, which was launched 17 days ago. Expressing satisfaction with the pace of construction, the minister said the project could be completed in less than 30 days if work continued at the same speed. During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi inspected the ongoing construction activities and reviewed the progress made since the project's launch. He examined the pace of work on the underpass's roof slab and walls. The interior minister expressed satisfaction with the speed of construction and the progress achieved so far. He said he was pleased to see the pace of work on the roof slab and walls of the underpass. Naqvi said the project could be completed in less than 30 days if construction continued at the current pace. The minister's visit focused on reviewing the ongoing work and assessing whether the project could be completed within the anticipated timeframe. The Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project was launched 17 days ago. The minister's remarks indicated that, with construction continuing at the same speed, the project could be completed before 30 days have elapsed since its launch. Meanwhile, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the Kashmiri people on Kashmir Black Day, marking 79 years since India's occupation of Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, 1947. He said the people of Kashmir had not bowed before Indian oppression and continued to stand firm in their struggle for freedom.—DNA

Leghari reaffirms Pak's support for Kashmiris'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, saying a just and lasting settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with their aspirations and United Nations resolutions was essential for peace in South Asia. In his message on Kashmir Black Day, he said October 27 marked one of the darkest days in history, when India occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said India continued to suppress the voices and legitimate right to self-determination of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) through the use of force. The minister said serious human rights violations in the occupied territory remained a persistent challenge to the conscience of the international community. He added that Indian oppression, coercion.—APP

Traders' associations in Zones IV, V, Gulberg Greens elect new office-bearers

ISLAMABAD: The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of the Traders' Welfare Associations of Zones IV and V and Gulberg Greens was held in Gulberg Greens, Islamabad. Muhammad Kashif Chaudhry, President of the Central Organization of Traders of Pakistan and Islamabad, administered the oath to the newly elected office-bearers, including Syed Hasnain bin Qasim, Patron-in-Chief of the Traders' Welfare Association, Zones IV and V; Raja Waheed, President; Chaudhry Tabassum, General Secretary; Faizan Shehzad, Senior Vice President; Malik Mohsin Khalid, Group Leader; Asim Ali Sethi, President of the Traders' Welfare Association, Gulberg Greens; Raja Waheed, General Secretary; Waqar Shah, Chairman; and other newly elected office-bearers. The ceremony was attended by Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, former Deputy Mayor of Islamabad Syed Zeeshan Naqvi, former Chairman of Loi Bher Malik Ikhtlaq Awan, representatives of traders' organizations and market associations, members of the business community, and a large number of prominent personalities from various walks of life. Addressing the gathering, Muhammad Kashif Chaudhry said that unity among traders' organizations plays a vital role in effectively representing the business community and resolving its issues. He urged the newly elected office-bearers to discharge their responsibilities with honesty, mutual consultation, and a spirit of service. Patron-in-Chief Syed Hasnain bin Qasim said that all available resources would be utilized to resolve the problems faced by the business community of Gulberg Greens, promote market development, and strengthen unity among traders. Raja Waheed, the newly elected President of Zones IV and V, said that fulfilling the trust placed in him by the business community was his foremost priority. He pledged to play an active role in raising traders' concerns at the relevant forums. Asim Ali Sethi, the newly elected President of Gulberg Greens, said that practical measures would be taken to improve the functioning of the association, strengthen communication with traders, and address their concerns. The leadership of Zones IV and V also expressed its commitment to working together to resolve market-related issues, promote

business activities, and safeguard the rights of the trading community. The ceremony was attended by a large number of representatives of traders' organizations, market associations, and business groups, including: Yousaf Razaqut, President of Blue Area; Khurshed Qureshi, President of the Jamiatul-Quraish Meat Welfare Association of Pakistan; Owais Satti, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries; Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, General Secretary of Jinnah Super Market; Malik Rashid Tufail, Chairman of the Islamabad Estate Agents Association; Syed Imran Bukhari, General Secretary of Blue Area; Nasir Chaudhry, President of I&T Centre, G-8; Zahir Abbasi, President of E-11 Markaz; Sardar Zaheer, Vice President of the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries; Amir Nawaz Abbasi,

President of Sihala; Ali Asghar Khan, popularly known as Ali Bhai, President of Lehtar Road; Raja Adeel, President of Khanna Bazaar; Baseer Khan, President of Tech Tower; Ubaid Abbasi, President of Murree Road, Zone I; Raja Qamar Abbasi, President of Moti Bazaar, Bhara Kahu; Umar Khayyam Abbasi, General Secretary of Moti Bazaar, Bhara Kahu; Aqeel Abbasi, President of the Distribution Association; Shahid Imran Gondal, General Secretary of the All Pakistan Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association; Ehsan-ul-Haq Satti, President of Sohan; Chaudhry Naveed, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Town; Asad Abbasi, Acting President of Jinnah Garden; Jahangir Abbasi, President of the Nanbai Association; Naveed Mughal, President of Swan Garden; and Riaz, President of National Police Foundation.—DNA



Briefs

DISCOs losses drop to Rs 325b from Rs 591b

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari told the Senate on Tuesday that annual losses of power distribution companies (DISCOs) had declined to Rs325 billion from Rs591 billion in 2024, while circular debt had fallen from Rs2.4 trillion to around Rs1.6 trillion over the past two and a half years.

Replying to a calling attention notice moved by Abid Sher Ali, he said the government had refinanced Rs1.2 trillion of circular debt. Under the plan, the Rs3.23 per-unit debt servicing surcharge would be eliminated within four years, and the remaining circular debt would also be paid off, he added.

Awaiz Leghari said distribution companies' annual losses had declined to Rs360 billion last year and further to Rs325 billion this year. The Power Division's budget support had also come down from Rs1,180 billion in 2024 to around Rs750 billion, he said. He said the reduction in losses had lowered the government's budget burden by about Rs200 billion. The minister said consumers using up to 200 units were paying about Rs13 per unit against an actual cost of Rs35, receiving a subsidy of around 60 to 65 per cent. Their number had risen from 10 million to 22.5 million in two years, he added. He said the government was working on a system to target subsidies according to income, potentially extending the eligibility limit to 250 units and linking relief to monthly consumption.—APP

WHO provides medical supplies to provincial govt

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization (WHO) has handed over medicines, medical supplies and laboratory equipment to the Sindh government to strengthen primary healthcare and improve laboratory services across the province.

WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr Luo Dapeng handed over the supplies to Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho and the Chief Executive Officer of the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI). The support aims to improve the availability of essential medicines and medical supplies, while enhancing laboratory capacity to facilitate healthcare delivery. The initiative reflects continued collaboration between WHO and the Sindh government to strengthen the provincial healthcare system and improve access to essential health services.—APP

AIU VC vows continued support for Kashmiri people

ISLAMABAD: Vice-Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood (SI) has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, stating that standing by the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a national and moral responsibility. He expressed these views on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day during a solidarity walk organized at the university, in which students, faculty members, officers and employees participated to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people and their struggle for their legitimate rights. In his message, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that the Pakistani nation would always stand by its Kashmiri brothers and sisters and pray for the success of their struggle for freedom and self-determination. He emphasized that Kashmir Black Day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices, hardships and continued struggle of the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir for their fundamental rights. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated that Pakistan would continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri people.—APP

Dr. Oumer for exploring Ethiopia investment potential

He assured his support to the Ambassador and expressed keen interest to explore trade and investment potential of Ethiopia in future

DNA

RAWALPINDI: H.E. Dr. Oumer H. Oba, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, on Tuesday visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) to hold a comprehensive interactive session with the business community of Rawalpindi. Upon arrival, the Ambassador was warmly received by Mr. Noshawan Khalil Khan, President RCCI, Mr. Waseem Aslam, Senior Vice President and Mr. Ikram ur Rehman Abbasi, Vice President of the chamber along with their executive body. The Ambassador congratulated the newly elected officer bearers of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and wished them a successful tenure ahead. Addressing the RCCI members, the Ambassador described Ethiopia as one of the world's fastest-growing economies and a gateway to Africa, hosting the headquarters of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. He said Ethiopia is open to trade and investment following home-grown economic reforms that have opened several sectors to foreign direct investment. He also pointed to the country's industrial parks, affordable and sustainable electricity, regional integration, and global air connectivity through Ethiopian Airlines. The Ambassador shared the details of the business delegation to Ethiopia being planned by the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad, inviting the Rawalpindi business community to visit and explore Ethiopia's agriculture, agro processing, manufacturing, mining, ICT and tourism sectors.

RCCI President Noshawan Khalil Khan



briefed the Ambassador on the chamber and its core sectors, and urged him to help promote trade and investment partnerships

between the two countries, particularly in pharmaceuticals, surgical goods, textiles and agriculture. He assured his support to the

Ambassador and expressed keen interest to explore trade and investment potential of Ethiopia in future.

Pakistan to continue support for Kashmiris: First Lady

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to extending moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their pursuit of legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

In her message on Kashmir Black Day, observed on October 27, she expressed solidarity with Kashmiri women and children, highlighting the suffering they continue to endure amid the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Recalling October 27, 1947, when Indian forces landed in Srinagar, the first lady said the day marked the beginning of a prolonged period of suffering for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

She paid particular tribute to Kashmiri women who have endured profound loss and hardship, with many left to raise their children alone following the deaths or disappearances of their husbands and other family members. She stressed that the voices of mothers who have lost their sons, daughters growing up without fathers, and women seeking justice must be heard. Asifa Bhutto Zardari also drew attention to the impact of prolonged conflict on children, noting that many have grown up amid fear, uncertainty and disruptions to their education and everyday lives. She emphasised that every child has the right to education, proper healthcare, safe recreational spaces and a future free from fear. She urged the international community, human rights organisations and the United Nations to give serious attention to the emotional and psychological consequences of prolonged conflict on children. The first lady reaffirmed her solidarity with Kashmiri mothers, daughters and children whose lives have been affected by the conflict, stressing that the rights, safety and future of women and children must remain central to international efforts to address the situation in IIOJK. She further stated that nearly eight decades after the events of October 27, 1947, the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination, recognised in relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, remains unfulfilled. Emphasising the need for lasting peace in South Asia, she called for a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and relevant UNSC resolutions. On Kashmir Black Day, Asifa Bhutto Zardari remembered the mothers waiting for their loved ones, women shouldering the responsibilities of entire families, and children whose futures remain uncertain. She said their sacrifices must not be forgotten. Expressing hope for a peaceful future, she said Kashmiri mothers should be able to raise their children in peace, girls should pursue education without fear, and every Kashmiri child should be able to look towards the future with hope and confidence. She also highlighted the solidarity of the women and children of Pakistan with their Kashmiri counterparts, expressing the shared aspiration for a future in which they can live with freedom, security and the opportunity to shape their own future.—DNA

Tashkent, Islamabad connecting cultural ecosystems explored

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a seminar titled "Connecting Cultural Ecosystems: Perspectives from Tashkent and Islamabad," bringing together artists, experts and digital specialists from Uzbekistan and Pakistan to explore how shared cultural heritage, tourism, music, cinema and digital media could strengthen people-to-people ties between the two countries. The discussion highlighted their historical and spiritual connections while examining practical ways to promote tourism, cultural exchanges and collaboration among artists and young people. President of the IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, opened the session by emphasising the centuries-old connections between Central and South Asia. He noted that Pakistan's spiritual traditions were deeply rooted in cities such as Bukhara and Samarkand, while Babur's origins in the Fergana Valley and the establishment of the Mughal Empire had significantly influenced the subcontinent's architecture, language, cuisine and culture. Despite the geographical proximity of Islamabad and Lahore to Tashkent, he observed that the potential for cultural engagement remained underutilised. He stressed that sustainable relations should be built on shared values, mutual understanding and direct people-to-people contacts rather than shifting political circumstances. Mr. Hasan Tuxtayev, Chief Specialist at the Department for the Study of International Tourism Markets under the Scientific Research

Institute for Tourism Development in Tashkent, highlighted the tourism potential of the two countries, rooted in their shared heritage. He noted that Uzbekistan's spiritual legacy, including figures such as Imam al-Bukhari and Baha-uddin Naqshband, held particular significance for South Asian visitors, while Pakistan's Gandhara, Taxila, Buddhist, Mughal and Islamic heritage offered considerable attractions for Uzbek tourists. Emphasising the role of digital transformation, he proposed virtual tours of historic sites, a shared digital database, joint tourism routes and collaborative research between his department and the IRS. He also called for simplified visa procedures, improved flight connectivity and professional training in tourism and cultural management to translate shared heritage into practical cooperation. Ms. Natasha Humera Ejaz, a singer-songwriter, producer and multidisciplinary artist from Islamabad, discussed the role of independent artists and cultural communities in strengthening international relations. Highlighting the growing international recognition of Pakistani music, including Arooj Aftab's Grammy win and the success of "Pasoori," she noted that Pakistani artists were keen to collaborate with their Uzbek counterparts. She proposed artistic exchanges and residencies, fewer bureaucratic barriers and greater cooperation between the film industries of the two countries.—APP

Azerbaijan envoy visits BU, discusses academic coop



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Irfan Davu-

dov visited Bahria University on Monday and met with Rector Vice Admiral Engr. Abid Hameed HI(M) (Retd). During the meeting,

discussions focused on strengthening academic cooperation, joint research, and student exchanges between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

Both sides expressed interest in further enhancing educational linkages and institutional collaboration between the two countries.

Health research uplift reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Farhan Essa, Member of the Board of Governors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Dr. Arshad Qaimkhani, Chief Executive Officer of the Sehat Sahulat Programme on Tuesday visited the Health Research Institute (HRI) to review its ongoing activities and research initiatives. During a meeting with the HRI team, the visiting officials were briefed on the institute's current activities and institutional priorities.

They shared recommendations on expanding research funding opportunities, strengthening professional skills, improving institutional capacity and promoting the effective translation of research findings into evidence-based policies.

The interaction highlighted the importance of strengthening health research institutions and ensuring that scientific evidence contributes to informed policy making and improved healthcare outcomes.—APP

UAJK urges steps for peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) on Tuesday marked Kashmir Black Day with a rally and seminar in Muzaffarabad, reaffirming solidarity with the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and calling for practical measures towards a peaceful resolution of the longstanding dispute, according to a press release received here. The observance marked October 27, 1947, when Indian troops landed in Srinagar following the signing of the Instrument of Accession, an event regarded by Pakistanis and Kashmiris observing the day as the beginning of India's occupation of the territory. Organised by the Directorate of Students Affairs, the rally began at the university's Administration Block and concluded at the Institute of Kashmir Studies (IKS). Former Chief Justice of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice (ret'd) Syed Manzoor Hussain Gillani, Vice Chancellor Prof. Nasir Jamal Khattak, university officials and students participated in the rally. The participants condemned India's occupation, expressed solidarity with the Kashmiri people and chanted slogans in support of their freedom movement. Addressing a seminar at the IKS, Justice Gillani highlighted the historical significance of October 27, 1947, rejecting India's narrative of tribal interference and describing the freedom movement in Jammu and Kashmir as indigenous. —APP

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The Soldier Who Chose the Path of Peace

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

THE true stature of a nation is measured not merely by the strength of its weapons, but by the wisdom with which it employs that strength. Defence remains the foremost responsibility of every sovereign state, for without security neither freedom nor prosperity can flourish. Yet the finest military leadership understands that victory on the battlefield is only one dimension of national service; the greater achievement lies in preventing the next war, reconciling estranged nations and creating conditions in which peace may endure. It is in this wider understanding of military responsibility that Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's role in Pakistan's evolving strategic and diplomatic landscape deserves consideration. A professional army is distinguished not only by courage, discipline and operational competence, but also by its adherence to ethical principles. The laws of armed conflict require the protection of civilians, humane treatment of prisoners and restraint in the use of force. Military strength, when guided by sound judgement, becomes an instrument of stability rather than an invitation to aggression. A commander who recognises these obligations understands that the purpose of defence is not the glorification of war, but the preservation of national sovereignty and human life. Islam offers a profound moral foundation for this philosophy. The Holy Quran commands believers to incline towards peace when the opposing side inclines towards it, while permitting firm resistance against aggression. It further declares that believers are brothers and calls upon them to reconcile their differences. These teachings acquire particular significance in a world where religious affinity, historical rivalries and competing strategic interests too often divide nations that might otherwise cooperate for the common good. Pakistan's confrontation with India in May 2025 brought the relationship between military preparedness and diplomatic restraint into sharp relief. Following the escalation of hostilities, Pakistan's armed forces mounted Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, while the country maintained that its response was an exercise of its right to self-defence. On 10 May, an understanding to cease military action was reached between the two countries. The episode demonstrated both the importance of credible deterrence and the necessity of communication when two nuclear-armed neighbours approach the precipice of a wider conflict. The challenge for Pakistan remains to translate the confidence generated by its response into sustained diplomatic engagement over Kashmir, cross-border security and other unresolved disputes. Pakistan's subsequent engagement with the United States and Iran has further demonstrated the value of mediation. Islamabad facilitated a temporary ceasefire in April 2026 and hosted high-level talks between Washington and Tehran. Field Marshal Munir's visits to Iran and his contacts with the Iranian leadership formed part of Pakistan's continuing efforts to prevent a wider regional conflagration. These initiatives have not

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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removed the profound differences between the two countries, but they have kept diplomatic channels open at a time when renewed hostilities threaten international security, energy supplies and maritime commerce. The distinction is important: mediation is not the same as a final settlement, yet without mediation a settlement may never become possible. The most recent chapter in this diplomatic endeavour concerns relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. On 26 October 2026, Munir participated in high-level discussions in Tehran involving Iranian, Saudi and Turkish representatives, alongside Pakistan's delegation. The talks took place against the background of Houthi attacks threatening Saudi security and renewed fears of a wider confrontation involving Iran, the United States and Israel. Munir's engagement reflected Pakistan's attempt to maintain communication with Tehran while honouring its strategic relationship with Riyadh. He had also urged the Iranian leadership to use its influence to help halt attacks against Saudi Arabia and had explored ways of reviving direct US-Iran negotiations. This is a delicate diplomatic undertaking. Saudi Arabia and Iran are influential powers whose rivalry has affected the security of the Gulf, Yemen and the wider Middle East for decades. Yet the persistence of regional conflicts has shown how fragile such progress can be. Pakistan's contribution lies in encouraging both sides to prevent local disputes from becoming a broader Muslim-world crisis. Its close ties with Saudi Arabia, geographical proximity to Iran and longstanding relations with other regional powers give Islamabad channels of communication that can be employed in the service of de-escalation. The Muslim world possesses immense human resources, strategic geography, energy wealth and economic potential. Yet divisions, sectarian mistrust and competing national ambitions have frequently prevented these advantages from being translated into collective strength. No single leader can resolve these difficulties, and no alliance can substitute for the political will required to settle disputes. Nevertheless, sustained diplomacy can create opportunities for co-operation where suspicion has long prevailed. Pakistan can play a constructive role by encouraging Saudi-Iranian engagement, supporting dialogue between Washington and Tehran, and working with Türkiye, Qatar and other Muslim countries to strengthen regional stability. Field Marshal Asim Munir's place in this unfolding story should therefore be understood through the relationship between defence, diplomacy and national purpose. His recent engagement with Iranian and Saudi representatives illustrates the difficult task of maintaining Pakistan's security commitments while keeping open the channels necessary for peace. Such efforts deserve assessment not merely through declarations or diplomatic photographs, but through their eventual results: fewer attacks, renewed negotiations, safer trade routes and a lasting reduction in regional tensions. History remembers military commanders for their victories, but it also honours those who use their influence to prevent further bloodshed. The ultimate measure of military leadership is not how frequently it confronts an adversary, but how wisely it employs strength to secure a more peaceful future. If Pakistan can transform its recent diplomatic initiatives into enduring agreements and genuine reconciliation among Muslim nations, the achievement will extend far beyond any single individual. It will affirm a principle worthy of remembrance: the strongest shield of a nation is not its arsenal alone, but the wisdom, restraint and moral courage with which it safeguards peace.

How Iran Weaponized Its Geography

Qamar Bashir



Sustaining this defensive and offensive capability requires a productive economy and access to supplies. Iran's military use of geography is supported by its economic use of the same geographic position. Its connections with South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East provide channels for trade, industrial inputs and commercial earnings under sanctions. This is the geographic foundation of its economic endurance. Iran borders Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east, Turkmenistan to the northeast, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the northwest, and Turkey and Iraq to the west. Turkmenistan provides its direct land connection to Central Asia

WHEN American and Israeli bombs began falling on Iran, Tehran's confidence appeared almost incomprehensible. Senior commanders were killed, military installations struck and overwhelming firepower brought to bear. Yet Iranian officials continued to promise resistance and eventual success. Watching those declarations, I wondered what their adversaries had failed to understand. Nearly eight months later, Iran's continued ability to fight has given that question a compelling answer. Iranian planners had prepared a war in which survival would sustain retaliation, retaliation would impose economic pain, and economic pain would challenge the political endurance of the attacking powers. Geography became an instrument of this strategy through deliberate military choices: where to shelter weapons, how to disperse forces, which maritime passage to threaten and how to exploit the regional dependence of an expeditionary war machine. The first foundation was national resolve. For many Iranians, defending the homeland combines patriotic duty with moral and spiritual conviction. The belief that they are resisting aggression gives sacrifice a purpose. This human commitment sustains the personnel who maintain weapons, restore damaged facilities and keep military organizations functioning under bombardment. It gives the strategy the endurance it requires. The first military task was to preserve the means of retaliation through the opening assault. Iran addressed that problem by placing military infrastructure underground and distributing assets across a country of approximately 1.65 million square kilometres. Its planners understood that surviving weapons could continue to shape the war after exposed installations had been destroyed. Iran paired this physical dispersal with decentralized organization. Its "mosaic defence" doctrine seeks to sustain resistance when local formations lose contact with higher command. That principle addresses the shock of leadership losses and damaged communications. The purpose is continuity: ensuring that an assault on senior leadership does not automatically become the paralysis of the entire military machine. The military use of its diverse locations is the essential point. Coastal surveillance, anti-ship weapons and small naval craft can exploit proximity to shipping routes. A dispersed coastal threat forces a superior navy to address risks across multiple positions while protecting commercial movement. Iran's objective is to preserve enough threatening capability to make uninterrupted passage costly and uncertain. Hormuz concentrates the effect. Between Iran and Oman's Musandam Peninsula, commercial traffic follows narrow designated lanes. By threatening vessels through missiles, drones, mines and small craft, Iran has influenced the decisions of shipowners, insurers and energy traders. A credible danger has interrupted commerce before any navy has established complete command of the

waterway. The second outward application of this strategy concerns the American military presence around the Gulf. Expeditionary warfare depends on regional facilities, communications, fuel, maintenance and transport. Iranian attacks on American bases challenge the assumption that the infrastructure supporting attacks on Iran can operate safely throughout the campaign. Proximity gives Tehran opportunities to impose costs on the regional system sustaining its adversary. Reuters' investigation into infrastructure attacks illustrates the wider consequences. It counted at least 135 attacks by Iran and allied groups against 84 infrastructure sites across seven countries. Disruption at Fujairah, Qatar's Ras Laffan complex and Saudi pipeline facilities showed how strikes on selected components could interrupt much larger operations. The strategic effect extends beyond the equipment struck to the services and revenues dependent upon it. Sustaining this defensive and offensive capability requires a productive economy and access to supplies. Iran's military use of geography is supported by its economic use of the same geographic position. Its connections with South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East provide channels for trade, industrial inputs and commercial earnings under sanctions. This is the geographic foundation of its economic endurance. Iran borders Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east, Turkmenistan to the northeast, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the northwest, and Turkey and Iraq to the west. Turkmenistan provides its direct land connection to Central Asia. The Caspian opens a separate northern maritime connection, while ports on the Gulf of Oman face the Arabian Sea outside Hormuz. Iran trade with Afghanistan alone stood at \$3.366 billion including fuel, liquefied gas, machinery, vehicle parts and industrial materials. Pakistan supplies another economic connection. The LPG supplies to Pakistan stood at 7,000 tonnes daily. That is a documented regional market for Iranian energy products, even as border restrictions make its availability variable. Northward, Iran's connection through Turkmenistan links it to wider Eurasian transport networks. In November 2025, a freight train from Russia reached Iran through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, entering Incheh Borun. Its 62 containers carried paper and related products. The cargo establishes an important fact: a functioning commercial connection can bring industrial goods into Iran without passing through Hormuz. Whereas the Caspian provides a parallel maritime connection. Iranian ports including Bandar Anzali and Amirabad link with Russian ports across the inland sea. RUSI identifies this network as important to Russia-Iran arms and technology transfers. These connections matter in both directions. Outward trade generates earnings and maintains commercial relationships. Inward trade supplies food, machinery, raw materials and components that support domestic

activity. A military-industrial system depends upon that wider productive economy. The capacity to obtain industrial inputs can support maintenance and manufacture without requiring every incoming shipment to be military cargo. The strongest inference is therefore about diversified access. A blockade affecting southern maritime trade does not physically close every land border or the Caspian. Multiple connections widen Iran's alternatives and complicate efforts to isolate it completely. Each corridor's practical contribution depends on capacity, neighbouring governments and the goods moving through it. Domestic industry turns that access into usable capacity. Iran's defence organizations manufacture weapons and maintain existing systems, while local workers, engineering and construction materials contribute to hardened infrastructure. Decades of investment have produced facilities and stocks that serve the present war. The full cost of that accumulated preparation does not fall on eight months of wartime receipts. The economic and military uses of geography thus reinforce one another. Regional connections help sustain the productive base; domestic industry converts resources into military capability; underground facilities protect parts of that investment; and surviving weapons impose costs on adversaries. Iran's endurance rests on the planning that connects these functions. This is the military ecosystem behind Iran's endurance: protected assets, dispersed command, surviving means of retaliation and pressure on regional bases and maritime commerce. Economic corridors help sustain the resources that keep this system functioning. National commitment and military planning connect these elements into a continuing capacity to resist. The October 26 talks in Tehran involving Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey, alongside Qatar's mediation, offer a chance to act upon that lesson. Renewed bombardment risks repeating the assumption that another round of destruction will finally deliver submission. Diplomacy offers a route out of a cycle that military escalation has prolonged. Iran's resistance has made a forceful argument through endurance. Its planners have connected protection with retaliation, military survival with pressure on the adversary, and economic access with the capacity to continue fighting. This is how geography becomes a weapon: through the decisions that turn location into sustained military power. Washington and Israel must now confront the consequence. The ability to inflict greater destruction has not delivered the ability to dictate the outcome. A lasting peace will require them to recognize the strategic capacity they expected to extinguish. – Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Are the IMF and World Bank Serious about Development?

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Special Drawing Rights provide another opportunity. The IMF's reserve asset has considerable potential to strengthen the financial position of countries facing external pressure, yet its distribution is largely linked to IMF quotas, which favour the largest economies. A fairer allocation and greater willingness to rechannel SDRs towards countries...

THE difference in financing costs is particularly striking in clean energy. Recent international estimates show that the cost of capital for utility-scale solar projects in emerging economies can approach 13 per cent, compared with around 6.5pc in advanced economies. The technology is essentially the same. What changes is the financial environment in which it is deployed. The usual response has been to call for greater mobilisation of private capital. Private investment is certainly important, but it cannot be the sole answer. When countries are already facing high debt, currency depreciation, weak growth and climate-related disasters, asking private investors to fill the financing gap often means accepting the high risk premiums they demand. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created in a very different international environment, but their role remains crucial. They possess financial resources, privileged access to capital markets and considerable influence over the rules governing international finance. They should use that position to reduce borrowing costs directly rather than relying primarily on private investors. The IMF, in particular, can do more during periods of external shock. Developing economies need financing that expands when crises occur rather than disappearing precisely when it is most needed. Short-term emergency financing should be made more accessible, while the Fund's mechanisms for helping the poorest countries cope with disasters and debt distress should be strengthened. Special Drawing Rights provide another opportunity. The IMF's reserve asset has considerable potential to strengthen the financial position of countries facing external pressure, yet its distribution is largely linked to IMF quotas, which favour the largest economies. A fairer allocation and greater willingness to rechannel SDRs towards countries with greater financing needs would make a substantial difference. The IMF should also reconsider its surcharges. Additional charges imposed on countries that borrow heavily or for extended periods may protect the Fund's financial position, but they can also increase

pressure on governments already struggling to restore economic stability. At a time when many developing economies are trying to avoid recession and protect essential spending, such charges deserve serious scrutiny. The World Bank and other multilateral development banks face a similar choice. They can continue to concentrate on attracting private capital through guarantees and other instruments, or they can make much greater use of their own balance sheets to provide long-term, affordable finance. The latter is particularly important for climate investment. Concessional financing through institutions such as the International Development Association should be expanded. Multilateral development banks can also use their capital more efficiently without compromising their financial strength. Their callable capital and other forms of unused financial capacity should be examined as potential sources for increased lending. Guarantees have a role, but they cannot replace public finance. If a guarantee eventually has to be honoured, the financial burden may still fall on a government already carrying heavy debt. Nor does a project-level guarantee necessarily solve the deeper problems of currency instability, sovereign risk and high borrowing costs. African governments frequently borrow in dollars or euros while collecting most of their revenues in local currencies. When the local currency falls, debt-servicing costs rise even if the underlying economy has not deteriorated. This currency mismatch has become a structural weakness in African public finance. Yet Africa's borrowing costs often appear disconnected from its actual record of sovereign defaults. Risk perceptions, credit ratings and assumptions about political and economic instability can impose what has increasingly been described as an "Africa premium". The result is a striking contradiction: countries that need investment most urgently are often charged the highest price for obtaining it. Some countries face a liquidity problem and need temporary assistance. Others face a deeper solvency crisis in which their

existing debt simply cannot be repaid from future revenues. Treating the latter as a temporary shortage of cash only postpones the inevitable restructuring. Debt restructuring therefore needs to become a central part of the international response. Restructuring should be timely, comprehensive and capable of bringing all major creditors into a common framework. Development and climate requirements should also be considered when assessing whether a country's debt is sustainable. The World Bank itself should reconsider how it distributes risk. Its preferred creditor status protects its loans from restructuring in many circumstances, leaving other creditors to absorb losses. This can encourage those creditors to charge higher risk premiums from the outset. The Bank also lends predominantly in major international currencies, transferring exchange-rate risk to borrowers. The international financial system therefore needs more than additional money. It needs a different approach to risk. Multilateral institutions should lend more in local currencies, accept a greater share of exchange-rate risk, provide more concessional finance and participate meaningfully in debt restructuring when countries become insolvent. The central question is not whether private capital has a role. It does. The question is whether countries with the greatest development needs should continue paying the highest price for capital. If the IMF and World Bank are serious about development, climate resilience and poverty reduction, their success should not be measured only by how much private money they mobilise. It should also be measured by how much they reduce the cost of finance for the countries they were created to serve. A global financial system that protects the cost of capital for wealthy economies while making development more expensive for poorer ones cannot remain the foundation of a fair international economic order. The real reform must begin with sharing risk more fairly. – The writer is Assistant Professor Pakistan Studies Imperial College of Business Studies Lahore muhammad.akram@imperial.edu.pk

Briefs

Egypt's support for Saudi Arabia amounts...

FROM PAGE 01
On Monday, Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman visited Tehran alongside Pakistan's Army Chief and Türkiye's intelligence chief as part of efforts to ease tensions stemming from ongoing regional conflicts. Al-Houthi characterized the emerging cooperation among regional powers as "a clear and blatant act of aggression" against Iran, while insisting that Yemen's Houthi movement would not be intimidated by any regional alliance. "We are not afraid of any alliance that may be formed," he stated, reaffirming the group's position amid growing regional security cooperation. The remarks highlight the increasingly complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, where diplomatic initiatives aimed at de-escalation are unfolding alongside heightened rhetoric from parties involved in regional conflicts. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia emphasized its commitment to regional security and stability. According to Saudi state media, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman chaired a meeting of the Council of Ministers in Riyadh on Tuesday, during which participants reviewed the outcomes of the discussions held in Tehran.

Sri Lanka beat Pak in tri-series...

FROM PAGE 01
Dilshan Madushanka in the fourth over. He scored five off 13 deliveries, hitting one boundary. Asitha Fernando then struck for Sri Lanka, dismissing Maaz Sadagat for eight off 11 deliveries, including one boundary, to put further pressure on the hosts. Pakistan were reduced to 23-2 in 6.2 overs. The home side lost their third wicket soon afterwards when Saad Baig was dismissed by Madushanka for five off eight deliveries. Salman Ali Agha and Babar Azam then joined forces to forge a steady partnership in an attempt to stabilise the innings and take Pakistan past the 50-run mark. However, their 15-run stand was brought to an end when Agha was dismissed by Sahar Arachchige for nine off 14 deliveries, including one boundary.

Bilawal calls for 'full stop' on...

FROM PAGE 01
the 18th Amendment, Bilawal said the people of Sindh and their elected representatives had presented their decision and "now we should put a full stop to this conversation". He said the Sindh Assembly had also made its stance in the matter evident for "at least seven to eight times now". "The people here can determine the fate of this province and the city," Bilawal asserted. "I think we should close this topic because the people themselves have closed it," he said. When asked about ongoing conversations regarding a 28th constitutional amendment and whether the government had spoken to him in this regard, Bilawal simply replied: "No."

UN inquiry says Israel kept...

FROM PAGE 01
The Israeli mission in Geneva said the latest report was part of a misinformation campaign to demonise the State of Israel. "The attempt to destroy the Jewish state ... continues through efforts by actors such as the UN Commission of Inquiry to undermine Israel's legitimacy and deny its fundamental right to exist and defend itself," Ambassador Daniel Meron claimed in a statement. Heavy munitions hit populated areas, commission says. The commission found that Israeli forces continued using heavy munitions, drones, quadcopters, artillery and sniper fire in densely populated areas during the ceasefire in Gaza.

Serena Hotels hosts Raabta panel discussion on breast cancer awareness

Prof. Dr. Shela Alvi highlighted the emotional and psychological impact of a breast cancer diagnosis and the importance of mental health support throughout treatment and recovery. A diagnosis can bring uncertainty, anxiety and emotional stress for both patients and their families

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under its Public Diplomacy initiative, hosted a panel discussion on breast cancer awareness titled "Every Story Is Unique, Every Story Matters." The session brought together medical experts, a mental health professional, a corporate leader and a breast cancer survivor to highlight the importance of early detection, timely medical consultation, emotional well-being and support for those affected by breast cancer. The discussion aimed to encourage open conversations about breast cancer, address common misconceptions and emphasize the importance of awareness in helping women make informed decisions about their health. It highlighted the role of accurate medical information, timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment in improving health outcomes, while also recognizing the emotional and psychological challenges that patients and their families may face. The panel featured Dr. Kamran Rashid, Oncologist and President of the Society of Medical Oncology Pakistan; Prof. Dr. Shela Alvi, Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist and Mental Health Advocate; Fauzia Ahmed, Chief Human Resource Officer at Mari Energies; and Ms. Shams Aijaz Akram, Breast Cancer Survivor. Drawing on their professional expertise and personal experience, the panelists explored the medical, psychological and social as-



pects of breast cancer, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive and compassionate approach to care. Dr. Kamran Rashid highlighted the importance of recognizing potential warning signs, seeking timely medical advice and understanding the role of early detection in breast cancer care. The discussion also addressed the hesitation and stigma that can prevent women from seeking medical attention, reinforcing the need for greater awareness and access to reliable health

information. Encouraging women to consult qualified healthcare professionals and seek advice about appropriate screening can help support informed decisions about their health. Prof. Dr. Shela Alvi highlighted the emotional and psychological impact of a breast cancer diagnosis and the importance of mental health support throughout treatment and recovery. A diagnosis can bring uncertainty, anxiety and emotional stress for both patients and their families. She emphasized the

importance of empathy, open communication and access to appropriate psychological support, ensuring that emotional well-being remains an important part of the care and recovery process. Fauzia Ahmed highlighted the role of organizations and workplaces in promoting health awareness and supporting women's well-being. Through awareness sessions, access to reliable information and a supportive workplace culture, organizations can encourage employees to prioritize their health and seek

medical guidance when needed. Such efforts can also help create an environment where conversations about women's health are approached with greater openness and understanding. Sharing her personal experience, Ms. Shams Aijaz Akram offered the perspective of a breast cancer survivor, bringing a personal dimension to the discussion. Her participation highlighted the importance of sharing experiences to raise awareness, challenge misconceptions and encourage others to seek support. Her story reflected the central message of the session: every woman's journey is different, and every experience deserves to be heard with compassion, respect and understanding. The session reinforced the importance of early detection, informed healthcare decisions, emotional support and collective responsibility in promoting breast cancer awareness. It also highlighted the role that individuals, families, healthcare professionals and workplaces can play in creating a more supportive environment for women navigating the challenges associated with the disease. Through its Raabta initiative, Serena Hotels continues to provide a platform for meaningful conversations on health, well-being and issues of public importance. By bringing together diverse perspectives and encouraging the exchange of knowledge and experiences, the initiative seeks to promote awareness, strengthen community engagement and support dialogue on subjects that matter to society.

Diamond Paints, Master Paints win thrillers in sudden-death finishes



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Diamond Paints and Master Paints opened their campaigns in the 14th Major General Saeed-uz-Zaman Janjua Memorial Polo Cup 2026,

sponsored by JS Bank, with hard-fought victories in two thrilling matches at Lahore Garrison Polo Grounds. Diamond Paints edged FG/Din/SQ Polo Team 6-5 in the opening encounter, with the contest decided in sudden death in the

fifth chukker after the teams remained locked in a fierce battle. Raja Jalal Arsalan proved the difference-maker, scoring all six goals for Diamond Paints in an outstanding individual performance. For FG/Din/SQ, Raja Tai-

mur Nadeem and Shiraz Qureshi scored two goals apiece, while Mian Abbas Mukhtar added one. The second match produced another dramatic finish, as Master Paints defeated AOS 8-7 in the sudden death during the fifth chukker. Agha Musa Ali Khan led the charge for Master Paints with three goals, while Saim Abbas and Ahmed Bilal Riaz contributed two each. Farooq Amin Sufi completed the scoring with one goal. AOS fought back strongly throughout the contest, with Moissam Haider Baloch, Abdullah Aijaz and Hamza Ali Hakeem scoring two goals each. Col (R) Omer Minhas added one goal, but their efforts ultimately fell just short. Both matches delivered closely contested polo and dramatic finishes, giving the tournament an exciting start as the participating teams began their pursuit of the prestigious memorial trophy.

Asian Cup organizers set kickoff times and detailed schedule for the 2027 tournament

KUALA LUMPUR: Asian Cup organizers released the kickoff times and finalized schedule Monday for the 2027 tournament in another move aimed at assuring continental football federations that planning is on track despite the recent deadly attacks in Saudi Arabia by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The tournament is set to kickoff on Jan. 7 with Saudi Arabia against the Palestinian team in Group A starting at 8 p.m. local time in Riyadh. Muhammed Q. Alghamdi, a spokesman for the organizing committee, told members at an Asian Football Confederation meeting in Tokyo last week that "daily life is ongoing in Saudi Arabia," despite the regional hostilities and added: "Our job is to be ready, and we will be ready." The kickoff times and locations of matches in all six groups were confirmed Monday for the monthlong tournament that is scheduled to feature 24 teams playing matches in eight venues across three cities — Riyadh, Jeddah, and Alkhobar. Iran are in Group C with Syria, China and Kyrgyzstan. The Iranian team is scheduled to open against China at 4:30 p.m. local time Saturday, Jan. 9 at the 26,000-seat Kingdom Arena in Riyadh. Australia open their Group D campaign against Singapore earlier the same day in Alkhobar. The final is set for Feb. 5 at the 72,000-seat King Fahd Sports City Stadium in Riyadh. "The allocation of all venues and kickoff times in this finalized schedule factors in key commercial and broadcast requirements, as well as the local arrangements put in place to drive spectator attendance and enhance fan experience," the Asian Football Confederation said in a statement. — DNA

Iranian Supreme leader...

FROM PAGE 01

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis remain stalled, especially since the collapse of a June deal which laid out a pathway to a permanent settlement. Several Iranian officials, including Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei and parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, have in recent days said they held rare meetings with the supreme leader.

India hosts Arab League diplomats

FROM PAGE 01

The first meeting took place in Manama in January 2016, and the second was held in New Delhi in January 2026. During the Delhi meeting, the foreign ministers agreed to institutionalize cooperation between their diplomatic institutes, with the SSIFS hosting annual training for representatives of all Arab states. The first such program was launched on Oct. 21 and will run through Oct. 30, with 29 mid-career diplomats from nearly all Arab League countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from the Gulf region, as well as Egypt, Algeria, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Libya, and Comoros. "Our idea is basically to create an opportunity for these mid-career diplomats to understand India, have a physical presence in India and get a feel of India beyond just the classroom," Ambassador Raj Kumar Srivastava, dean of the SSIFS, told Arab News.

Pakistan-Iran trade resumes

FROM PAGE 01

trucks on the Iranian side and two to three thousand trucks on the Pakistani side," Kalmati said. Only certain vehicles were being allowed across the border to clear the backlog after a week-long closure, he said. Iran's ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam, said on X on Sunday there were no restrictions on the Iranian side, including for the export of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). He blamed the closures on "changes in the implementation of Pakistan's E-Form procedure for imports from Iran," which he said "have created a situation in which traders are effectively and literally unable to dispatch cargo from Iran to Pakistan." Kalmati said companies on both sides of the border were urging authorities to allow the complete resumption of trade. He said his members and drivers were "frustrated, they want to go back home, they want to continue their business." Fida Ahmad Dasthi, a businessman in Kech district in Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province.

Black Day observed in Belgium

BRUSSELS: 27 October is a Black Day, and the Kashmiri people will never compromise on their right to self-determination. India must end its illegal occupation of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and allow the Kashmiri people to decide their future freely. Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU), Ali Raza Syed, expressed these views on the occasion of Black Day, observed on 27 October. He said that 27 October 1947 is one of the darkest days in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, when India landed its troops in Srinagar against the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people, beginning its military occupation of a large part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmiri people consider this action a violation of their fundamental rights, freedom and right to self-determination, and have therefore continued their struggle against the illegal occupation for several decades. The KC-EU chairman said that Kashmiris, whether living in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, residing in Azad Jammu and

Kashmir, or settled in any other part of the world, observe 27 October every year as Black Day to register their protest and draw the attention of the international community to the longstanding Kashmir dispute and the suffering of the Kashmiri people. Ali Raza Syed said that the purpose of the protest on 27 October is to send a clear message to the Indian government that the Kashmiri people do not accept India's occupation of their motherland. The Kashmiri nation wants to decide its future in a free environment, without pressure, coercion or fear. The right to self-determination is a fundamental right of the Kashmiri people, and their struggle to achieve this right will continue. The Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe said that it was deeply regrettable that India claims to be the world's largest democracy while depriving the Kashmiri people of their political, human and fundamental rights. Serious human rights violations, arrests, detention, torture and an atmosphere of fear continue in Indian-ilegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shaking hands with Ameer Jamaat Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman at Prime Minister's House Islamabad on 27 October 2026. — DNA

Chief of Naval Staff, Commander Kuwait Naval Forces discuss naval coop

The Commander Kuwait Naval Force was also briefed on Pakistan Navy's contributions and initiatives for regional maritime security

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Commander Kuwait Naval Force, Major General (Navy) Saif Abdulhadi Alhamlan, called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

Upon arrival, the distinguished guest was received by the Chief of the Naval Staff and a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Navy presented Guard of Honour. The dignitary was also introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters. During the meeting, matters of mutual professional interest, regional maritime security environment and avenues for strengthening bilateral naval cooperation were discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of sustained engagement and explored opportunities to further enhance

collaboration in professional training, capacity building and defence cooperation. The two naval leaders reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen the longstanding defence relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait, with particular emphasis on expanding the scope of naval cooperation and promoting closer institutional linkages between the two navies. The Commander Kuwait Naval Force was also briefed on Pakistan Navy's contributions and initiatives for regional maritime security. Pakistan and Kuwait enjoy longstanding brotherly relations, underpinned by shared interests, mutual trust and close cooperation across diverse fields. The visit of the Commander Kuwait Naval Force reflects the enduring commitment of both countries to strengthening bilateral defence ties and is expected to impart further impetus to naval cooperation, contributing to regional maritime security and stability.

Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.80, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 276.81.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.50 and Rs 280.00, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.56, closing at Rs 308.64 against the previous day's rate of Rs 310.20, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.75; while the British Pound declined by Rs 0.71 and closed at Rs 368.76 against the previous day's Rs 369.47.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham reduced by 01 paisa to closed at Rs 75.36, while the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged to close at Rs73.75.—APP

Gold prices fall by Rs1,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed a decline in the domestic market on Tuesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs1,300 to Rs422,136, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs1,115 to Rs361,913, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs1,022 to Rs331,765. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$13 to \$3,996 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola fell by Rs85 to Rs5,793, while the price of 10 grams of 24-karat silver declined by Rs73 to Rs4,966. The price of silver in the international market also registered a decrease, falling by \$0.85 to \$53.15 per ounce, the association added.—APP

Israel bars int'l delegation from entering West Bank

LONDON: Israel prevented an international delegation that included Western politicians from entering the occupied West Bank as part of a tour to meet Palestinian children, farmers and civil society leaders, The Guardian reported. The delegation, comprising 23 people, came from countries including Britain, Switzerland, the US, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Spain and Luxembourg. "We were detained, taken aside and then interrogated ... People were shouted at. We were asked why we were going in, what was happening, why our stories were one way or the other. The bottom line was it was a deeply unpleasant experience," Clive Lewis, an MP with the UK's governing Labour Party, told The Guardian. The delegation was set to attend Progressive International's Second Ramallah Congress, an event to oppose Israel's occupation of Palestine hosted in partnership with Birzeit University. The event included a series of talks among Palestinian academics, students and civil society organizations. To attend, the delegation had planned to cross the Allenby / King Hussein Bridge into the West Bank from Jordan. Former Labour MP Sam Tarry told The Guardian that Israeli authorities "made a political decision very clearly based on the fact they didn't want people to witness what's been going on in the West Bank, especially ahead of the elections." The refusal to allow entry to the delegation comes amid escalating attacks by Israeli forces and settlers on Palestinian farmers and foreign media in the occupied territory. Israel Katz, the country's defense minister, told officials earlier this month to pursue exclusion orders against activists traveling to the olive-harvest season, local media reported. — APP

Cuba praises Pak's support, calls for end to US embargo

The briefing primarily focused on the impact of the US embargo on Cuba. Ambassador said economic restrictions and financial sanctions have significantly constrained Cuba's ability to import essential goods, including medicines, fuel, and medical equipment

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Cuba's Ambassador to Pakistan, Damian Cordero Torres, has lauded Pakistan's consistent support for Cuba at international forums, particularly at the United Nations, while calling for an end to the decades-old United States embargo that Havana says has severely impacted the country's economy, healthcare system, and energy sector.

Addressing a press briefing in Islamabad ahead of the annual United Nations General Assembly vote on a resolution calling for the lifting of the US embargo on Cuba, Ambassador Damian devoted significant attention to Pakistan-Cuba relations, describing them as historic, friendly, and rooted in mutual respect and solidarity.

The Cuban envoy thanked the Government of Pakistan for its continued support at the United Nations, where Islamabad has consistently voted in favor of resolutions opposing the embargo. The ambassador said Cuba deeply values Pakistan's principled stance, which is based on respect for the UN Charter, international law, state sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries. "Pakistan has always stood by Cuba on international issues and



has consistently supported our position at the United Nations. We highly appreciate this friendship and solidarity," the ambassador said.

Recalling Cuba's humanitarian assistance to Pakistan following the devastating 2005 earthquake, Am-

bassador Cordero Torres said the bond between the two countries remains strong because both nations have demonstrated solidarity in times of need. The ambassador noted that during visits to Mansehra and Balakot, areas heavily affected by the earthquake, local

residents still remembered and appreciated the contribution of Cuban medical teams who served in Pakistan during one of the country's most difficult periods.

"I was able to visit Mansehra and Balakot and saw with my own eyes that people have not forgotten

Cuba's support. Pakistan never forgets its friends, and Cuba never forgets Pakistan's solidarity," the ambassador remarked.

The briefing primarily focused on the impact of the US embargo on Cuba. Ambassador said economic restrictions and financial sanctions

have significantly constrained Cuba's ability to import essential goods, including medicines, fuel, and medical equipment. The envoy stated that persistent electricity shortages caused by fuel constraints have affected hospitals and healthcare facilities across the island. According to the ambassador, thousands of surgical procedures remain delayed because hospitals are unable to operate at full capacity due to power shortages and limited resources. The ambassador said Cuba, once known for producing medicines domestically and providing medical assistance to other countries, is now struggling to meet its own pharmaceutical needs. More than 100,000 surgeries are reportedly awaiting scheduling, while many cancer patients are facing difficulties obtaining first-line treatments. Despite these challenges, the ambassador insisted that Cuba remains committed to maintaining its public healthcare and social welfare systems. Criticizing Washington's policy toward Havana, the ambassador argued that the embargo is designed to isolate Cuba economically and financially. The envoy also rejected allegations that Cuba sponsors terrorism, describing such claims as politically motivated and inconsistent with Cuba's longstanding support for diplomacy and international cooperation.

Jam for boosting trade, eco coop at WIF

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan held a series of high-level meetings with senior officials, international economic leadership and prominent business representatives in Doha on the sidelines of the World Investment Forum 2026, focusing on strengthening Pakistan's international trade relations, attracting foreign investment, enhancing regional connectivity and expanding economic cooperation across key sectors. During the engagements held, the Federal Minister met with the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, Qatar's Minister of Municipality, the Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industries and representatives of Retaj Group. The meetings explored opportunities for expanding bilateral and multilateral trade, strengthening private-sector linkages and promoting investment in agriculture, food security, industrial development, hospitality and tourism, said a release issued here on Tuesday. Pakistan Reaffirms Commitment to D-8 Economic Cooperation and \$500 billion trade target, in a meeting with the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation on October 25, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan discussed measures to strengthen economic integration and accelerate trade among member countries. The D-8 Secretary-General appreciated Pakistan's continued support for the organisation and highlighted the importance of implementing the D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement following its ratification by Egypt. Both sides emphasised the need to translate existing economic cooperation frameworks into practical commercial opportunities through greater private-sector participation, improved market access and stronger trade linkages among member states. The discussions also focused on advancing the D-8 organisation's ambitious target of achieving US\$500 billion in intra-member trade by 2030. Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening cooperation within the D-8 framework and supporting initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, encouraging investment and promoting sustainable economic growth among member economies. Pakistan and Qatar explore Co-operation in agriculture and food security, in a separate bilateral meeting on October 26, the Federal Minister met with Qatar's Minister of Municipality to discuss expanding cooperation in agriculture, food security and bilateral trade. Both sides exchanged views on opportunities to strengthen commercial relations and promote greater institutional and business-level engagement in agricultural development and food supply chains. The discussions highlighted the potential for closer collaboration between relevant government institutions and private-sector stakeholders to identify practical areas of cooperation and facilitate mutually beneficial commercial partnerships. The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment of Pakistan and Qatar to further strengthening their longstanding bilateral relations through enhanced economic engagement and cooperation in sectors of common interest. Jam Kamal Khan Invites Qatari Investors to Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs), in another important engagement, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan met with the Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industries to explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral trade, investment and private-sector cooperation.—DNA

India's actions in IIOJK threat to regional, global peace: HC Tipu

LONDON: The Pakistan High Commission in London organized a solemn event to commemorate "Jammu and Kashmir Black Day". British parliamentarians including Lord Qurban Hussain, Lord Shaffaq Mohammed, Baroness Nosheena Mobarik, Mr. Adnan Hussain MP, Mr. Afzal Khan MP, and Mr. Ayoub Khan MP as well as a large number of British Kashmiris, civil society activists and media representatives attended the event. In his keynote address, High Commissioner Tipu Usman condemned the reign of terror and brutal oppression unleashed by Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He noted that the people of IIOJK had been subjected to a severe and prolonged military siege, under which torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings had become rampant. The High Commissioner emphasized that India's actions violated both international law and basic morality, and threatened not only regional but global peace and security. He urged the international community to hold India accountable for violating the UN Security Council resolutions that guarantee the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination. High Commissioner Usman appreciated the role of British parliamentarians for raising the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in Parliament and with the British government. He reiterated the High Commission's desire to work with the parliamentarians and the wider Kashmiri community for highlighting the Kashmir cause. British parliamentarians and guest speakers, in their remarks, expressed their solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Members of Parliament emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir is not a bilateral issue between Pakistan and India, but a long standing international dispute. They urged the international community to call upon India to put an end to the systematic violations of human rights in IIOJK and abide by its international commitment of holding a free and fair plebiscite in the occupied territory.—DNA



India hosts inaugural training for Arab League diplomats

NEW DELHI: Diplomats from Arab League member states are undergoing training this week at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi as part of the inaugural program of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum. The forum is a high-level diplomatic platform that guides and strengthens relations between India and the 22 member states of the Arab League. The framework was formally established in December 2008, with the India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting serving as the forum's main institutional mechanism of the forum. The first meeting took place in Manama in January 2016, and the second was held in New Delhi in January 2026. During the Delhi meeting, the foreign ministers agreed to institutionalize cooperation between their diplomatic institutes, with the SSIFS hosting annual training for representatives of all Arab states. The first such program was launched on Oct. 21 and will run through Oct. 30, with 29 mid-career diplomats from nearly all Arab League countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from the Gulf region, as well as Egypt, Algeria, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Libya, and Comoros. "Our idea is basically to create an opportunity for these mid-career diplomats to understand India, have a physical presence in India and get a feel of India beyond just the classroom," Ambassador Raj Kumar Srivastava, dean of the SSIFS, told Arab News. "What they not only learn but also experience in India will help them in their policymaking ... and understanding the history of our relationship.—APP

Six French men sentence to life in prison for Daesh membership

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court on Tuesday sentenced six French nationals to life in prison and a seventh to 15 years after convicting them of membership in Daesh, a Reuters witness inside the courtroom said. The men were among 47 French Daesh suspects transferred from detention facilities in northeast Syria to Iraq last year under a broader relocation arrangement coordinated by US forces and Iraqi authorities. The presiding judge said the sentences were imposed under Iraq's counterterrorism law for joining Daesh and spreading fear. He added that the court had opted for life imprisonment rather than the death penalty because the defendants were young. A seventh French national, aged 23, was given a 15-year sentence, according to the Reuters witness. Abbas Al-Maliki, one of the lawyers for the defendants, said the group would appeal the sentence in the Court of Cassation. Iraq opened the trial of the French nationals last month. Daesh seized large parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014 before being driven from its self-declared caliphate by a US-led coalition and local forces in 2019. Many of the group's militants were detained, although remnants of the jihadist organization continue to operate.—APP

China plans to send envoy to ME in near future

BEIJING: China is highly concerned about conflicts in the Middle East and surrounding regions and Beijing will send an envoy to the relevant countries in the near future, foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a daily press conference on Tuesday. Guo called on related parties to resolve differences through dialogue and negotiation and also expressed concerns about the spillover and transmitting of the Middle East conflict to the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. "China will soon send a special envoy to visit countries in the regions to strengthen communication with relevant parties, promote contact and dialogue, help ease tensions and prevent the situation from deteriorating further," Guo said. Top officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan met Iranian officials in Tehran on Monday to de-escalate the Middle East conflict.—APP

Romania's President condemns Russia's acts of sabotage

BUCHAREST – Romanian



President Nicu Dan has strongly condemned what he described as Russian involvement in acts of sabotage on Romanian territory,

calling such actions a serious violation of Romania's sovereignty and national security. In a statement, President Dan said that no foreign power has the right to conduct hostile operations on the territory of Romania or any other European state. He argued that the alleged sabotage is part of a broader pattern of Russian hybrid warfare targeting European democracies. According to the Romanian leader, Russia has for years employed a variety of tactics aimed

at destabilizing Europe, including attempts to influence elections, disinformation campaigns, information warfare, cyberattacks, and sabotage operations. He also expressed concern over what he described as an increased level of Russian provocation against civilian shipping in the Black Sea in recent weeks.

Dan stressed that these incidents should not be viewed in isolation, asserting they form part of a coordinated effort to

create divisions within European societies and weaken support for national and collective defense measures. "We must not deceive ourselves about the nature of this threat," he said, warning that hybrid warfare has been directed against European states for years with the objective of undermining internal stability and solidarity among allies. The president pledged that Romanian authorities would take decisive action to prevent future

incidents, identify those responsible, and safeguard citizens as well as critical infrastructure. He reaffirmed Romania's commitment to close cooperation with NATO allies and European Union partners. Dan also praised the work of Romania's intelligence and law enforcement agencies, including the SRI, MAI, DIICOT, and DGIA, for their role in investigating a fire at the Carfil industrial site and identifying both the perpetrators and those allegedly behind the

operation. The investigation, he said, highlighted the increasing use of social media by hostile actors to recruit and manipulate individuals into participating in illegal activities. He urged citizens to remain vigilant and critically assess information and content encountered online. Concluding his remarks, President Dan thanked Romania's international partners for their cooperation, emphasizing that responses to hybrid threats must be "united, coordinated, and credible," based on solidarity and collective action.

Briefs

PTI leader
sent to
prison on
judicial
remand

DNA

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Tuesday sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Hammad Azhar to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in a case related to the May 9 riots. The detained PTI leader was produced before the court after completing his latest physical remand, bringing the total period to 50 days. The ATC had last extended the PTI leader's physical remand by 12 days on October 15 in the case. Azhar was reportedly handed over to Lahore police following his arrest in Multan, with police sources saying that the PTI leader — declared a proclaimed offender — was involved in multiple cases registered in connection with the May 9, 2023 riots. Azhar, who served as the federal minister during the PTI's tenure at the Centre, resigned from the post of the party's Punjab chapter president in August 2024. At the time, he cited the "lack of access" to jailed PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan and restrictions on his movements as the reasons behind his decision. He had remained in hiding after being named in several cases stemming from the May 9 riots. Thousands of supporters of the jailed party founder stormed public property and military installations, including the Corps Commander House in Lahore, on May 9, 2023, in protest against the former premier's arrest.

ATC reserves
verdict in
security
breach case
against
Imaan, Hadi

ISLAMABAD: The trial of human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in the security breach case concluded at Adiala Jail on Tuesday, with the anti-terrorism court (ATC) reserving its verdict. Imaan and 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 October 7. On Tuesday, both accused recorded their statements under Section 342 (power to examine the accused) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. — APP

Information Minister Atta Tarar says China-Pak information corridor to help counter propaganda

Mao Ning said the launch of the China-Pakistan Information Corridor was necessary and important, as the challenges posed by fake news and misinformation continue to grow, making it increasingly important to promote accurate, timely, and reliable information



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zidong said China-Pakistan Information Corridor will help create greater cohesion through information sharing and greater understanding of each other's cultures and traditions. The Center was formally inaugurated by the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning here at a function, held at

Pakistan China Friendship Center.

The ambassador said the initiative will also help counter propaganda against the two countries which are tied in shared bond of long-lasting friendship. It will also help foster public opinion in the two countries. In her remarks, Mao Ning said the launch of the China-Pakistan Information Corridor was necessary and important, as the challenges posed by fake news and misinformation continue to grow, making it increasingly important to promote accu-

rate, timely, and reliable information.

She said the Corridor's four pillars will play an important role in telling more and better stories about China-Pakistan cooperation and enabling more people to understand and support the friendship between the two countries. The spokesperson further said, the initiative will also help lay a strong public foundation for the two countries' all-weather strategic partnership and their sustainable and everlasting friendship. Addressing the ceremony, Minister for In-

formation and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said our forefathers passed down stories of Pakistan-China friendship from generation to generation and we will carry forward this legacy of Pakistan-China friendship and pass it on to future generations. He said it is our responsibility to strengthen the Pakistan-China friendship and transmit it to new generations. The Minister said the importance of China-Pakistan Information Corridor has grown even further and the "iron-clad" Pakistan-China friendship is a unique term, which is exclusive to these two nations. Attaullah Tarar said the first regional office of the trade pillar of the China-Pakistan Information Corridor has been established in Karachi. He said China-Pakistan Information Corridor will serve as a bridge between the people of Pakistan and China, connecting minds and strengthening mutual understanding through media, information sharing and digital platforms. He said the initiative has been developed as an integrated ecosystem bringing together media organisations, think tanks, scholars, businesses, universities and youth to promote Pakistan-China cooperation. The Minister said China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the body of the shared future, while China-Pakistan Information Corridor will be its voice.

He said the Corridor stands on four pillars including media, business and enterprise, think tanks, and culture, tourism and youth. He said the media pillar would facilitate verified news exchange between Pakistani and Chinese media organisations and establish mechanisms to counter misinformation through fact-checking. Attaullah Tarar said the business and enterprise pillar would promote trade and investment linkages, while the think-tank pillar would bring depth to the bilateral conversation through joint research, dialogue and publications.

CM Maryam backs 'tit-for-tat' response to assault incidents

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday advocated a tit-for-tat response to assault incidents across the province, saying she had advised victims to respond to such attacks in kind. Addressing an Hon'haar scholarship and laptop distribution ceremony at a university in Mandi Bahauddin, she said that offenders would not be spared even if they belonged to her own party. She also criticised governing through fear, saying, "Governing through fear is not governance; keep one principle and remain consistent." Referring to a fatal incident in Multan in which a man ran over an orphaned teenager, she said the incident continued to haunt her. The Punjab chief minister also referred to cases involving violence against a woman riding a motorcycle and an assault at a petrol pump. CM Maryam was referring to video footage showing a man overtaking a female scooter rider on a busy road in Lahore, placing his bike in front of her two-wheeler, and subjecting her to brutal torture.

JI says Islamabad march will go ahead in mid- November

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said Tuesday the party would go ahead with its Islamabad long march in mid-November despite the government seeking another seven to 10 days to address its demand for abolishing the petroleum levy. JI would continue preparations for the march and begin mobilisation across the country while holding further talks with the government, Hafiz Naeem told reporters after meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "We will no longer postpone the Islamabad march," the JI chief said. "We will continue talking to the government, but the march will take place in mid-November." He said the prime minister had sought another seven to 10 days, while the two sides agreed that greater relief would be provided on petroleum products.

Govt makes public record of Toshakhana gifts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif deposited more than three dozen gifts in the Toshakhana between July and September, including 1,000 grammes of fine gold received from Kyrgyzstan, according to information released by the Cabinet Division. The division said all gifts received by the prime minister during foreign visits had been deposited in the Toshakhana, while their valuations were being determined. The News reported on Tuesday. The list of gifts also includes one box containing 1000-gramme fine gold, which was deposited in the Toshakhana on September 8 this year. The prime minister received this valuable gift during his official visit to Kyrgyzstan from August 31 to September 2. The gifts received by the prime minister include a handmade silk carpet, a shield, a plate, a tie, a set of cufflinks, a calligraphy, a model of Roza-e-Rasool (SAW), a handmade carpet, two wool and silk carpets, a handmade souvenir (stine), a painting of SKY47, a wall hanging, a handmade decoration (glass Belarusian), a wooden plate and a model of SC of Bangladesh, a ceramic vase, two scarfs, four olive oil, small soaps and traditional perfume with Oud, one box (Kyrgyzzaltyn) 1,000 grammes fine gold, a model of car, a Kyrgyz style large blanket, a ceremonial vase, books in small bag and a large size crystal shield, a bronze

vase, a handkerchief, handmade carpets, two Islamic prayer beads, six cups with saucers and one table clock. President Asif Ali Zardari received only seven gifts, which include two carpets, an archery set, a musical instrument, a Faisal Mosque frame, a chess set and a decoration piece. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and other Cabinet members, including Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and others and senior officials, also received gifts during this period, which were deposited in the Toshakhana.

The federal government has tightened rules governing gifts received by the public office-holders by notifying the Toshakhana (Management and Regulation) Rules, 2026 in September this year, according to which all existing and future gifts to be received in the Toshakhana shall be disposed of through an open auction by the Cabinet Division, with the approval of the committee headed by Federal Secretary Cabinet Division. The committee may seek expert advice, where required, in the discharge of its responsibilities. Any gift received by a public office holder, or a private person as part of an official delegation, shall invariably be declared and deposited by the recipient in the Toshakhana, as required under Section 3 of the Act, within 30 days of receipt of the gift or thirty days from the date of return of the recipient to Pakistan.

Shafqat Abbas appointed DG IP MOIB

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has appointed Shafqat Abbas, a BS-20 officer of the Information Group, as Director General, Internal Publicity Wing, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad, with immediate effect. According to an official notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Shafqat Abbas, who was serving as Director General (PR), Regional Information Office (RIO), Press Information Department, Lahore, has been transferred and posted to the new position in Islamabad. The notification stated that Shafqat Abbas will replace Ashique Hussain Sheikh, who had been serving as Director General of the Internal Publicity Wing. The appointment will remain effective until further orders.

A seasoned officer of the Information Group, Shafqat Abbas has held key positions in the government's communication and public information structure. His latest assignment as Director General (PR) at the Regional Information Office Lahore involved overseeing government outreach and public information activities in Punjab. The Internal Publicity Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting plays a significant role in disseminating information regarding government policies, development initiatives, and public awareness campaigns across the country. The transfer is part of the government's ongoing administrative reshuffling within the Information Group aimed at strengthening institutional performance and enhancing public communication mechanisms. — DNA

'Institutional paralysis'

Pakistan urges abolition or curbs on UNSC veto power

At UNGA session, Islamabad warns more permanent members would deepen existing inequalities

DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan has called for reforms to the veto mechanism of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to end the 15-member body's "institutional paralysis" and make it more effective and equitable. "The misuse of the veto undermines the Security Council's effectiveness and the credibility of the UN, while giving the permanent five [US, Russia, China, France and UK] unmatched influence throughout the UN system," Gul Qaiser Sarwani, Counselor/Political Coordinator at the Pakistan Mission, told the UN General Assembly on Monday. During a debate on use of the veto, representatives reiterated calls to restructure the UNSC to make it more responsive to its primary role of maintaining international peace and security. The UNGA had convened in line with resolution 76/262, adopted in April 2022, which mandates it to hold a session within 10 working days of a veto being cast in the UNSC. With the campaign of India, Brazil, Germany and Japan for permanent seats on the Council in mind, Sarwani, a counsellor and political coordinator in the Pakistani mission to the UN, said more permanent members and more vetoes would deepen existing inequalities, perpetuate historical privileges, create new centres of power and increase the risk of institutional paralysis. "Let us be clear: the problems cannot be the solution," he said, highlighting that Pakistan/Italy-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group remains opposed to the addition of any new individual permanent member on an expanded Security Council. "We believe that the veto should be abolished or at least severely restricted; It must not be expanded," Sarwani said. Pakistan, he said, supported resolution 76/262, saying any measures to restrict or restrain the use of the veto must be consistent with the UN Charter provisions.

Regarding the negative power of the veto to "block", Sarwani said Pakistan believes that this can be better balanced by placing restrictions on the use of the veto or by enhancing the number and role of the elected members of the Council through larger representation and thereby changing the threshold for approval of decisions by the Council — to make it more democratic and to serve as an effective check on the use of veto.

Opening the meeting, UNGA's Bangladeshi President Khalilur Rahman said, with 21 such meetings convened as part of the veto initiative, the "mechanism has become an established expression of transparency, accountability and collective responsibility within our organisation". He commended the UNSC for its timely special reports to the General Assembly and its permanent members' participation in these debates, noting that humanity is best served when both organs "operate in balance, each fulfilling its distinct yet complementary responsibilities under the Charter". Noting that the Security Council's effectiveness directly impacts people living in conflict, insecurity and humanitarian suffering, he said the cost is borne "first and foremost by those most affected by violence and instability" when the body does not act definitively. "It is my hope that the Council will find the consensus needed to act decisively in the service of peace — and that the veto initiative will be needed less often," he said, urging related debates to not become repetitive exercises, but help keep dialogue alive.

"Let us reaffirm that no veto should bring an end to dialogue and diplomacy and that the principles of the Charter must continue to guide our collective search for peace," Rahman said. In the ensuing debate, delegates highlighted the present and potential pitfalls of a veto-laden Security Council with its implications in regions and territories far from the location where the decision is taken.

