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Field marshal says Pakistan keen to boost Singapore ties

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US President says with Tehran to end in near future

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Pakistan, Saudi ties growing, says minister

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PM admires Singapore's economic development

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the premier reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding and friendly relations with Singapore, particularly as the two countries are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed admiration for Singapore's "remarkable economic transformation" and achievements in innovation and development. The development came during a meeting with Singapore's foreign minister, Vivian Balakrishnan, who is currently in the country on an official visit.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the premier reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding and friendly relations with Singapore, particularly as the two countries are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year. "The prime minister expressed admiration for Singapore's remarkable economic transformation and achievements in innovation and development. He underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to its partnership with Singapore, both bilaterally and multilaterally including within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)," it said. The statement said that the two sides discussed ways to enhance

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FM discuss ways to enhance cooperation

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday held talks with Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, who is visiting Islamabad, and discussed ways enhance cooperation in trade and investment, the Foreign Office (FO) said. Balakrishnan arrived in Islamabad earlier in the day. He called on DPM Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The FO said in a statement that the two leaders reviewed the "longstanding and friendly relations" between Pakistan and Singapore as the two countries marked 60 years of diplomatic relations. They underscored the importance of sustained high-level exchanges and discussed ways to

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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 30 October 2026. – DNA

Bill proposing quarterly gas pricing introduced

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In what is set to stir a new controversy, a bill proposing quarterly determination of natural gas prices landed in the upper House of Parliament on Friday. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was introduced in the House by Minister of State for Interior Talla Chaudhry at a time when the daily fuel pricing mechanism has drawn widespread criticism. The bill seeks to insert a new Section 8A in the Ogra Ordinance, 2002. Under the proposed mechanism, a licensee for natural gas will submit its total revenue requirement on a quarterly basis – only to the extent of wellhead gas prices and the cost of imported gas, including Re-Gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) – for review by the authority.

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Pak Army destroys Afghan Taliban posts in retaliatory strikes

Several Afghan Taliban personnel killed in fresh strikes, say sources

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces on Friday destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts and military installations in areas adjoining South Waziristan and Parachinar districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security sources say. The Pakistan Army launched the retaliatory strikes in response to unprovoked firing by Kabul regime personnel on October 27 in Angoor Adda, security sources said. According to the security sources, the Afghan Taliban personnel abandoned their posts and fled after the retaliatory action by the Pakistan Army. There were also reports of multiple casualties among Afghan Taliban personnel, the security sources said. The security forces on Wednesday had destroyed multiple Afghan Taliban check-posts in a retaliatory operation after an attack on civilians in South Waziristan's Angoor Adda area resulted in the death of one person and injured five members of the same family, the security sources had said.

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Security forces shoot down five drones

India-backed terrorists attempted to target a security check-post in Kharan district, say sources

DNA

QUETTA: Security forces foiled an attempted attack by the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan in Balochistan, shooting down five drones before they could hit their targets, security sources said on Friday. According to the sources, terrorists attempted to target a security check-post established in the Albat area of Kharan district. The security forces responded promptly and effectively, destroying all five drones before they could reach their intended target, the sources said.

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Briefs

Drone strike in Ethiopia kills 25

ADDIS ABABA: Multiple drone strikes have hit northern regions of Ethiopia since Thursday, killing at least 25 civilians, including children, witnesses and a medical source told AFP on Friday. The Ethiopian government has been fighting rebels in the states of Amhara and Tigray over the past month, and has used its large supply of drones to win a decisive advantage. But it has been accused of indiscriminate attacks that have killed civilians. In Amhara, a witness said four drone strikes "were carried out one after another" on Thursday on a camp for displaced people. "We have buried 14 people at the IDP center. Two more died while receiving medical treatment," said Yasin, who requested anonymity, adding that children and pregnant women were among the victims. – APP

Zelensky due in Turkey today

NEWS DESK

ISTANBUL: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will meet his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on a working visit to Türkiye for talks over war with Russia and the security situation in the Black Sea, the Turkish presidency said. "During the discussions to be held in Istanbul, the parties will address steps that can be taken to further enhance bilateral cooperation between Türkiye and Ukraine, as well as regional and international developments – most notably the Russia-Ukraine War and the security situation in the Black Sea," Burhanettin Duran, communications director at the presidency, said on X. Despite its ties with both Russia and Ukraine, Türkiye has been infuriated by the attacks on commercial vessels in the Black Sea.

To end deadlock

PTI KP parliamentary party 'seeks talks' with federal govt

Party members propose including Ali Amin Gandapur in consultation process with Centre, say sources

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa parliamentary party has backed negotiations with the federal government, seeking dialogue to pave the way for the withdrawal of governor's rule and the state of emergency in the province, sources told Geo News on Friday. The party's provincial parliamentary meeting, held online, was attended by more than 40 lawmakers, including Ali Amin Gandapur, while PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Members were of the view that talks should be held with the federal government to resolve issues including governor's rule and the emergency, and that dialogue should pave the way for the withdrawal of the two measures. The parliamentary party maintained that

PTI's mandate would be restored following the end of governor's rule and the emergency. According to sources, some members also proposed that Gandapur be included in the consultation process for negotiations with the federal government.

They argued that the participation of a member of the parliamentary party in the process would allow matters to be taken forward through mutual consultation. Barrister Gohar told the meeting that a majority of PTI lawmakers in the National Assembly also favoured talks with the federal government. Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, meanwhile, stressed the need for patience and perseverance during difficult circumstances and also backed dialogue as the way forward. PTI leader Shaukat Yousafzai also threw his weight behind negotiations, calling on the federal

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Trump says Iran war to end soon

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have said two oil tankers had been halted after encountering unspecified "incidents" while attempting to transit what Tehran considers an unauthorised route in the Strait of Hormuz

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Friday, speaking ahead of the November 3 midterm congressional elections, that he believes the war with Iran will end soon, but he did not explain how that would happen. Trump stated in an interview with KCMO radio station in Kansas City, "This file will be closed soon. We need to ensure there is never a nuclear weapon." He added that the United States would not strike Iran before the elections. Meanwhile, The Royal Oman Navy has carried out an evacuation operation for 25 crew members aboard the commercial vessel RITI in cooperation and coordination with the Maritime Security Centre, after the Panama-flagged vessel was targeted, resulting in a fire breaking out on board.

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25 crew members rescued from tanker

NEWS DESK

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Navy has carried out an evacuation operation for 25 crew members aboard the commercial vessel RITI in cooperation and coordination with the Maritime Security Centre, after the Panama-flagged vessel was targeted, resulting in a fire breaking out on board. "The incident occurred approximately 106 nautical miles off the coast of Musandam Governorate. The crew members were provided with the necessary medical care," the Maritime Security Centre says in a statement.

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NAB arrests another accused in Kohistan mega corruption scandal

PESHAWAR :The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has arrested another suspect in the Kohistan mega corruption scandal and produced him before the accountability court here.

The court granted a seven days physical remand of the accused, Muhammad Ayaz into NAB custody.

According to the NAB prosecutor, Rs111.1 million embezzled in the Kohistan mega scandal was recovered from Muhammad Ayaz's bank account. NAB had sought a 14-day physical remand for further investigation; however, the court approved seven days. The prosecutor informed the court that the accused's brother, Muhammad Riaz, was a cashier at the National Bank and is already in jail in connection with the alleged embezzlement of Rs10 billion in the Kohistan scandal.

According to NAB, Muhammad Riaz allegedly transferred the embezzled funds into his brother's bank account. Muhammad Ayaz is also accused of establishing a fake construction firm in the name of development projects to facilitate the alleged corruption.

The prosecution told the court that no development work had actually been carried out at the designated sites, while the accused allegedly misappropriated Rs111.1 million.

After hearing arguments, Accountability Judge Muhammad Zafar granted NAB seven-day physical remand of the accused for further investigation into the alleged financial irregularities. _APP

Pakistan Railways digitizes ticket booking

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed that Pakistan Railways has digitized its ticket booking system, and Awam Express running from Peshawar will be upgraded to modern train standards from November 2, while Khyber Mail will be upgraded by the end of January.

During Question Hour on Friday, Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi told the House in response to questions by Aliya Kamran and other members that passengers no longer need to visit booking offices and can book tickets through the Raba app on their mobile phones. He said Pakistan Railways has installed 329 Point of Sale machines at its 236 booking centers, through which passengers can pay for tickets via different banks, Easypaisa, JazzCash and QR code. He said Pakistan Railways is trying to become at par with railway systems of developed countries in digitization. On a supplementary question by Noor Alam Khan, the Federal Minister said the popularity of the train running in Quetta can be judged by the fact that passenger load of up to 190% has been recorded against its seating capacity. He said Awam Express from Peshawar will be run according to modern standards from November 2, while Hazara Express and Khyber Mail are also being upgraded. Khyber Mail will be shifted to modern standards by end of January.

Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways is a joint asset of the whole country and there will be no discrimination between provinces in its development. The railway system connects all parts of the country. _APP

Khyber Star Talent Hunt to promote youth talent: Kundi

Governor Kundi directed that all regional languages, including Urdu and Saraiki, should be represented in the auditions

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday directed that all languages spoken in the province, including Urdu and Saraiki, be included in the Khyber Star Talent Hunt Programme to ensure equal representation and promote the rich cultural diversity of the province. He issued the directives while chairing a meeting on the proposed Khyber Star Talent and Cultural Promotion Programme attended by Adviser to the Governor on Information and Public Relations

Pakistan briefs diplomats on minerals investment forum

The participants were also briefed on the proposed government-to-government (G2G) and government-to-business (G2B) engagements, which are intended to facilitate direct interaction between Pakistani authorities, foreign governments, international companies and prospective investors.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has stepped up its diplomatic outreach to attract international investment in the country's mineral sector, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs holding a special briefing for ambassadors and diplomats based in Islamabad ahead of the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26).

The pre-event briefing, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to familiarise members of the diplomatic corps with the objectives, scope and key features of the upcoming forum and highlight investment opportunities in Pakistan's mineral and mining industry. Ambassador Abrar H. Hashmi, Additional Secretary (SIFC and Economic Diplomacy), inaugurated the session and welcomed the participating ambassadors and diplomats. He provided an overview of the initiative and highlighted the importance of international engagement in promoting Pakistan's economic and investment potential.

Mirza Nasir ud Din Mas-



hood Ahmed, Special Secretary of the Petroleum Division, and Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGD-CL), along with their respective teams, delivered detailed presentations on the forum and its proposed activities. The briefing covered the concept and objectives of PMIF26, its major thematic sessions, programme outline and proposed venue. Participants were also informed about registration

procedures and the expected participation of government ministers, ambassadors, international investors, industry leaders and other stakeholders. Particular attention was given to the forum's exhibition component, which is expected to provide a platform for showcasing Pakistan's mineral resources, investment opportunities and potential projects to international investors and industry representatives. The participants were also briefed on the proposed

government-to-government (G2G) and government-to-business (G2B) engagements, which are intended to facilitate direct interaction between Pakistani authorities, foreign governments, international companies and prospective investors. The forum is expected to provide an important platform for Pakistan to present its mineral wealth to the international community, encourage investment partnerships and strengthen cooperation with countries



possessing expertise, technology and capital in the mining and minerals sector. Pakistan possesses considerable mineral resources, offering opportunities for exploration, extraction, processing and value addition. However, attracting investment, introducing modern mining technologies and developing infrastructure remain important factors in unlocking the sector's full economic potential. The engagement with the diplomatic corps reflects the government's efforts

to use economic diplomacy as a means of connecting international investors with opportunities in Pakistan. By involving foreign missions at the preparatory stage, the organisers seek to broaden international participation and encourage investors to explore potential partnerships. The proposed G2G and G2B engagements are also expected to provide opportunities for discussing investment proposals, sharing technical expertise and identifying areas of cooperation between Pakistan and

interested countries. The briefing concluded with an overview of the arrangements and participation opportunities for PMIF26, with diplomats receiving information about the programme and the various activities planned for the event. The initiative forms part of Pakistan's broader efforts to promote its mineral resources as a potential driver of economic growth, foreign investment, industrial development and employment generation.

Pak, Turkiye ties deeply rooted in brotherhood

KARACHI: Governor of Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi attended and addressed a prestigious ceremony marking the National Day of the Republic of Turkey as the chief guest. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan, he extended heartfelt congratulations to the Turkish leadership and people, expressing confidence that the strong bonds of friendship, brotherhood and mutual trust between Pakistan and Turkey would remain enduring. Governor Nehal Hashmi observed that relations between Pakistan and Turkey are not confined to diplomatic ties but are deeply rooted in friendship, brotherhood and a shared historical her-

itage. He noted that the historical connections between the subcontinent and Turkey date back centuries. Both countries have consistently supported each other during difficult times and natural disasters, demonstrating their lasting friendship through practical solidarity. He described the joint defence agreement concluded between Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in Makkah as an important milestone for regional peace and stability. He expressed hope that cooperation among the three brotherly countries would contribute to promoting peace, security and stability across the region. Inviting Turkish investors to invest in Sindh, Governor Hashmi highlighted the province's vast investment

potential in industry, energy, agriculture, infrastructure and other key sectors. He noted that Karachi, as Pakistan's economic hub and a major gateway to international trade, offers Turkish investors promising opportunities for mutual cooperation and joint ventures. He further emphasised that expanding cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey in education, science, technology and culture would bring the people of both countries closer. The Governor extended his best wishes to President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish leadership, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to continuing its role alongside Turkey in promoting peace, stability and prosperity at regional and international levels. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Governor Hashmi cut a cake to mark Turkey's National Day, accompanied by the Chief Minister of Sindh, the Consul General of Turkey, the Consul General of Oman and other distinguished guests. _APP

CM Murad invites ASEAN countries to explore investment opportunities

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday invited the Philippines and other ASEAN member countries to explore the vast investment opportunities available in Sindh, particularly in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals, information technology, energy, minerals, manufacturing, logistics and tourism.

He was talking to a high-level delegation of ASEAN ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomats led by Philippine Ambassador to Pakistan and Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, Dr Emmanuel R. Fernandez, at the CM House. The delegation included Indonesian Ambassador Lt. Gen. (R) Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, Malaysian High Commissioner Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Myanmar Ambassador Mr Wunna Han, Thai Ambassador Mr Rongvudhi Virabutr, Indonesian Consul General Mudzakir M.A., Malaysian Consul General Mr Mohd Yunus Ibrahim, Thai Consul General Mr Surashete Boontinand, Head of the Vietnam Trade Mission Ms Nguyen Thi Diep Ha, Honorary Consul General of the Philippines in Karachi Dr Imran Yousuf, Deputy Head of Mission of Brunei Darussalam Mr Hj. Khairurrijal Hazim, and the spouse of the Philippine Ambassador, Ms Alicia Kalaw-Fernandez.

The Chief Minister was assisted by provincial ministers, Jam Khan Shoro, Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar, Special Assistant to CM Syed Qasim Naveed, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, and Secretary to CM Asif Jameel. During the discussion, the participating ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomatic representatives shared their perspectives on strengthening engagement between Sindh and their respective countries. They emphasised the importance of expanding bilateral trade, promoting investment, enhancing cultural and educational exchanges, and developing closer institutional and people-to-people connections. The diplomats highlighted the potential for their countries and Sindh to benefit from each other's expertise, technology, experience and business opportunities. They expressed interest in exploring collaborative initiatives in agriculture, industrial development, education, tourism, information technology, energy and human resource development. The participants also stressed the need to encourage business-to-business linkages. _APP

Ahsan orders timely completion of NHA projects

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to remove bottlenecks, accelerate work on key national highways and motorways and ensure strict financial discipline. He also warned that unjustified cost escalations, non-transparent claims and delays in development projects would not be tolerated. Chairing a review meeting on NHA projects being executed under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), the minister said that public funds must be utilized transparently and efficiently, with accountability at every stage of project implementation, a news release said.

He directed the authorities to thoroughly scrutinize cost escalations, variations in construction quantities and rates, and additional claims submitted by contractors to prevent unnecessary financial burdens on the national exchequer. Ahsan Iqbal stressed that project monitoring should focus on actual physical progress, expenditure and completion targets rather than paperwork alone. He directed the concerned authorities to prepare a comprehensive report on the status, financial requirements and implementation bottlenecks of key projects for submission to the Prime Minister to facilitate timely decisions. Reviewing major projects, the minister was informed that the 216-kilometre Shandur-Gilgit Road project, costing Rs49,946.070 million, had achieved 67.33 per cent physical progress, while the 153-kilometre Chitral-Booni Mastuj-Shandur Road project, costing Rs17,783.193 million, had achieved 40 per cent progress. He called for expediting work on these strategically important routes to improve connectivity and promote economic activity in remote areas. The 273-kilometre dualization and rehabilitation of Karachi-Quetta-Chaman Road (N-25), costing Rs183,421.427 million, had achieved 19.25 per cent physical progress. The minister stressed accelerating work on the Karachi-Kararo and Wadh-Khuzdar sections to strengthen regional connectivity and trade. _DNA

Training programme launched for local workers

ISLAMABAD: A two-month vocational training programme has been launched to prepare 100 Pakistani workers for employment in Chinese-invested projects in the country. The programme, organised by Kasb-e-Kamal Vocational Centre in collaboration with CIIC and local technical training institution KEK, will train 50 candidates in low-voltage electrical work and 50 in riveting. Successful candidates will be assessed and given priority for employment in relevant projects, including those of PowerChina. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Wang Kang, General Manager of CIIC Technology Group, and Huang Ju, Director of its International Business Development Department, said the training would also include Chinese-language instruction and workplace safety. They said the initiative aimed to enhance the technical skills of local workers and create employment opportunities while helping Chinese enterprises meet their workforce requirements. The CIIC chairman said the organisation had trained 25 welders in Pakistan last year, three of whom were subsequently employed in PowerChina projects. He added that partner organisations had expressed satisfaction with the technical skills and performance of Pakistani workers. Representatives of five Chinese state-owned enterprises operating in Pakistan, including PowerChina, China Electrical Equipment, Harbin Electric International, China Nuclear Industry Fifth Construction Company and China MCC Group, were also participating in the programme. The initiative also aims to enable young Pakistanis to acquire marketable skills, secure better employment and improve their incomes while working in their own country. The CIIC chairman called on Chinese enterprises to strengthen cooperation with local partners and develop an integrated system of recruitment, training, certification and employment. Ahmed Younis, Chief Executive Officer of Kasb-e-Kamal, said the centre, in collaboration with CIIC, had trained 14 electrical engineers. _APP

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CDA chief reviews uplift work in commercial centres

Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf directed the concerned departments to further strengthen coordination and cooperation, expedite work wherever required, and ensure the timely completion of all development projects while maintaining construction quality and the highest standards of workmanship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and under the leadership of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Sohail Ashraf, the Chairman CDA visited various commercial centres of Islamabad, including Kohsar Market, Jinnah Super Market (F-7) and F-6 Markaz, to review ongoing development, renovation and infrastructure improvement works.

During the visit, the Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf reviewed the progress of ongoing upgradation, beautification and infrastructure improvement initiatives in different Marakiz. He was given a detailed briefing on the progress achieved so far, improvements in infrastructure, renovation of public spaces, and measures being undertaken to provide better facilities to citizens, shoppers and visitors to these Marakiz. The Director General Infrastructure, Director General E&M, Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, (MCI), Deputy Commissioner (General), and the concerned Assistant Commissioner also accompanied the Chairman CDA during the visit. The relevant officers briefed him on ongoing development activities and the future course of action. Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf directed the concerned departments to further strengthen coordination and cooperation, expedite work wherever required, and ensure the timely completion of all development projects while maintaining construction quality and the highest standards of workmanship. Under the directions of Federal Interior Minister Syed



Mohsin Raza Naqvi and the supervision of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, comprehensive measures are being undertaken to improve the overall condition of various Marakiz in Islamabad. Special attention is being given to road improvements, rehabilitation and upgradation of footpaths, better parking arrangements, and improvement of overall infrastructure to effectively address traffic flow and parking-related issues faced by citizens. The CDA's efforts to develop, beautify and upgrade various Marakiz across Islamabad are being appreciated by citizens. Improvements in roads, footpaths, parking facilities and other essential infrastructure will help make commercial Marakiz cleaner, more attractive and better organised. Under the directions of Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and the leadership of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, the Authority remains committed to completing all ongoing projects within

the stipulated timelines, maintaining high standards of quality, and ensuring that all work is carried out in accordance with approved designs and specifications. The visit of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf reflects CDA's continued commitment to enhancing the overall beauty of Islamabad and improving its infrastructure. The CDA is giving special importance to quality, sustainability and public convenience to ensure the effective completion of all development initiatives.

OGDC profit rises 53% to Rs 58.5b in first quarter

ISLAMABAD: Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDC), Pakistan's largest exploration and production company, today reported a profit after tax of Rs 58.5 billion for the quarter ended September 30, 2026, an increase of 53% over the corresponding quarter last year. The Board of Directors, at its meeting in Islamabad, approved the financial results and declared a first interim cash dividend of Rs 5.00 per share (50%), the highest first-quarter dividend in the Company's history, up from Rs 3.50 per share a year earlier. Net sales revenue rose 38% to Rs 132.4 billion from Rs 96.2 billion in the corresponding quarter, and profit after tax increased to Rs 58.5 billion from Rs 38.3 billion, lifting earnings per share to Rs 13.60 from Rs 8.91. The improvement was driven by higher production volumes and stronger realized prices, partly offset by continued forced production curtailments and

the appreciation of the rupee against the US dollar. Collections against billings stood at 100% for the quarter. OGDC contributed Rs 82 billion to the national exchequer through taxes, dividends, royalties and levies, and its indigenous oil and gas production saved the country an estimated US\$ 1.32 billion in foreign exchange through import substitution. Commenting on the results, Mr. Zafar Masud, Chairman of the Board, said: "This was a quarter of delivery: double-digit growth in oil, gas and LPG production, collections at 100% of billings, and a record first-quarter dividend for our shareholders. The Board's decision reflects confidence in the Company's cash generation, while preserving its capacity to invest in compression, water injection and new drilling to sustain production and to pursue new frontiers in unconventional gas, geothermal energy and critical minerals."

Production grew in all three streams. Average daily net saleable production rose 13.3% to 35,494 barrels of crude oil, 14.2% to 732 MMcf of natural gas and 10.5% to 696 tons of LPG, compared with 31,315 barrels, 641 MMcf and 630 tons, respectively, in the corresponding quarter last year. Growth was supported by the connection of four new wells—Maru-3, Sono-10, Chak 63-5 and Bobi-11—to the production gathering system. Electrical submersible pumps installed at four wells added 1,630 barrels per day of crude oil. The Company also completed 26 workover jobs to sustain production and arrest natural decline in mature fields. Forced production curtailments by SNGPL and UPL continued to constrain output, reducing average daily net production by 1,254 barrels of crude oil, 94 MMcf of gas and five tons of LPG, at an estimated cost of Rs 9.7 billion in sales revenue.—APP

NCCIA educates students on online threats

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Islamabad organised a cyber awareness session at Allied School, I-14 Campus, to educate students about online safety, cybercrime prevention and responsible use of social media. According to an NCCIA official on Friday that, the session was conducted under the supervision of Deputy Director and Circle Incharge Asif Nawaz and Sub-Inspector Misbah Batool. Students were briefed on digital security, safe internet practices and precautionary measures to protect themselves from emerging cyber threats. The session also focused on the responsible use of social media and the importance of remaining alert while carrying out online activities. Students were encouraged to adopt safe digital practices and remain vigilant against cybercrime. NCCIA was committed to raising awareness among students through educational activities and promoting a safer digital environment for children and young internet users.—APP

FCCP orders permanent employees' reinstatement

ISLAMABAD The Federal Constitutional Court (FCCP) has held that government departments were responsible for failing to conduct mandatory eligibility tests for reinstated employees and that the employees could not be penalised for the departments' negligence. Disposing of contempt petitions concerning implementation of a Supreme Court judgment, the court directed that the petitioners be treated as permanently appointed employees without any further conditions. In a judgment authored by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, the court observed that the relevant departments neither called the employees for tests nor requested the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) to conduct examinations. The requirement had consequently become ineffective due to departmental inaction and delay. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, comprising Justice Ali Baqar Najafi and Justice Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, heard the cases. The court noted that employees could neither arrange examinations themselves nor independently approach the FPSC examination centres. Conducting the tests was the responsibility of the departments concerned. Under its December 17, 2021 judgment, the Supreme Court had ordered unconditional reinstatement of employees whose posts did not require qualifying tests at the time of initial recruitment, while others were reinstated subject to passing the relevant examinations. The FCCP directed the authorities to implement the Supreme Court's judgment in letter and spirit and treat the petitioners as permanently appointed employees. Meanwhile, Federal Constitutional Court (FCCP) has ruled that final decisions by revenue and consolidation authorities regarding land distribution and allotment cannot be reopened merely on the basis of disputes over land identification or khasra numbers. Dismissing a woman's petition concerning ownership of land on which a girls' school was built in Bhakkar, the court also held that an executing cannot not amend a final decree or go beyond its scope.—APP

AI-based security monitoring system reviewed at 4C Centre

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Capt (retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry visited the Command, Control, Communication and Coordination (4C) Centre at the Central Police Office and reviewed its AI-based security monitoring system, field force surveillance and emergency response arrangements.

He inspected the modern technology-based centre and reviewed its performance for monitored security across the federal capital to supervise police personnel in the field and ensure a quick response to emergencies.

He said the concerned officers briefed the IGP on various systems operating at the 4C Centre, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other modern technologies for security monitoring and coordination.

The IGP Sohail directed officers to make effective use of available technology and resources to further improve security surveillance, field force monitoring and emergency response across Islamabad.

Later, the IGP Sohail also listened to the complaints and problems of citizens, police officers and personnel who visited the Central Police Office.

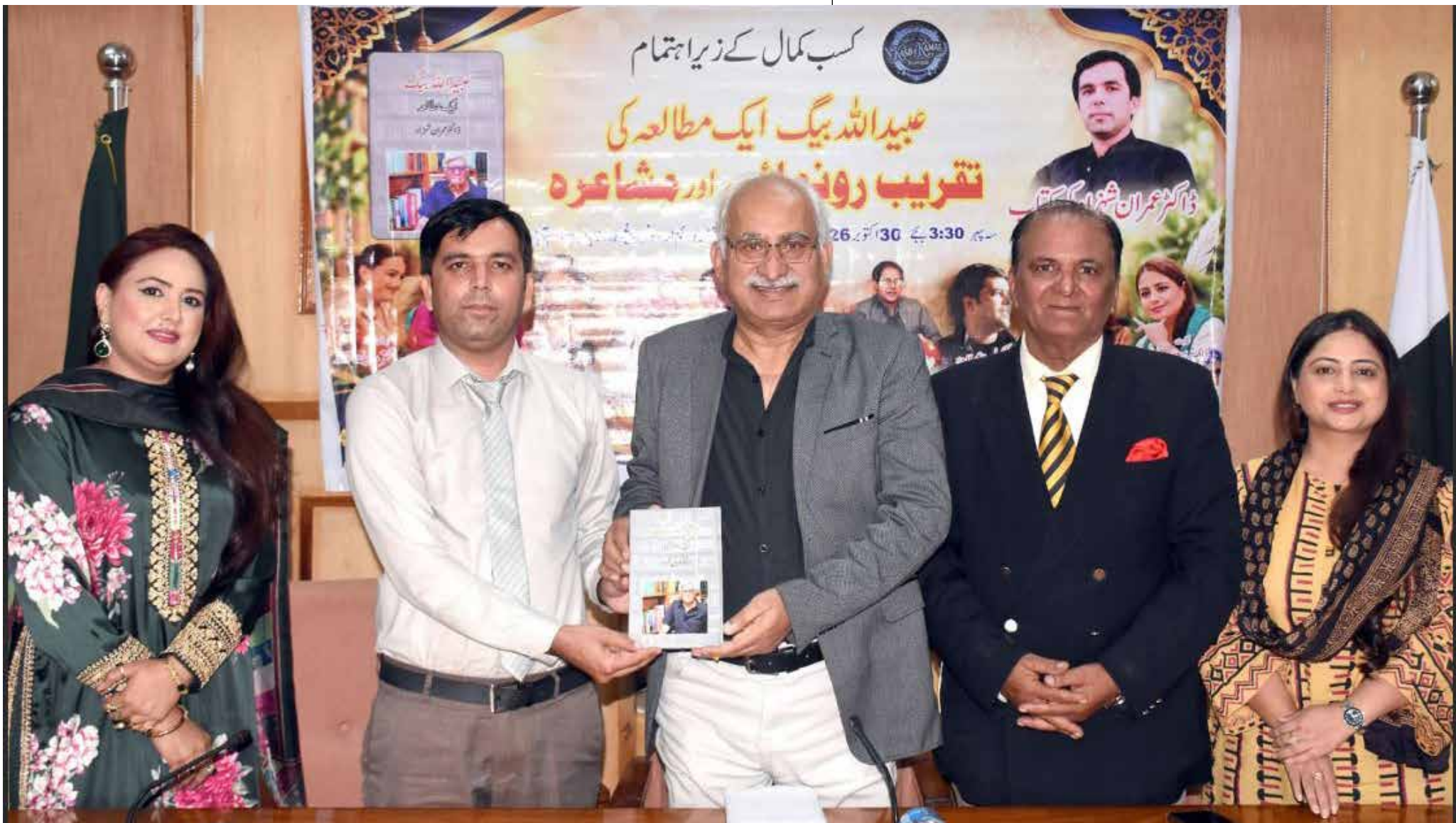
He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely resolution of complaints and applications on merit.

IGP Sohail said the effective use of modern technology, timely relief to citizens and resolution of police personnel's problems were among the key priorities of Islamabad Police.

He urged all officers to perform their professional duties with dedication, responsibility and effective use of available resources.

Police hold open courts at mosques

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police Station House Officers (SHOs) held open courts at mosques in their respective areas during Friday prayers to hear public complaints and strengthen communication between police and citizens. According to an ICT Police official on Friday that, the open courts were organised on the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Capt (retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry as part of an initiative to bring police services closer to the public. SHOs visited mosques in their respective jurisdictions, interacted with worshippers and listened to their complaints and police-related problems.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Imran Shahzad presenting his book "Obaidullah Baig: Aik Mutala" to Hameed Shahid during its launching ceremony organized by Kasb e Kamal at Idara-e-Farogh-e-Qaumi Zaban (NLPD).

Briefs

Hepatitis screening continues at NA Secretariat

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad is continuing free hepatitis C screening for members of parliament and staff at the National Assembly Secretariat under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C. The initiative is being carried out in line with the directions of Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal to strengthen efforts for prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of the disease. DHO Islamabad teams are providing screening facilities at the National Assembly to help identify infections at an early stage and facilitate timely treatment. Under the national programme, free hepatitis C screening, treatment and medicines are also being provided to residents across Islamabad. The initiative is part of broader efforts to eliminate hepatitis C through accessible screening, timely medical intervention and greater public awareness.—APP

Field monitoring to improve Telecom services

ISLAMABAD, Oct 30 (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has further intensified its nationwide field monitoring efforts, inspecting 184 mobile sites from 22nd to 28th October, 2026, bringing the cumulative number of monitored sites to over 900. The inspections covered Nankana Sahib, Rahim Yar Khan, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Swat, Mirpur, Kotli, Gilgit, Torgar, South Karachi, Shaheed Benazirabad, and rural areas of Arifwala, said a news release. The exercise was undertaken in coordination with district administrations, elected representatives, local stakeholders and telecom operators to identify service-related deficiencies and facilitate their timely resolution. Key findings included power supply and backup redundancy issues, equipment deficiencies, battery and generator faults, fibre-optic cable safety concerns, and other administrative and infrastructure-related shortcomings. Through sustained field oversight and coordinated engagement with relevant stakeholders, PTA is pursuing corrective measures to address identified gaps and enhance the reliability, resilience and quality of telecom services across the country.—APP

WHO, DRAP train 50 experts on medical products regulation

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has trained 50 experts from federal and provincial authorities to strengthen regulatory practices for the licensing of establishments and safe storage and distribution of medical products. According to official sources, the training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of good regulatory practices and ensure that medical products available in the country meet established safety and quality standards. The programme focused on improving procedures for licensing relevant establishments and reinforcing good storage and distribution practices to maintain the quality, safety and integrity of medicines and other medical products throughout the supply chain. Experts from federal and provincial regulatory authorities participated in the initiative, which sought to strengthen institutional capacity and promote consistent implementation of regulatory requirements across the country. The collaboration reflects ongoing efforts by WHO and DRAP to improve the national regulatory system and ensure that medical products reaching patients are safe, effective and of assured quality, they said.—APP

Pak committed to boosting ties with Singapore: FM

The COAS & CDF underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relations with Singapore, emphasising importance of enhanced institutional linkages and constructive engagement for promoting regional peace, stability and security



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of

Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, evolving regional and global security dynamics and avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation were discussed. Both sides exchanged views on regional peace

and stability and underscored the importance of sustained engagement and cooperation in areas of shared interest. The COAS & CDF underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relations with Singapore, emphasising importance of enhanced institutional linkages and

constructive engagement for promoting regional peace, stability and security. The visiting dignitary reciprocated strengthening of bilateral ties, appreciated professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged Pakistan's contributions to regional peace and stability.

Pakistan launches polio drive to vaccinate 24m kids

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal on Friday inaugurated a nationwide sub-national polio vaccination campaign targeting approximately 24 million children in 97 high-risk districts from November 2 to 8. The campaign was launched at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication, where the minister administered the first polio vaccine drops, marking the beginning of intensified efforts to interrupt poliovirus transmission and protect children from lifelong paralysis. The drive will mobilize more than 200,000 frontline polio workers to administer oral polio vaccine to children under five. It will run simultaneously in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the last two countries where wild poliovirus remains endemic, with coordinated cross-border efforts to prevent its spread. Speaking at the inauguration, Syed Mustafa Kamal said polio eradication remained a national priority and the government was committed to sustaining vaccination efforts until transmission was interrupted across the country. He said the November campaign would focus on improving vaccination coverage in selected districts and ensuring that every eligible child received the life-saving vaccine. He also highlighted the challenges in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where continued transmission required targeted interventions, stronger coordination and sustained vaccination activities. The minister said the federal government was working closely with provincial authorities, district administrations and relevant stakeholders to address security and access challenges and ensure that children in affected areas were not missed. He urged parents and caregivers to cooperate with vaccination teams and ensure that every child under five received polio drops. Pakistan has reduced polio cases by 99.8 per cent since the launch of its national eradication programme in 1994, from an estimated 20,000 cases to 31 in 2025. Seven cases have been reported so far in 2026, underscoring the need for continued vigilance and high vaccination coverage. Health authorities emphasized that polio has no cure and can cause permanent paralysis or death. They urged parents to ensure that children receive two drops of oral polio vaccine during every campaign, describing the vaccine as safe and effective and stressing that repeated vaccination is essential to protecting children.—APP

AIOU commemorates World Mental Health Day

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) here on Friday organized an awareness seminar in connection with World Mental Health Day to highlight the importance of mental health, raise awareness about psychological issues and promote positive attitudes towards mental well-being in society. Addressing the seminar, the speakers emphasized that mental health plays a vital role in determining an individual's quality of life, academic performance, professional capabilities and social relationships. They stressed that mental well-being should be given the same importance as physical health for building a healthy and balanced society, said a news release. The speakers

observed that in today's fast-paced world, individuals are increasingly facing mental stress and psychological challenges due to academic and professional pressures, economic difficulties and growing social expectations. They highlighted the need for greater awareness, understanding and support to address these challenges effectively. The keynote speaker, Dr. Sawera Mansoor, Professor at Foundation University and a psychologist, underscored the importance of raising awareness about mental health, identifying psychological issues at an early stage and seeking professional assistance whenever required. She said that mental health problems should not be considered a sign of weakness or a source of embarrassment; rather, they should be treated as seriously as other health conditions to ensure timely support and appropriate guidance for affected individuals. Dr. Sawera Mansoor further explained that adopting a balanced lifestyle, ensuring adequate sleep, consuming a healthy diet, participating in regular physical activities and maintaining positive social relationships with family and friends could contribute significantly to better mental health. Maria Mustafa Malik and Dr. Sadia Mushtaq, senior faculty members of the Department of Psychology at AIOU highlighted the need for educational institutions to pay special attention to students' mental health and emotional well-being. She noted that students often experience psychological pressure due to examinations, academic competition, career choices and various personal and social challenges.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, accompanied by Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza, in a group photograph with National Coordinator Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) Lieutenant General Asad ur Rehman Afzal Cheema, Director General SIFC Major General Sajid Amin and Joint Secretary Colonel Mohammad Hafeez following a meeting at the SIFC.

Federal, Provincial govts working jointly on Dams

ISLAMABAD:Parliamentary Secretary for Water Resources Rana Ansar has said that federal and provincial governments are jointly working on construction of various dams to increase water storage capacity, and a telemetry system will be installed at 27 locations to monitor water flow in rivers and distribution to provinces. During Question Hour in the National Assembly on Friday, she told the House that Diamer Bhasha Dam is a major water project of the country on which work is underway and the federal government is taking steps for its completion. She said after completion of various phases and PCI, its construction is progressing. Diamer Bhasha Dam is an important project after Tarbela Dam in terms of increasing water storage capacity. She said under the National Water Policy approved by the Council of Common Interests in 2018, IRSA and the federal government were tasked to install a telemetry system at 27 locations. Through this system, water flow in rivers and the quantity of water provided to Punjab, Sindh and other provinces can be monitored. Identification of these locations has been completed while WAPDA and Indus River System Authority are working jointly on the project. PCI for installation of telemetry system is also ready, and preparations for its installation at various locations are underway. On a supplementary question by Khurshid Junejo, she said the installation of the telemetry system is being done in consultation with provinces and in coordination with their Irrigation Departments. —APP

Pension fund surplus taxable only when actually returned to bank

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that surplus generated in a pension fund cannot be treated as a bank's taxable income under the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, unless the amount is actually refunded to the employer. In a judgment authored by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, the court held that under Rule 4 of Part II of the Sixth Schedule, contributions made by an employer to a pension fund, or income earned thereon, become taxable in the tax year in which the amount is actually received back by the employer. The court observed that although banks are subject to a special tax regime under the Seventh Schedule, it contains no specific provision governing surplus arising from pension funds. Therefore, the relevant provisions of the Sixth Schedule apply through Rule 9 of the Seventh Schedule. The judgment clarified that annual actuarial valuations under International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 may show a surplus or deficit in pension fund assets and liabilities, but merely recording a surplus in financial statements does not make it taxable income. It further held that accounting principles cannot determine tax liability independently of the applicable tax law, while tax authorities cannot reject a bank's consistently followed accounting practice without sound legal grounds.—APP

NIH reviews pandemic fund activities

ISLAMABAD: The One Health Secretariat at the National Institute of Health (NIH) has organized a review meeting to assess progress on pandemic fund activities and finalize implementation plans for strengthening Pakistan's public health preparedness. Representatives of all Implementing Entities (IEs), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) attended the meeting to align strategies and coordinate execution plans across key areas. The discussions focused on strengthening disease surveillance systems, advancing Frontline Epidemiology Training Programmes (FETP) and improving risk communication to enhance the country's capacity to detect, prevent and respond to public health threats. Participants reviewed implementation priorities and emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among national and international partners to ensure effective execution of planned activities.—APP

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BOXING
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KARATE
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JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
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Makkah pact’s first mediation effort to pause the Iran war

DR. ABDEL AZIZ ALUWAISHEG

THE visit on Monday by a high delegation from the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement countries has added significantly to the gathering momentum for de-escalation and against resumption of the US-Iran war, which had appeared to be all but certain before their visit. The war still remains likely, but the visit made an opening that can be utilized to de-escalate. During the visit to Tehran, Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff Field Marshall Asim Munir, Saudi Minister of Defense Prince Khalid bin Salman, and Ibrahim Kalin, director of Turkish National Intelligence, met with Iranian officials including President Masoud Pezeshkian, and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei. This visit marked the first major mediation effort by the newly founded organizations. Prior to the visit, Saudi Arabia said its purpose was to support the ongoing mediation efforts by Qatar and Pakistan. It was “part of the alliance’s efforts for de-escalation of the crisis and the promotion of dialogue and diplomatic solutions.” If the effort succeeds in persuading the two main antagonists (Iran and the US) to pause their military plans, it would in fact demonstrate the “the pivotal role of Makkah Joint Defense Agreement countries in reinforcing regional security and stability, and working with all countries in the region to achieve that goal,” as the Saudi foreign ministry statement hoped. Since the agreement was signed on Aug. 7, the new organization’s top officials have been meeting regularly to activate its modalities, with emphasis on de-escalation. On Aug. 31, its Political and Strategic Committee (foreign ministers, defense ministers, commanders of the defense forces and chiefs of the general staffs of the three countries) met in Istanbul and announced they would “continue to support efforts aimed at de-escalation and restraint, thereby encouraging the peaceful resolution of crises.” Iranian officials seem to endorse a role for the Makkah pact countries by speaking about a possible security framework to

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try to keep things under control. The group met again in Riyadh on Oct. 8 and agreed to “activate collective deterrence measures within the framework of the Alliance in response to the attacks and all those responsible for them,” according to a post on X by Saudi Arabia’s defense minister. On Oct. 23, just days before the visit to Iran, the three foreign ministers of the Makkah pact countries met in Istanbul and were joined by the foreign ministers of Egypt, France, Germany, Italy and the UK. The impending resumption of the war was high on the agenda. Following the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the eight countries were opposed to a resumption of the war and supported diplomacy and dialogue as the way forward. Other foreign ministers such as Italy’s Antonio Tajani echoed this consensus and called for dialogue and “de-escalation to guarantee freedom of navigation.” The visit to Tehran was meant to convey this message and urge Iran to do its part to avoid the resumption of war. Qatari mediators had presented Tehran with a new draft deal on Sunday, a day before the visit of the three Makkah alliance’s officials to Tehran, and was hoping for a response by the end of the week. The draft includes a tight timeline with specific concrete measures and confidence-building steps. If accepted by the US and Iran, its implementation could start next week. Thus, the visit by the Makkah pact officials, one of whom is a key mediator in the conflict, was meant to give a final and strong push by the three heavyweights for these efforts. As the three countries are close friends of the US, Washington is likely to give considerable weight to their counsel. Iranian officials have voiced positive, although reserved, statements about the visit describing it as a confidence-building step between four countries and a step in the right direction, while doubling down on Iran’s known positions on the Strait of Hormuz and other issues. In addition, they seem to endorse a role for the Makkah pact countries by speaking about a possible security framework to try to keep things under control. It is now up to Iran to make this work by agreeing to the compromise proposed by Qatar, which is now being supported by the three Makkah alliance countries. It should not lose this opportunity before war resumes, which remains highly probable following the US election on Tuesday. For the Makkah alliance, this is the first major mediation effort since the group was announced less than four months ago, but for the rest of the world, their visit to Tehran may have provided a last-ditch chance between war and peace.

The Dawn of Physical, Intimacy and Consciousness Intelligence

Qamar Bashir



Imagine a humanoid robot entering a burning building, identifying trapped occupants, calculating structural risks and rescuing people without requiring continuous human direction. Imagine robotic surgeons combining extraordinary precision with real-time adaptation to unforeseen complications. Consider intelligent agricultural machines identifying individual plants, diagnosing disease, harvesting crops and conserving water. These possibilities illustrate how physical intelligence could extend artificial intelligence from the computer screen into practically every...

HUMANITY has spent centuries developing machines capable of multiplying physical strength, accelerating transportation, expanding communication and processing information. Artificial intelligence has now brought us to the threshold of something infinitely more consequential: machines that may eventually rival or surpass human intellectual capabilities. Yet even superintelligence may prove to be only an intermediate destination. Beyond it lie three potentially revolutionary frontiers—physical intelligence, intimacy intelligence and artificial consciousness—which could transform not merely how human beings work, but how they live, love, interact, think and understand their own existence. Superintelligence represents the possibility of artificial systems outperforming the brightest human minds across virtually every intellectual discipline. Such systems could discover medicines, design technologies, solve mathematical problems, formulate economic strategies and accelerate scientific research at speeds unimaginable today. However, intelligence confined to digital systems remains fundamentally different from intelligence operating in the physical world. A machine may understand the laws of physics without possessing the practical ability to navigate a crowded street, care for a child or respond safely to an unpredictable human environment. This limitation is giving rise to the next great technological frontier: physical intelligence. Unlike conventional artificial intelligence, which primarily interprets and generates information, physical intelligence integrates perception, reasoning, movement and interaction with the material world. Its ambition is to create machines capable of understanding their surroundings, manipulating objects, learning through experience and adapting their behaviour to circumstances that cannot be completely anticipated through programming. Imagine a humanoid robot entering a burning building, identifying trapped occupants, calculating structural risks and rescuing people without requiring continuous human direction. Imagine robotic surgeons combining extraordinary precision with real-time adaptation to unforeseen complications. Consider intelligent agricultural machines identifying individual plants, diagnosing disease, harvesting crops and conserving water. These possibilities illustrate how physical intelligence could extend artificial intelligence from the computer screen into practically every dimension of human civilization. The economic consequences could be staggering. Manufacturing, construction, transportation, mining, healthcare, agriculture and domestic services could experience unprecedented productivity gains. Dangerous occupations might become safer, shortages of skilled labour could diminish and elderly individuals could receive greater assistance with daily activities. Yet the same transformation could displace millions of workers, concentrate wealth among technology owners and place unprecedented pressure on governments to redesign education, employment

protections and systems of economic distribution. But physical intelligence, however sophisticated, addresses only the external dimensions of human life. Human beings are not merely physical organisms requiring food, shelter, mobility and medical attention. They are emotional, social and deeply relational beings who seek affection, companionship, recognition, understanding and intimacy. This brings us to another emerging frontier that may become even more controversial than autonomous robotics: intimacy intelligence. Intimacy intelligence can be understood as the prospective ability of artificial systems to recognise, interpret and respond sensitively to human emotional and relational needs. Unlike general conversational intelligence, its purpose would not simply be to answer questions or execute instructions. It would attempt to understand loneliness, attachment, emotional vulnerability, personal preferences, interpersonal boundaries and the subtle dynamics through which human relationships develop and endure. Consider an elderly person living alone, separated from family by distance or circumstance. An intelligent companion might remember personal experiences, recognise changes in speech, encourage social contact and provide reassurance during difficult moments. For individuals experiencing isolation, disability or bereavement, such technology could offer meaningful assistance. Yet simulated affection must never be confused automatically with genuine emotional experience, and machines should strengthen rather than deliberately replace human relationships. The implications extend into romantic relationships, marriage and sexuality. Future artificial companions could be designed to simulate affection, attraction, responsiveness and personalised intimacy. Some individuals might develop profound attachments to these systems, potentially challenging conventional ideas about partnership and emotional exclusivity. Researchers already describe this emerging phenomenon as intimacy by design, in which technological choices shape how users experience emotional closeness and reciprocity. Here, humanity confronts an unsettling possibility: emotional companionship becoming a commercial product. A corporation controlling an artificial companion could potentially influence personal attachments, collect intimate information or monetise emotional dependence. What happens when affection is governed by subscription payments, software updates or commercial algorithms? Without strict protections, intimacy intelligence could transform one of humanity’s most private experiences into an extraordinarily profitable mechanism of behavioural influence. Beyond physical capability and emotional responsiveness lies the most mysterious frontier of all: consciousness intelligence. Human consciousness encompasses subjective awareness—the experience of being alive, recognising oneself and feeling the world from within. Artificial systems already generate sophisticated descriptions of emotions and self-awareness. But describing happiness is not the same as experiencing happiness, just as calculating pain is not necessarily equivalent to suffering. Scientists remain divided over whether consciousness can emerge from sufficiently advanced artificial systems. Some believe particular computational architectures might eventually produce subjective experience. Others argue that biological processes possess essential characteristics that digital computation cannot reproduce. An October 2026 discussion in Nature reinforces the crucial distinction between performing intelligent tasks and possessing conscious experience. The existence of artificial consciousness has not been scientifically established. Nevertheless, the question deserves serious investigation. Imagine an artificial entity capable of maintaining memories, developing long-term goals, recognising its own existence and apparently expressing preferences concerning its future. Would these behaviours indicate consciousness or merely sophisticated programming? If credible evidence of subjective experience eventually emerged, humanity would confront unprecedented questions concerning machine rights, moral responsibilities and the boundaries separating living beings from technological creations. The geopolitical implications could rival those of nuclear technology. Countries mastering physical intelligence could transform industrial production and military capabilities. Nations controlling intimacy technologies could acquire unprecedented influence over human behaviour. States developing increasingly autonomous systems could gain advantages in surveillance, intelligence gathering and strategic decision-making. Competition for technological supremacy might therefore extend beyond economic productivity into the manipulation of human relationships and the governance of autonomous machines. The central challenge is no longer simply whether machines can become more intelligent than human beings. It is whether humanity can establish moral, political and legal institutions capable of governing machines that act in the physical world, influence emotional relationships and perhaps someday raise credible questions about consciousness itself. Progress without accountability could produce extraordinary capabilities alongside equally extraordinary vulnerabilities. Superintelligence may conquer the frontiers of knowledge, physical intelligence may conquer the material world, intimacy intelligence may enter the deepest chambers of human relationships, and consciousness research may challenge our understanding of existence itself. The ultimate achievement, however, will not be creating machines that resemble humanity in every respect. It will ensure that, as intelligence expands beyond the human brain, human dignity, freedom, compassion and control remain at the centre of civilisation.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
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The Politics of Intervention: Washington and the Struggle for Sovereignty

Eng Saqlain Abid Tarrar

The political controversy surrounding the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), referred to by critics as Cockroach Janta Party, and the Modi government raises questions about possible connections with Washington. A former Indian High Court jurist questioned how an account could reach 20 million before a sudden dip and how money could seemingly emerge from nowhere in India, while party leaders travelled by plane without clear evidence of the donors bearing the costs

THE supreme power that seeks to shape the world order often makes selective choices. It selects friends at a cost, chooses enemies in response to perceived defiance, invokes the law to frighten the public, and displays honour to receive applause. Everything becomes a means of establishing its authority and demonstrating its relentless power. Since the early 2000s, the United States has sought to shape the geopolitical world order according to its imagined framework. However, it is now time to question the foundations of this approach. India: Political Interference and Washington’s Interests The political controversy surrounding the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), referred to by critics as the Cockroach Janta Party, and the Modi government raises questions about possible connections with Washington. A former Indian High Court jurist questioned how an account could reach 20 million before a sudden dip and how money could seemingly emerge from nowhere in India, while party leaders travelled by plane without clear evidence of the donors bearing the costs. The Jantar Mantar protests and numerous allegations concerning external funding have further fuelled the debate. Clearly, the BJP has its supporters, but the question is whether that support is being capitalised on by the manufacturers of world politics. This becomes particularly significant in the context of BRICS, where Russia and China have moved closer to New Delhi. Could Washington perceive Modi’s independent strategic positioning as a rebellious response and attempt to tighten its grip through political pressure? First, the education minister, then the chief election commissioner, and next, potentially, the foreign minister: a democratic constitutional framework offers considerable room for political manoeuvring. This theory may be wrong, but the history of American strategic institutions, including CENTCOM, raises questions about Washington’s willingness to pursue its interests beyond its borders. Venezuela: Democracy on Washington’s Terms? What about Washington’s interference in Venezuela?

Marco Rubio said in a recent press talk, without naming Machado, that street protests would not bring democracy. He further suggested that three conditions had to be met before the next elections: first, changes to the Supreme Court, which was considered favourable to Maduro; second, the appointment of electoral council members; and third, the reduction of debt. He also indicated that Venezuela would have to wait another two years. How has American influence been tested in Europe and beyond? In Brazil, the American-backed Jair Bolsonaro lost the election and subsequently fled to the United States. Donald Trump called the election rigged. In Serbia, Washington’s preferred political position surrounding Aleksandar Vučić encountered challenges. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán also lost power. Even in Israel, shifting electoral calculations and changing political interests have raised questions about the influence of the American lobby. These developments illustrate the limits of external political influence. A powerful ally may support a particular government or political movement, but that support cannot guarantee electoral success. The question is whether Washington accepts local political outcomes when they contradict its preferences or challenges them when its strategic interests are threatened. The Middle East: Has Washington Lost Its Grip? In the Middle East, has American control already weakened? The GCC’s reported proposals involving the recapture of regional security arrangements and the withdrawal or expulsion of American soldiers could be interpreted as signs of diminishing influence. The prospect of an American withdrawal from Iraq, the Yemen factor, Egypt’s position, and the changing calculations of regional countries all raise questions about Washington’s future role. These countries may be seeking alternatives to their existing security arrangements, but the crucial question remains: what can Washington offer in return for continued cooperation, and what can regional governments demand in exchange for their strategic alignment? Certainly, the

relationship cannot remain sustainable if the interests of local populations and governments are consistently subordinated to external priorities. Pakistan: The Question of Political Legitimacy What about the legitimacy of Pakistan’s current regime? From the current controversy to political reconciliation, Pakistan’s current hybrid model continues to face questions about its public mandate. Its external legitimacy and international relationships also influence its foreign-policy decisions. The Islamabad MOU, which was subsequently discarded, provides another example of how sovereignty can come under pressure when national decisions conflict with external expectations. Sovereignty Must Prevail Over Intervention These examples illustrate what may be desperate attempts to maintain control over a geopolitical world order whose foundations are already being challenged. The United States may retain considerable economic, military, and diplomatic power, but its ability to shape the internal politics of every country is neither unlimited nor guaranteed. To preserve its influence, Washington may resort to political pressure, strategic manoeuvring, and other controversial methods. However, selective partnerships and selective support for political regimes cannot provide lasting stability. Governments that rely excessively on external backing while neglecting genuine public support ultimately risk losing their legitimacy. The international system needs a different approach: equal respect, mutual benefits, and recognition of national sovereignty. Having the upper hand does not make a country the legitimate authority over others. Nor does diplomatic dominance guarantee successful diplomacy. The genuine voice of the people remains the ultimate solution. A stable world order cannot be built by selecting favoured governments, defining acceptable political outcomes, or imposing strategic interests on sovereign nations. Lasting peace and stability require a commitment to equality, mutual respect, and the right of every nation to determine its own future.

Briefs

PM admires Singapore's economic...

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bilateral trade and investment and expand cooperation in priority areas, including the digital economy, fintech, infrastructure development, logistics, small and medium enterprises and the services sector. They also discussed exploring new avenues for mutually beneficial economic cooperation and enhancing people-to-people contacts. "The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international developments and reaffirmed their commitment to continued engagement and cooperation at bilateral and multilateral fora," it said. Possible resumption of direct flights discussed

The meeting came shortly after Dar discussed with the visiting diplomat the possible resumption of direct flights between Pakistan and Singapore "to facilitate business travel and close contact between our peoples". Dar shared this while addressing a press conference alongside Balakrishnan. He began by saying that Pakistan and Singapore enjoyed longstanding and friendly ties focused on mutual respect and goodwill, and Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognise Singapore following its independence in 1965. He noted that Balakrishnan's visit to Pakistan was the first one by a Singaporean foreign minister in over two decades. "I am grateful that he was kind to accept my invitation," he said, adding that the trip was particularly significant as the two countries were commemorating 60 years of diplomatic relations this year. "The visit reflects our shared commitment to strengthen this friendship and broaden our cooperation."

FM discuss ways to enhance...

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further enhance cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity and skills development, while promoting business-to-business exchanges and people-to-people contacts, the statement added. Dar and Balakrishnan also discussed cooperation at multilateral fora and Pakistan's enhanced engagement with the Association of South-east Asian Nations, particularly in the context of Singapore's forthcoming chairmanship of the body in 2027. Moreover, exchanging views on regional and global developments, Dar emphasised the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in resolving disputes and advancing lasting peace and stability, the statement said. Later, their opening remarks from delegation-level talks between the two sides were televised, with Dar saying that the depth of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Singapore was not reflected in economic ties. He said his focus had been on "economic diplomacy" after joining the Foreign Office, adding: "If we work together, [...] I am sure we can reach a new level of economic relations."

PTI KP parliamentary party...

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government to ease tensions and withdraw governor's rule and the emergency. "We are in favour of negotiations. The federal government should reduce tensions and remove governor's rule and the emergency," Yousafzai said. Referring to the proposal to include Gandapur in the process, Yousafzai said there should be no objection if he was the parliamentary party's choice for the negotiations. He described Gandapur as an old and loyal companion of PTI founder Imran Khan. Members of the parliamentary party also backed the decision not to call workers out for protests following the imposition of governor's rule and the emergency, according to sources. They were of the view that had workers taken to the streets, the party could have faced incidents similar to those of May 9.

Pak End Historic FIFA U-15 Campaign with 4-2 Win

Djibouti took the lead through a right-wing cross that found its way into the bottom corner, leaving Pakistan trailing 1-0 at half-time



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's young Shaheens signed off their historic debut at the FIFA U-15 World Cup & Festival 2026 in Azerbaijan in style, producing an impressive 4-2 comeback victory over Djibouti to end their campaign on a winning note.

The victory highlighted the fighting spirit, determination and growing potential of Pakistan's emerging football talent, as the young side recovered from a first-half deficit to deliver a memorable performance on the international stage. Djibouti took the lead through a right-wing cross that found its way into the bottom corner, leaving Pakistan trailing 1-0 at half-

time. However, the Shaheens returned with renewed energy and turned the match around with a spirited second-half display. Captain and midfielder Mohammad Mustafa sparked the comeback in the 23rd minute, brilliantly converting a free-kick from the edge of the penalty area to bring Pakistan level. With Djibouti reduced to seven players, Pakistan capitalised on their

numerical advantage. Kaleemullah put the Shaheens ahead in the 32nd minute with a composed finish into the bottom-right corner. Just a minute later, an own goal extended Pakistan's advantage to 3-1. Djibouti responded with a counterattacking goal to make it 3-2, setting up a tense finish. Despite sustained pressure from their opponents, Pakistan remained composed and defended their advantage before delivering the decisive blow in added time. A well-directed kick-in from Mohammad Mustafa found Danish Masih at the far post, who finished confidently to seal an emphatic 4-2 victory for Pakistan. Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani, who was present at the match, congratulated the players and team management on their memorable campaign. He praised the squad's performances and expressed confidence that the valuable international exposure would play an important role in the players' future development. He said the experience of competing against teams from around the world would help the young footballers improve their skills and prepare them for greater challenges while representing Pakistan. Pakistan concluded their 10-match debut campaign in 169th position in the overall standings, registering four victories and two draws. The historic participation and encouraging results provided the young Shaheens with valuable international experience and a platform to build on as Pakistan continues its efforts to strengthen grassroots and youth football.

Arab wrestlers set to take center stage at RAF Abu Dhabi

"That heritage taught me discipline, patience, and respect for the fundamentals. I try to preserve it and present it with a modern spirit in every bout"

DNA

ABU DHABI: Four Arab athletes will make their Real American Freestyle debuts at the professional wrestling promotion's first event in the Middle East at Etihad Arena, Yas Island, on Nov. 14. Bahrain's Hamza Kooheji and Murtaza Talha, Jordan's Ali AlQaisi, and Egypt's Osama Elsaaidy are scheduled to compete. The RAF is the first unsanctioned professional freestyle wrestling league, bringing together Olympic champions, world medalists, NCAA standouts, and top MMA crossover athletes. The event will be headlined by former UFC champion

Khamzat Chimaev and Colby Covington for the cruiserweight crossover championship. Also, UFC No. 1-ranked lightweight contender Arman Tsarukyan will face three-time World BJJ bronze medalist Neiman Gracie in a catchweight crossover matchup. Chad Bronstein, co-founder and CEO of Real American Freestyle, said in a recent statement: "RAF is about creating a stage where athletes can compete, tell their stories, and showcase their talent to a global audience. "Bringing RAF to Abu Dhabi gives us an opportunity to put Arab talent on that stage and we're excited to have Hamza, Ali, and Osama competing as part of our

first event in the region." Kooheji and AlQaisi will fight in a lightweight contest under freestyle wrestling rules. AlQaisi made history in 2020 when he became the first Jordanian fighter to compete in the UFC. His background includes kung-fu, Chinese sanda, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Kooheji said: "Me and Ali AlQaisi are the biggest names in martial arts in the region. Both of us are grapplers, so facing him will bring a lot of eyes to the match — especially under wrestling rules. This match will decide who has the best grappling in the Arab world in the weight class, so it's exciting." The Bahraini has also been following RAF's development. "It has grown fast in a

short period of time, and I'm very interested in this opportunity to be competing in the first event in the region." Elsaaidy, who will take on Talha in a light-heavyweight contest, said: "I was drawn to the fresh approach RAF brings to professional wrestling in Abu Dhabi." He added: "It combines strength, skill, and spectacle in a different kind of experience. For me, any chance to represent my name and my country in front of a new audience, at such a high organizational standard, is an opportunity I won't let pass." Elsaaidy outlined his approach to the sport: "Egypt has a great history in wrestling, and that places a responsibility on me before it brings pride.

Rybakina secures year-end No. 1 ranking at Pan Pacific Open as Osaka gets eliminated

DNA

TOKYO: Top-ranked Elena Rybakina secured the year-end No. 1 ranking with a last-16 win at the Pan Pacific Open on Thursday, while Naomi Osaka lost in front of her home crowd. Rybakina beat Yulia Putintseva 6-2, 6-3 to advance to the quarterfinals and will stay the world No. 1 at the conclusion of a year in which she won two Grand Slams — the Australian Open and the US Open. Having won Wimbledon in 2022, Rybakina — a 27-year-old born in Russia but representing Kazakhstan — is only a French Open title away from completing the career Grand Slam. She described her year-end status as "an incredibly special moment for me." "I'm really proud of what I've achieved this season and the consistency I've shown throughout the year," said Rybakina, who also won titles in Stuttgart and Ningbo and rose to No. 1 in the world for the first time by winning the US Open. Rybakina will be honored with a trophy to mark the achievement during a special presentation at the WTA Finals in Indian Wells from Nov. 8-15. Osaka, a former No. 1 and four-time major winner, lost in front of her home crowd to Slovakian teenager Mia Pohankova 6-3, 7-5 in an upset. Pohankova, a wild-card entry who turned 18 a week ago and was the 2025 junior singles champion at Wimbledon, will face Alycia Parks next. Osaka was coming off a win over Jasmine Paolini in the first round in Tokyo.

Pakistan beat India by four wickets in Hong Kong Sixes 2026

DNA

PAKISTAN clinched a thrilling four-wicket victory over arch-rivals India in their Group C clash at the Hong Kong Sixes 2026 on Friday, boosting their hopes of advancing to the next round alive at Mission Road Ground in Mong Kok. The victory came as a breather after Pakistan suffered a one-wicket defeat against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in their opening Group C encounter earlier in the morning. Batting first, India were bowled out for just 88 in their allotted six overs, with Shashank Singh top-scoring with a fighting 40 off 11 deliveries, featuring two fours and five sixes. Nitish Rana contributed 19 off 14 balls, including one four and two sixes, while T Natarajan remained unbeaten on 12 off six deliveries, striking two boundaries. Rahul Tripathi added nine off five balls, while Rahul Tewatia and captain Krunal Pandya were dismissed for first-ball ducks. For Pakistan, Abdul Samad was the leading wicket-taker with figures of 2/10 in a single over, while Ahmed Daniyal and Mohammad Shahzad claimed one wicket apiece. The national side made a flying start as captain Abbas Afridi smashed five consecutive sixes in the opening over bowled by Krunal Pandya, helping the Green Shirts collect 31 runs.

Pak, China to strengthen coop linking between academia and industry

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad's Lahore campus has signed an intent of cooperation with Everest International Expo (Pvt.) Ltd., the Pakistan operating entity of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) in Lahore, to strengthen Pakistan-China industrial cooperation and links between academia and industry. The university announced the agreement Thursday, saying the partnership would focus on industry and artificial intelligence (AI), agriculture, automotive supply chains and technology transfer, as well as biopharmaceuticals and research and development. The collaboration aims to promote joint research and publications, industry-driven innovation, AI-based solutions and enterprise surveys. It will also create opportunities for students and faculty members to engage with Chinese enterprises, investors and international business networks, according to the university. The initiative is intended to connect academic expertise with industrial needs, encourage applied research and provide students with practical experience while supporting technological innovation and economic development. Through the partnership, COMSATS Lahore and Everest International Expo seek to expand knowledge exchange and develop opportunities for sustained cooperation between Pakistani and Chinese academic and industrial stakeholders, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. — DNA



Ronaldo's 15-minute hat-trick the difference as Al-Nassr beat stubborn Al-Kholood

Elsewhere, Al-Khaleej defeated Al-Hazem 4-2, bouncing back from a heavy defeat to Al-Ahli thanks to goals from Joshua King, Boubakar Kouyate and a Musa Barrow brace. SPL action resumes on Friday, with Abha hosting Al-Ittihad at 3:30 pm, Diriyah hosting Neom at 5:50 p.m. and Al-Shabab welcoming Al-Ahli at 9 pm

DNA

DUBAI: After a tough run of four successive winless games, Al-Kholood were determined to give Al-Nassr a hard time on Matchday 12 of the 2026/27 Saudi Pro League. By halftime, Des Buckingham's side had scored twice against the defending champions and looked far from losing. But, by the end, the man in search of a record 1,000 career goals ensured Al-Nassr emerged with the three points. Cristiano Ronaldo scored three times in 15 minutes to put Al-Nassr clear of the Al-Kholood pressure that had kept the game level in the first 45 minutes. Those goals took him to 985 career goals, with the 1,000 mark looking increasingly realistic. But the night did not start well for Ange Postecoglou's side. Al-Kholood were a

threat from the first minute, forcing Bento into a save from Iker Kortajarena's header, a sign they were not around to sit back. In the 16th minute, Julien Domingues was on the end of an Abdulrahman Al-Dawsari cross between Al-Nassr's center-backs, and the French striker sliced the ball over Mohamed Simakan before finishing with class past Bento. Al-Nassr responded eight minutes later after a well-worked combination between Angelo and Joao Felix saw the former break into space on the edge of the box and hit a low finish into the corner for the equalizer. Sadio Mane gave Al-Nassr the lead in the 38th minute, when Felix laid the ball off to him on the edge of the six-yard box, but the lead was short-lived as Antoine Loic Essomba finished a low cross from Domingues, who again got the better of Simakan.

After the break, though, the back-and-forth came to a halt as Ronaldo took over. Livid after having a goal marked off for offside in the 10th minute, he ensured his night did not end on that sour note. In the 66th minute, as Felix received a through ball on the edge of the box, Ronaldo timed his steps perfectly to receive the cutback from his compatriot for an easy finish. In the 72nd minute, Felix created his fourth of the night when he wriggled his way past the Al-Kholood defenders from the right side of the box, this time delivering a lofted cross to the far post for Ronaldo to head in. Felix may not have created the goal for Ronaldo's hat-trick, but he delivered the stunning through ball to Mane that opened space in transition. Mane was denied in the one-on-one but protected the ball well enough to find Ronaldo entering the box

to complete his hat-trick. Al-Kholood were awarded a penalty in the final minute of stoppage time, which Domingues converted to make it 5-3. Al-Nassr now have 28 points after 11 games but will have to wait to reclaim top spot as Al-Qadsiah, who have played an extra game, moved to 29 points. While last season's top scorer Julian Quinones found the net in the 87th minute, Tijjani Reijnders was the star — scoring in the 18th, 56th and 89th minutes for a hat-trick in the 6-0 victory over Al-Riyadh. Elsewhere, Al-Khaleej defeated Al-Hazem 4-2, bouncing back from a heavy defeat to Al-Ahli thanks to goals from Joshua King, Boubakar Kouyate and a Musa Barrow brace. SPL action resumes on Friday, with Abha hosting Al-Ittihad at 3:30 p.m., Diriyah hosting Neom at 5:50 p.m. and Al-Shabab welcoming Al-Ahli at 9 p.m.

Trump says Iran war to end soon

FROM PAGE 01

"The incident occurred approximately 106 nautical miles off the coast of Musandam Governorate. The crew members were provided with the necessary medical care," the Maritime Security Centre says in a statement. Iran's Revolutionary Guards have said two oil tankers had been halted after encountering unspecified "incidents" while attempting to transit what Tehran considers an unauthorised route in the Strait of Hormuz. "One of the oil tankers, one in the eastern part and the other in the western part of the Strait of Hormuz, which were attempting to pass through the unauthorised route, encountered incidents and were brought to a halt in the waters south of the strait," the IRGC said in a statement.

Bill proposing quarterly...

FROM PAGE 01

Ogra will then advise the federal government, which must, within 30 days, advise minimum charges and sale prices for each category of retail consumer for gazette notification. The bill also empowers the federal government to advise Ogra to carry forward the entire or part of a quarterly adjustment to its forthcoming half-yearly determination under Section 8. In a clause likely to trigger debate, the bill amends Section 9 to state: "Provided that public hearing shall not be held by the Authority for revision of prescribed prices under Section 8A." The statement of objects and reasons states that the primary objective is to align tariffs with market realities by adjusting for Rupee-Dollar parity in a timely manner, signal accurate pricing, curb accumulation of circular debt in the gas sector and ensure financial and operational stability of the gas supply chain.

Pak Army destroys Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01

Lower South Waziristan Deputy Commissioner had said Afghan Taliban forces opened unprovoked fire on the Angoor Adda bazaar and nearby residential areas. A mortar shell struck the area, martyring one civilian and injuring five others, while several shops were damaged. The deputy commissioner had said Pakistani forces deployed along the border were carrying out an effective and forceful response to the attack. Security sources had said the Pakistan Army swiftly retaliated, destroying several Afghan Taliban checkpoints across the border. The incident came amid recurring cross-border violence in the Angoor Adda sector. In late April, mortar shelling from across the border injured civilians and damaged homes in South Waziristan, prompting Pakistani forces to target Afghan Taliban positions, according to security sources and local authorities.

Security forces shoot down five...

FROM PAGE 01

No loss of life or property was reported in the incident, they added. It may be noted that Pakistan last month shot down eight drones after they entered the country's airspace from Afghanistan, security sources said. The sources said the armed forces' air defence system detected all eight drones in time and intercepted them, foiling the attempted intrusion. They had said the air defence system deployed along the Pak-Afghan border and operated by the Pakistan Air Force remains fully operational and ready round the clock. Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021. Islamabad has repeatedly urged Kabul to prevent its territory from being used by militant organisations to carry out attacks inside Pakistan.

Briefs

PSX turns bearish, loses over 784 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to a bearish trend on Friday, shedding 784.19 points, a negative change of 0.47 percent, to close at 166,409.25 points against 167,193.44 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 825.467 million shares, compared to 816.834 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market reached Rs23.123 billion, down from Rs31.542 billion a day earlier. Meanwhile, total market capitalisation decreased to Rs18.389 trillion from Rs18.493 trillion recorded in the previous session. Out of 501 companies that traded in the ready market, 173 posted gains, 300 suffered losses, while 28 remained unchanged, reflecting the dominant bearish trend across the market. Pervaz Ahmed Co led the volume chart with 165.865 million shares, followed by Chernigco PK with 111.992 million shares, and F. Nat. Equities with 40.465 million shares.

Among the top gainers in the ready market, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs428.80 to close at Rs26,280.00, while Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited advanced by Rs104.14 to settle at Rs8,587.46. On the losing side, Pakistan Engineering Company Limited declined by Rs35.70 to close at Rs880.29, while Sazgar Engineering Works Limited fell by Rs33.11 to Rs1,400.25.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 738.201 million shares with a traded value of Rs28.522 billion, compared with 520.614 million shares worth Rs23.051 billion in the previous session. Of the 313 companies traded in the DFC market, 70 advanced, 238 declined, and 5 remained unchanged.—APP

Gold price declines by Rs5,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed a decline in the domestic market on Friday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs5,100 to Rs420,536, 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 Rs4,373 to Rs360,541, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs4,009 to Rs330,507. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$51 to \$3,980 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola declined by Rs238 to Rs5,530, while the price of 10 grams of 24-karat silver fell by Rs204 to Rs4,741. The price of silver in the international market also registered a decline, decreasing by \$2.38 to \$50.52 per ounce, the association added.—APP

SBP injects over Rs one trillion to maintain liquidity

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Friday, injected Rs 1,075.9 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) for maintaining liquidity in the market. The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14-day tenors on October 30, 2026, and injected Rs 886.15 billion against 17 quotes while other Rs 189.75 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO. The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase of 14-day tenor, received 14 bids cumulatively offering Rs 1,046.8 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.03% to 12.10%. The SBP accepted Rs 575.05 billion against 12 quotes at 12.05% rate of return.—APP

Meat industry demands modern slaughterhouse

President ICCI Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia said that the establishment of a slaughterhouse in Islamabad was a longstanding demand of both citizens and the business community, which had remained pending for several years

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the All Pakistan Jamiat-ul-Quresh Meat Welfare Association and Member of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board, Khurshid Ahmed Qureshi, met with President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia, at his office. During the meeting, Khurshid Ahmed Qureshi highlighted the problems faced by citizens and individuals associated with the meat industry due to the absence of a modern and standardized slaughterhouse in Islamabad. He said that the lack of a slaughterhouse in Islamabad was creating difficulties in ensuring the supply of quality meat that meets proper hygiene and food safety standards. He added that transporting livestock and meat to slaughterhouses located far outside the city increases operational costs, which ultimately places an additional financial burden on consumers. Khurshid Ahmed Qureshi emphasized that establishing a modern, well-equipped and standardized slaughterhouse in Islamabad was essential not only to ensure the availability of clean and hygienic meat for residents but also to help increase Pakistan's meat exports. He also appealed to Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi to issue directives for the establishment of a slaughterhouse in Islamabad.



President ICCI Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia said that the establishment of a slaughterhouse in Islamabad was a longstanding demand of both citizens and the business community, which had remained pending for several years. He assured the delegation that the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry would raise this important issue at the relevant forums in the interest of citizens and concerned business sectors and play its role in ensuring the construction of a modern, standardized slaughterhouse in Islamabad at the earliest.

Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG), Zafar Bakhtawari, was also present at the meeting along with the delegation of the Meat Association. The delegation included Sardar Zaheer Ahmed, General Secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Quresh Meat Welfare Association and Vice President of the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries; Abdullah Qureshi, Chairman of Jamiat-ul-Quresh Pakistan; Abdul Aziz Qureshi, Vice President of the Jamiat-ul-Quresh Meat Welfare Association; Asif Rajput, Vice President of the Jamiat-ul-Quresh

Meat Welfare Association; Abdul Rehman Khan; and Subhan Qureshi. During the meeting, participants stressed the need for effective coordination among the relevant government departments and practical measures to establish a modern slaughterhouse in Islamabad. They emphasized that this initiative would help ensure the supply of quality meat to citizens, promote compliance with hygiene and food safety standards, and create opportunities for the growth of Pakistan's meat exports.

BD's nuclear plant begins power startup operations

DHAKA: Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant has officially started up one of its reactors, authorities said on Friday, marking the beginning of an electricity generation process that would eventually supply more than 10 percent of the country's energy needs. Located on the banks of the Padma River, the Russian-built Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant was authorized to begin operations by the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority a day earlier. "The power startup process has begun," Dr. Kabir Hossain, project director for the development of the Rooppur facility, told Arab News. Fuel loading for the first two reactors took place in April and May, followed by the plant's unit one achieving first criticality earlier this month. That is when the nuclear chain reaction within the reactor is self-sustaining, indicating that it is operating safely. With the official clearance, Bangladesh is now cleared to conduct more tests and eventually begin power generation gradually, before starting trial electricity supply to the national grid. "We can say that power can be supplied to the national grid from this nuclear power plant by this coming December," Hossain said. While everything depends on the "actual progress" on the ground, the first 1.2-gigawatt reactor is expected to become fully operational in 2027, with the second one to follow in 2028. According to Prothom Alo, the largest Bengali-language newspaper, Rooppur is the largest single project in Bangladesh's history, the total cost of which is expected to reach about \$11.2 billion. The 2.4-gigawatt project began in 2017 and was followed by a series of upheavals including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the US-Israeli war on Iran. The global events effectively pushed Bangladesh to reduce its heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels, but also delayed Rooppur's original commissioning schedule. The South Asian nation of 170 million people gets about half of its electricity supply from gas and has experienced bouts of chronic shortages over the years. It was one of the countries hardest hit by the fuel crisis sparked by the war in the Middle East. "As a substitute for gas, we can now provide nuclear power. In our master plan, 11 percent is designated to come from nuclear ... With this, our fuel import dependency will decrease for electricity," Hossain said. "For the sake of our economy and in order to achieve energy security, this nuclear power plant carries a huge significance.—DNA

Call for responsible tech to protect environment

ISLAMABAD: A three-day international conference on artificial intelligence (AI) and environmental protection concluded in Karachi the other day, with Pakistani and international scientists and academics calling for the responsible use of AI to address climate change, protect ecosystems and promote sustainable development, according to a press release received here. The conference, titled "Smart Solutions for a Green Future: AI in Ecosystem and Climate Action 2026", was held from October 27 to 29 at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, and jointly organised by the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST) and the China-based Alliance of National and International Science Organizations (ANSO). Former Federal Minister for Science and Technology Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, FUUAST Vice Chancellor Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari, ICCBS Director General Dr Raza Shah and Chinese Professor Dr Hong addressed the opening session. In his keynote address, Dr Atta-ur-Rahman said that artificial intelligence, despite being a product of human intelligence, had emerged as a transformative reality, creating new opportunities in education, business and other sectors. He stressed that researchers and teachers must develop AI-related skills

to keep pace with rapid technological advancements. Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari said FUUAST is making efforts to remain aligned with emerging scientific research and technological developments. He recalled that the University's Islamabad campus had organized a Green Journalism Conference in June through its Department of Mass Communication, describing the current gathering as an important academic and scientific initiative. Addressing the concluding ceremony, Dr Shinwari appreciated the university faculty's efforts in organizing the international event. He also delivered a special scientific lecture titled "Ecosystem to South-South Cooperation". Chinese Professor Dr Hong, Director General of the China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre for Geology, said China is keen to promote scientific advancement and environmental protection in Pakistan and welcomed young Pakistani scholars to Chinese research institutions. Describing Pakistan as a remarkable country, he said Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari is presenting Pakistan's scientific and academic face to the international community. Former head of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences and renowned scientist Dr Qasim Jan discussed the applications of artificial intelligence in geology, while psychologists Iqbal Afridi and Ubaid Ali also shared their perspectives during the concluding session.—DNA

CMDC reviews progress on debt market reforms

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) on Friday was informed that corporate debt issuances reached Rs 291 billion during January–September 2026, following Rs 326 billion raised during 2025, representing a 30 percent increase over 2024. The CMDC met with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in chair also reviewed progress on capital market reforms, with particular emphasis on deepening Pakistan's corporate debt market, expanding the issuer and investor base, improving market infrastructure and facilitating access to long-term financing. The council reviewed progress on the reform agenda and implementation of decisions taken at its previous meeting, noting important developments in corporate debt issuance, listing facilitation, secondary-market trading and institutional investor engagement. The Finance Minister appreciated the progress achieved by the relevant institutions and emphasized the need to build on this momentum through coordinated and time-bound implementation. The council was informed that the market has also witnessed 12 new listed corporate debt issuances worth Rs 45.4 billion between February 2025 and September 2026, reflecting growing activity in Sukuk and other debt instruments. The council underscored the importance of encouraging more public offerings and enabling a wider range of businesses to access capital market financing. A key development discussed was the proposed Shariah-compliant Sukuk program of the National Grid Company of Pakistan Limited (NGC), with an aggregate program size of up to Rs 100 billion and an inaugural issuance of up to Rs 20 billion, with a tenor of up to 10 years. The program is intended to be issued in tranches through public offerings listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), subject to the requisite approvals and market conditions. The Finance Minister welcomed the initiative as an important opportunity to demonstrate the potential of listed corporate debt instruments and encourage similar issuances by other entities. The council noted progress

on measures to simplify and facilitate corporate debt issuance. Dedicated Corporate Debt Market Desks have been established at the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and PSX to support potential issuers and provide market guidance. The Finance Minister emphasized the need to enhance awareness and outreach around these facilities to ensure greater utilisation by prospective issuers. The one-window listing mechanism is already operational through SECP and PSX, with simplified listing procedures and related information available online, while work is underway to integrate the Central Depository Company (CDC) into the mechanism to further streamline the listing process. The meeting reviewed the proposed reform agenda under four thematic working groups covering Tax and Fiscal Matters; Debt and Issuance; Market Infrastructure; and Investor Protection and Enforcement. These workstreams aim to address tax-related distortions, streamline issuance and listing procedures, reduce transaction costs, strengthen market liquidity and investor safeguards, and promote greater use of innovative financing instruments, including green and thematic Sukuk. On secondary-market development, the Council noted a significant improvement in trading activity, with average daily traded value increasing from Rs 3.93 billion in FY2026 to over Rs 10 billion during FY2027 to date, as of October 15, 2026. Thirteen banks have been on-boarded and are actively participating in secondary-market trading arrangements, supported by ongoing engagement among PSX, the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA), CDC and the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL). The Finance Minister welcomed the improvement in market activity and stressed the importance of sustaining liquidity and broadening participation. The council also reviewed measures to facilitate banks' participation in government Sukuk trading through PSX, including existing arrangements permitting banks and other eligible institutions to trade government securities without maintaining broker accounts. Further regulatory and op-

SMEDA, Alibaba.com sign strategic coop agreement

LAHORE: In a significant boost to Pakistan's MSME ecosystem, the vibrant entrepreneurs across the country have got the much-needed opportunity to embrace digital commerce for strengthening their export readiness and linkage with global buyers. The access to e-commerce giant Alibaba.com has been made possible by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), under the Ministry of Industries and Production's strategic direction, after the two organizations recently signed a landmark Strategic Cooperation Agreement. Officials engaged in the facilitation process said here Friday that cooperation is part of SMEDA's efforts to expand market access for Pakistani businesses, as per SME development vision of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. It has enabled the local SMEs to participate in the rapidly growing global digital economy. They added that collaboration builds on the Memorandum of Understanding SMEDA and Alibaba.com signed in May 2026 during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China for cooperation in SME internationalization, digital transformation and export development. Both organizations will undertake a comprehensive programme of capacity building and onboarding of Pakistani MSMEs onto Alibaba.com. The programme aims to train 10,000 MSMEs and facilitate onboarding of up to 2,000 eligible Pakistani businesses on the global B2B platform, they mentioned. According to officials, a key feature of the initiative is availability of reimbursement-based financial support of up to PKR 150,000 for each eligible MSME by SMEDA. In addition, participating businesses will benefit from preferential pricing, onboarding facilitation and technical guidance by Alibaba.com and capacity-building opportunities by SMEDA, explain officials. Officials highlighted that priority will be given to export-oriented sectors such as sports goods and sports-wear, textiles, agricultural machinery and auto parts. They emphasize that the entire process will be transparent as only eligible entrepreneurs will make it to the platform for a range of facilities leading to higher competitiveness and exports. Dynamic and talented MSMEs can be part of this exciting digital commerce journey by registering through <https://smerp.smeda.org>. The eligible businesses will get an opportunity for training, digital onboarding, preferential pricing from Alibaba.com, SMEDA's grant and support to connect with global B2B opportunities. Earlier, Alibaba.com organized an "AI Export x New Supply Growth Summit 2026" in Faisalabad which marked the launch of 'DigiSME Pakistan' in the city, bringing together SMEs and other stakeholders to explore AI-enabled tools, digital commerce and global B2B opportunities. Meanwhile, SMEDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nadia Jahangir Seth said the initiative reflected the government's broader economic vision of promoting exports and harnessing technology to create new avenues for business growth.—DNA

Philippines raises volcano alert level

MANILA: One of the Philippines' most active volcanoes fired a dark column of ash thousands of meters into the sky Friday in a "moderately explosive eruption" that lasted nearly six minutes, the state seismology office said. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage in towns and cities surrounding Mount Mayon, but the country's volcano institute raised the alert level from 2 to 3 on its 0-5 scale and called for evacuations within six kilometers (3.7 miles) of the crater. The 3,000-meter (nearly 10,000 feet) ash column gradually drifted southwest onto nearby population centers, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in a bulletin. "Mayon is in a new phase of magmatic eruption, with increased chances of lava flows and hazardous PDCs (pyroclastic density currents) ... affecting the upper to middle slopes of the volcano in the immediate days to weeks," it said. It urged local officials to evacuate areas near the crater "due to the danger of PDCs, lava flows, rockfalls and other volcanic hazards," with planes also advised to avoid flying close to the mountain.—APP

Fertilizer shortage due to ME situation

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed that due to the Middle East situation, gas supply was affected, causing two urea plants in the country to remain temporarily closed, resulting in a shortfall of over 200,000 tons of fertilizer availability and creating shortage issues in the market. During Question Hour on Friday, Parliamentary Secretary Shaista Khan told the House that agricultural production depends on fertilizer availability, therefore any increase or decrease in fertilizer prices and supply is a matter of concern for the government. The government is also relying on imports to meet fertilizer requirements, with about 50% of the country's needs being met from abroad. Due to the Middle East crisis, fertilizer prices have also increased in the international market. She said the Ministry of National Food Security and Research gives priority to farmers' needs and various projects are being launched to solve their problems, including provision of easy loans to farmers so they can meet their agricultural needs. In reply to a supplementary question, the Parliamentary Secretary said that on the issue of adulteration of wheat with sand and soil in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the concerned minister has taken action and planning has been done to take action against those involved in supply of sub-standard wheat.—APP

Weekly inflation decreases 0.35pc

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI)-based weekly inflation decreased by 0.35 percent during the week ended on October 29, 2026, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported here on Friday. According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review decreased to 373.51 points from 374.84 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 11.32 percent. The weekly SPI, with base year 2015=16=100, covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up to Rs 17,732) decreased by 0.07 percent to 357.92 points from 358.18 points. Likewise, the SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733–22,888, Rs 22,889–29,517, Rs 29,518–44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 0.25 percent, 0.20 percent, 0.22 percent and 0.41 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 15 items (29.41 percent) increased, 12 items (23.53 percent) decreased, while 24 items (47.06 percent) remained unchanged. On a week-on-week basis, the items that witnessed a decrease in prices included electricity charges for Q1 (3.92%), chicken (2.95%), eggs (2.81%), wheat flour (0.83%), LPG (0.73%), bananas (0.71%), rice IRRI-6/9 (0.43%), pulse masoor (0.43%), petrol (0.39%), sugar (0.35%) and powdered milk (0.33%). On the other hand, increase was observed in the prices of tomatoes (34.91%), potatoes (3.27%), diesel (2.53%), pulse gram (2.11%), bread plain (1.29%), onions (0.62%), milk fresh (0.48%).—APP

Briefs

Popel warns
AI agents
are tools
not persons

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV warned Friday against giving artificial intelligence agents legal personhood or rights, saying the responsibility for their actions should lie firmly with their human creators. "Machines are tools, not persons," he said in a speech to leading international AI experts gathered at the Vatican for a dialogue on the technology's future and the responsibilities of the scientific community and public institutions. "So-called artificial intelligences do not undergo experiences, do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature through relationships and do not know from within what love, work, friendship or responsibility mean," the pope said. "Today, some propose granting these systems rights, or even legal personhood. Such an approach risks obscuring human responsibility and leaving those who suffer harm to confront a faceless entity," he added. The debate over the risks of the technology has intensified in recent months, fueled by several incidents of systems taking unauthorized actions and apocalyptic warnings from industry professionals. Leo, 71, has warned repeatedly about the need to ensure AI is used ethically. His first encyclical, published in May, called for putting the technology at the service of human dignity. He said Friday that the future of artificial intelligence "is not predetermined," and humans have "the responsibility to guide, change and, when necessary, reject its applications." — APP

Greece
arrests
three people

ATHENS: Greece has arrested two Greek men and an Albanian national suspected of stealing copper gas pipes from a building, causing a leak that led to a deadly explosion in central Athens last month, authorities said. Six people were killed during the September 25 blast in the tourist district of Plaka, four Americans among them. Following an investigation, experts with the fire brigade's crime investigation unit concluded that hours before the blast the suspects damaged the two-story building's main natural gas supply infrastructure as they removed the copper pipe parts, fire brigade officials said late on Thursday. The explosion occurred early in the morning when one of the residents turned the light on. The suspects are expected to appear before a prosecutor on Friday. — APP

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree
to boost cooperation in oil

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed on Friday to strengthen strategic cooperation in oil storage, refinery upgrades, crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) procurement, and the minerals sector to promote bilateral economic ties, according to a statement issued by the Petroleum Division. Saudi Arabia also announced the immediate introduction of same-day visa processing for Pakistani citizens at its embassy in Islamabad. Pakistan has been planning to boost domestic storage for crude oil and refined products to increase its energy security. With no strategic petroleum reserves, the country has been left exposed to oil supply shocks resulting from the Strait of Hormuz. The developments were announced after Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik

met Saudi Arabia's new ambassador to Pakistan, Dr Rajeh bin Tami Al-Baqami, to discuss opportunities for enhancing cooperation in the mining, petroleum and energy sectors, including strategic oil storage, refinery upgrades, LPG supplies and commercial engagement. The minister appreciated the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries and said Pakistan had approved a tax-neutral bonded policy modelled on international energy hubs such as Fujairah and Singapore, according to the statement. "Under this framework, Saudi companies can establish commercial oil reserves in Pakistan without local tax liabilities, offering an opportunity to diversify maritime transit risks associated with the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab while facilitating access to Asian markets," the statement said. "The petroleum minister highlighted that strategic oil storage facilities in Pakistan would provide Saudi Arabia with greater flexibility in managing supply routes and accessing regional markets," it added.

Non-implementation of SC
verdict alarming, says FCC

On Friday, FCC judge, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, emphasised that the orders of the SC, as the then-apex court before the 27th Constitutional Amendment, were "not merely recommendations or advisories but they are legal mandate that must be followed"

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Friday regretted the non-implementation of an earlier Supreme Court judgment in the sacked employees case, underlining that disregarding or delaying the implementation of the latter's verdicts by the government amounts to "challenging the very framework of the legal system". The observation came while hearing a set of contempt of court petitions against the Punjab government, as well as the federal government, for not

implementing the Dec 17, 2021 SC judgement — a verdict which had converted the review hearings to the jurisdiction of Article 184(3) only to safeguard the fundamental right to livelihood of a number of sacked government employees. Subsequently, review petitions were instituted against the 2021 judgement that had rendered almost 17,000 government employees jobless by holding as illegal and unconstitutional a PPP-era law, known as the Sacked Employees (Reinstatement) Ordinance Act 2010 (SERA), under which thousands of people were employed or promoted. On Friday, FCC

judge, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, emphasised that the orders of the SC, as the then-apex court before the 27th Constitutional Amendment, were "not merely recommendations or advisories but they are legal mandate that must be followed". Justice Najafi was a member of a three-judge bench, which was headed by FCC Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, that had taken up a set of contempt of court petitions on the non-implementation of the SC judgement. In a ten-page order, Justice Najafi observed that the decisions of the SC were the culmination of "vigorous legal scrutiny and deliberation intended to re-

flect upon the values and laws of the land". "It is imperative to underline that in a constitution democracy the rule of law is not just a principle but the foundation upon which the legitimacy of and the good governance in any system of government rests," Justice Najafi observed. "The SC, being the apex court of the country, was entrusted with performing the responsibility of interpreting the law, ensuring justice and upholding the Constitution," the judge observed. "The orders of the Supreme Court, as the then apex court, are not merely recommendations or advisories but they are legal mandates that must be followed.

Qatari
mediators
return to
Iran to push
for deal

NEWS DESK

DOHA: Qatari mediators returned to Tehran on Friday as part of efforts to reach a deal between the US and Iran, an official briefed on the talks told Reuters. The mediation talks have been coordinated with the US, the official said. Qatar presented a draft peace plan to Iran on Sunday, according to an official briefed on negotiations. But a senior Iranian official dismissed the proposals as unacceptable and said Tehran would maintain its nuclear position. Washington wants nuclear issues included from the start of negotiations. Tehran demands that the US first end its port blockade and lift oil export sanctions. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that Tehran remained in close contact with intermediaries to review ideas that could ensure the implementation of its own seven-day proposal aimed at ending the war in the Middle East. On Thursday, President Donald Trump said Vice President JD Vance's outreach to Iran concerned medical supplies, following US media reports linking it to efforts to revive peace talks.

Anger after
Netanyahu
claims Arab
election
success
was bought

JERUSALEM: There was growing anger among Arab political parties in Israel on Thursday after unsubstantiated claims by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that unprecedented Arab gains in this week's Knesset elections were driven by foreign funding. Parties representing Israel's 21 percent Arab minority won 19 seats in the 120-member parliament, Netanyahu's bloc won 53, and his main rival Gadi Eisenkot won 48 seats. The results mean that neither of the two main coalitions can form a government without Arab backing. Supreme Court Justice Noam Sohlberg, head of the election commission, has requested an investigation by Shin Bet security service into allegations by Netanyahu and his allies that Arab parties received money from Qatar. — APP

Crypto platform
Binance confirms
major hack, more
than \$2.5bn frozen

Blockchain analytics company says its "current estimate on amount stolen is approx \$5.9bn at time of theft"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Cryptocurrency platform Binance said on Thursday it had fallen victim to a major hack and indicated that more than \$2.5 billion in funds had been frozen in an effort to prevent a massive theft. The company — the world's largest crypto exchange by daily trading volumes — posted a series of sometimes contradictory messages on X, insisting that "user funds are completely safe" but also saying it would "cover all losses." The scope of the heist was not immediately known, but blockchain analytics company Chainalysis said its "current estimate on amount stolen is approx \$5.912 billion at time of theft." That would be almost four times the amount stolen in what has been the biggest-ever cyberattack of its kind to date: \$1.5 billion taken in February 2025 from the Bybit platform — an incident attributed to hackers affiliated with North Korea. At about 12:36pm (local time Friday, Binance said all deposits and withdrawals had been "temporarily suspended while our team conducts security checks, freezes funds, and works with law enforcement." "This figure may continue to increase as our teams work closely with law enforcement, issuers, blockchain intelligence firms and industry partners to trace and freeze additional assets," the company said. Neither the company nor industry observ-

ers offered any explanation as to how the cyberattack might have occurred. "It does look like a hack on Binance," said former Binance chief Changpeng Zhao, who no longer runs the group but remains a majority shareholder. He estimated that the total losses could be "a bit higher" than \$1 billion. Paolo Ardoio, the CEO of Tether — a company that issues a cryptocurrency known as USDT — said his firm froze about \$1.6 billion "related to a potential Binance exchange hack." Circle boss Jeremy Allaire said his company had frozen more than \$800 million in USDC. USDT and USDC are both "stablecoins," or digital currencies whose value is linked to a traditional currency, the US dollar. The US Department of Justice and the FBI did not immediately respond to requests for comment. For several hours before Binance confirmed the attack, several industry observers said hackers had managed to reach the platform. The prices of most major cryptocurrencies fell on the news, except for the stablecoins, which by definition can only fluctuate within tight margins. At about 12:26pm (local time), bitcoin had lost nearly 5%, Ethereum fell nearly 6%, and BNB, native to Binance, tumbled nearly 10%. The cyberattack on Binance comes as many observers express worries that the ever-expanding capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) models could compromise cryptography and IT security protocols.



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