LAHORE - KARACHI - ISLAMABAD

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UN Secretary General says global warming is a serious challenge

Detailed News On Page-08

Dare' to marry, have kids, says Pope Leo



Detailed News On Page-07

We aim to build strong team, says Babar



Detailed News On Page-06

Shehbaz, Nawaz discuss political, security situation

According to party sources, the three leaders reviewed the overall political landscape, law and order challenges, economic indicators and the government's policy priorities for the coming months. The meeting comes at a time when the ruling coalition is facing multiple challenges on both the political and governance fronts

BUREAU REPORT/DNA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday visited Jati Umra, where he held an important meeting with PML-N President Nawaz Sharif to discuss the country's evolving political, security and economic situation amid signs of growing turbulence within the ruling alliance.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also attended the meeting, which took place against the backdrop of increasing political uncertainty and fresh concerns within government circles over the stance of some coalition partners. According to party sources, the three leaders reviewed the overall political landscape, law and order challenges, economic indicators and the government's policy priorities for the coming months. The meeting comes at a time when the ruling coalition is facing multiple challenges on both the political and governance fronts.

Sources said special attention was given to the changing political mood following the increasingly critical posture adopted by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). The party, led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, has recently maintained a distance from the federal government on several key issues, fuelling speculation about the future shape of political alignments.

The meeting also discussed concerns arising from recent criticism by Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader and federal minister Salik Hussain, who publicly blamed the Punjab government for corruption and governance shortcomings. The remarks have generated unease within the ruling coalition, particularly because PML-Q remains an ally of the government at the federal level.

Sources said the PML-N leadership is seeking to understand the reasons behind the increasingly critical tone adopted by some coalition partners. Senior government figures are said to be concerned that such statements could be indicative of broader political realignments taking shape behind the scenes. Political observers believe that criticism from coalition allies carries greater significance than attacks from opposition parties, particularly at a time when the government is attempting to project stability and economic recovery. The meeting at Jati Umra also reviewed the country's economic outlook. Participants reportedly discussed measures

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President, PM pay tributes to Iqbal

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid rich tribute to national poet and philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal on the occasion of Iqbal Day and his 149th birth anniversary, announcing that the government would launch year-long celebrations leading up to the 150th anniversary of the great thinker's birth on November 9 next year.

In a special message issued on Iqbal Day, they described Allama Iqbal as a visionary philosopher, statesman and intellectual whose ideas awakened political consciousness among the Muslims of the subcontinent and helped shape the movement for an independent homeland. They said Iqbal played a pivotal role in helping Muslims

Continued on Page 06

Six killed in Poland shooting

NEWS DESK

KRAKOW: Poland began a two-day national mourning on Sunday and enhanced police security following the killing of six in a mass shooting in Krakow, which authorities believe was likely inspired by far-right ideology. The attack, which occurred on Saturday in the historic main square of the city, has shocked a country that has long considered itself safer than many of its neighbors in Western Europe, adding to a sense of unease that has built up due to a series of stabbing incidents in schools in October, which authorities said were influenced by extremist content online. Authorities reported that 17 people, including two police officers and the gunman, were injured in the attack. Police and a local official stated that authorities later found the bodies of the

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz sharif chaired the meeting on PM's Youth Business & Agriculture Scheme on Sunday.

Middle East tension

Saudi-led coalition says intercepted two Houthi missiles

DNA

RIYAD: The Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis has said it intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles fired by the rebel group towards Riyadh, after loud booms were heard in the Saudi capital, reports media. Saudi Civil Defence had issued an alert in the Riyadh region shortly before the booms, a Reuters witness said. Authorities later announced that the risk of danger had passed. Later, the coalition said it intercepted and destroyed two cruise missiles in Riyadh and the southern region. Multiple witnesses have told on Sunday that Riyadh's financial district had been targeted and the area's Aramco building had been damaged, after the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis said it had intercepted missiles launched by the group. "Aramco tower in KAFD has been targeted, that's the sure thing," said one witness, referring to the King Abdullah Financial District. Two other witnesses confirmed seeing damage to the building. Meanwhile, The United Arab Emirates National Guard says it has rescued 22 people, all of whom are Arab nationals, after a fire broke out on a cargo ship in the Gulf of Oman.

Rescue operation followed a report from the ship's crew that fire had broken out on board, the National Guard says in a post on X. It adds, "Specialised teams immediately began responding to the report, located the tanker, reached it, and rescued all 22 crew members.

They provided the necessary first aid before handing them over to the relevant authorities, with all of them in stable condition."

28TH amendment also on cards

Govt weighs referendum for 12 new provinces

NEWS DESK /DNA

ISLAMABAD: A proposal to reorganise Pakistan's administrative structure by creating 12 provinces through a constitutional amendment is under consideration, with a nationwide referendum being envisioned to seek public approval before the move is formally introduced. According to sources, the plan could form the basis of a proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment and may be taken up during the first half of 2027. Preparatory work and consultations are expected to begin much earlier if the proposal gains political traction. Under the proposed framework, Punjab would be divided into four provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan into three provinces each, while Sindh would be split into two administrative units. The move would increase the total number of provinces from four to 12.

Supporters of the proposal argue that Pakistan's growing population, governance challenges and uneven distribution of development resources require a fresh administrative model. They maintain that smaller provinces could improve service delivery, strengthen local governance and bring decision-making closer to citizens.

Sources familiar with the deliberations said a nationwide referendum is being considered as a way to secure a public mandate for restructuring before the matter enters the parliamentary arena. Proponents believe the issue

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Karachi-born US Senator to contest presidential election

In 2021, Van Hollen had thanked Pakistan among other countries for helping evacuate American nationals and others stranded in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover of the country

NEWS DESK



WASHINGTON: US Democrat Senator Christopher Van Hollen, who has set his sights on contest for the American president's office in 2028, was born in Karachi.

According to his biography on Maryland Manual Online – a website run by the Maryland state government – he was born in the port city in 1959. Van Hollen himself spoke of his "special connection" with Pakistan in a clip released on the country's Independence Day last year. "I am proud to join you in celebrating Pakistan's 79th Independence Day. I am fortunate to have

Continued on Page 06

KP announces plan to establish ATCs

Home secretary pledges increase in IBO, arrest of individuals providing support to terrorists

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to establish faceless courts for the trial of terrorism suspects as part of a new strategy to combat terrorism, the provincial home secretary said on Sunday.

Speaking at a press conference in Peshawar, KP Home Secretary Amjad Ali Khan said the provincial government had devised a new strategy to tackle terrorism across the province.

He said that the now-dysfunctional Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed provincial government had not provided the required support for the fight against terrorism or the repatriation of Afghan refugees. According to Khan, the previous government had allocated Rs6.4 billion for 22 districts but released only Rs1 billion. However, he said that the federal and provincial governments were now on the same page regarding counterterrorism efforts. The KP home secretary also announced plans to increase intelligence-based operations and arrest individuals providing support to terrorists. According to Khan, anti-drone systems were being installed in Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat and Bannu to strengthen security arrangements.

Khan said Rs70 billion would be provided to the police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) this year, adding that Rs59.8 billion had been allocated for improving police infrastructure, while Rs10.3 billion had been earmarked for the CTD. The home secretary further said that a plan had been prepared to increase the CTD's capacity from 12% to 37%.

He said the shortage of personnel in the police force currently stood at 15%, adding that the target was to reduce it to 5%. Khan's announcement comes after an earlier briefing by the KP Home Department to a high-level meeting attended by the KP governor, advisers, chief secretary, secretaries of all departments and senior police officers, according to The News. During the briefing, it was stated that faceless ATCs were being established for the trials of terrorists. Under the proposed system, the identities of judges, witnesses, police personnel and other relevant individuals will remain confidential during the hearing of terrorism cases to protect them from

Continued on Page 06



Govt focuses on uplift, public welfare: Tariq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has said the government is committed to promoting development, improving public welfare and addressing the pressing challenges facing the country. Speaking to a private television channel, the minister said no government wanted political instability or an atmosphere of confrontation, emphasising that the government's priority was to ensure economic progress, development and public welfare. He said differences of opinion among political parties were an essential feature of democracy and should be addressed through dialogue and mutual understanding rather than confrontation. The minister observed that Pakistan was facing multiple challenges, including internal and external security threats, which required a united national response. He stressed that political stability and national cohesion were essential for overcoming these challenges and ensuring sustainable progress. Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said all political stakeholders should demonstrate responsibility and work collectively in the larger national interest. He added that dialogue, cooperation and a peaceful political environment were vital to strengthening democratic institutions and steering the country towards stability and prosperity._APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors perform on a traditional cloth making Charkha during women Gala 2026 at F-9 Park, in the Federal Capital.

PIMS holds breast cancer awareness walk

ISLAMABAD: A breast cancer awareness walk was organized at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) to promote breast health awareness and encourage early diagnosis and timely screening.
The walk was organized as part of efforts to educate communities about breast cancer prevention, early detection and the importance of seeking timely medical advice. Head of Medical Oncology at PIMS, Dr. Qasim Buttar, attended the event and highlighted the significance of early diagnosis and regular screening in improving breast cancer treatment outcomes. He emphasized that timely detection could significantly increase the chances of successful treatment and save lives. The event was also attended by consultants Dr. Sadia Noor, Dr. Hafsa Fayyaz, Dr. Tehreem, Dr. Hamza and Dr. Ibrahim, who joined the awareness activity to demonstrate healthcare professionals' collective commitment to combating breast cancer. Speakers highlighted the need to overcome social stigma, encourage women to seek medical consultations without delay and promote awareness about the importance of recognizing potential warning signs._APP

FIA nabs woman in Rs 5.2m UK visa fraud

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has nabbed a woman allegedly involved in a Rs 5.2 million UK work visa fraud involving a fake IELTS certificate, marriage registration certificate and other documents, recovering Rs 2 million during the investigation. According to an FIA official, the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Rawalpindi arrested the accused in connection with FIR No. 285/2026 following a complaint regarding fraudulent promises of arranging a UK work visa.
He said the complainant alleged that the woman received a total of Rs 5.2 million in different payments on the promise of sending him to the United Kingdom. During the initial investigation, it emerged that the accused allegedly provided a fake International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate to the complainant against a payment of Rs 1 million.
The official said the woman later allegedly promised to arrange a UK visa through marriage and provided a fake marriage registration certificate and an agreement on estamp paper. Another accused reportedly acted as a guarantor in the agreement. He said when the complainant demanded his money back, the accused allegedly refused to return the amount and threatened him. The official said Rs 2 million had been recovered from the arrested woman, while efforts were underway to recover the remaining amount and determine the involvement of other suspects. He said Inspector Iqra Jahangir was investigating the case, adding that FIA Islamabad Zone would continue action against individuals involved in human smuggling and visa fraud._APP

Kundi for revival of Landi Kotal tourist train

PESHAWAR:Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has called for improving the railway system in the province and emphasized the revival of the Landikotal Tourist Train to promote tourism, facilitate passengers and boost economic activity. The Governor expressed these views during a meeting with Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi in Islamabad, where they discussed measures to make the railway network in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa more efficient, modern and responsive to public needs. The meeting reviewed proposals aimed at upgrading railway facilities across the province, improving passenger services and enhancing the overall quality of railway operations. The two sides also held detailed discussions on restoring the Landi Kotal Tourist Train, describing it as an important initiative to promote tourism, strengthen the local economy and provide better travel opportunities for visitors. Governor Kundi said an improved railway system would not only provide better transportation facilities to the people but would also contribute to the promotion of trade and tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He termed the revival of the Landi Kotal Tourist Train vital for the region's tourism development. The meeting also discussed the overall political situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ongoing development initiatives and the importance of effective coordination and cooperation between the federal and provincial governments for addressing public issues. The Governor stressed the need to further strengthen cooperation between the federal government and relevant institutions to accelerate the province's development, improve public services and bring underdeveloped areas into the national mainstream. Both sides agreed on the need for joint efforts to improve railway infrastructure, promote tourism and address public issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting was also attended by Pakistan Peoples Party's parliamentary leader in the KP Assembly, Ahmad Karim Kundi. Both sides agreed to expedite the restoration of the historic Safari Train service between Peshawar and Landi Kotal in district Khyber. The revival of the route aims to attract both local and foreign tourists by offering scenic travel experiences through the mountainous region.–DNA

Digital portal to remove hurdles in SME financing: Saif

LAHORE :Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman Saifur Rehman on Sunday welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan's launch of SME-Connect, a centralized digital portal designed to simplify access to bank financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
Talking to a delegation of SME entrepreneurs here, he stated that the initiative would facilitate substantial lending to the SME sector by streamlining procedural workflows and bringing transparency to the loan application process.
He noted that for the first time, SME financing applications would be processed through a unified digital platform, allowing applicants to track their request status in real time and receive formal reasons in cases of rejection.
He added that commercial banks had been directed to process financing applications promptly and strictly on merit, while the final authority to approve loans remained with the respective financial institutions.
Saifur Rehman remarked that SME entrepreneurs previously encountered severe hurdles when securing capital to modernise and upgrade business units, adding that the Prime Minister had also directed provincial governments to ensure timely loan disbursements to foster sustainable economic growth._APP

Arora joins Hindu community in Diwali celebrations

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora has said that all religious minorities in Punjab enjoy religious freedom and equal rights in line with the vision of Chief Minister(CM) Punjab,Maryam Nawaz Sharif.
He was addressing a Diwali celebration organized by the Government of Punjab in collaboration with BARGAD, an organization for youth development at a local hotel,here on Sunday. The minister extended heartfelt Diwali greetings to the Hindu community and appreciated BARGAD's efforts to promote interfaith harmony,peace and mutual respect. He said promoting love, tolerance, acceptance and peaceful coexistence at the grassroots level was essential for building a harmonious society. The participation of people from different religious communities in each other's festivals reflected the spirit of a peaceful and united Pakistan,he added. Minister Ramesh Singh Arora said that the Punjab government was taking practical measures to protect minority rights, ensure religious freedom and promote interfaith harmony in accordance with the vision of the chief minister. Representatives of Hindu,Sikh,Christian and Muslim communities,Punjab University students and members of civil society attended the event. The celebration began with the traditional lighting of diyas ,followed by a special Diwali prayer. Professor Ashok Kumar said the light of diyas symbolized positivity, hope and happiness while appreciating BARGAD's efforts to promote interfaith harmony over the past 12 years. Jaspreet Singh described the participation of people from different faiths as an example of interfaith harmony and appreciated the organizers for arranging a vegetarian dinner to accommodate all participants. BARGAD Executive Director,Sabiha Shaheen said the joint celebration reflected the Pakistan envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah,where people of all faiths could celebrate their religious festivals with freedom._APP

Pak crush Maldives 3-0, close in on semi-finals

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan delivered a commanding performance to sweep aside Maldives 3-0, taking a major step towards securing a semi-final berth. McKeal Abdullah opened the scoring from the penalty spot before Najeebullah Bettani struck twice in a dominant first-half display to put Pakistan firmly in control. Najeebullah doubled the lead with a clinical finish after Junaid Shah produced an excellent cross from the left. The forward timed his run perfectly to beat his marker and guide the ball into the net. He then completed his brace in spectacular fashion, controlling a long clearance on the right before unleashing a powerful strike beyond the helpless Maldives goalkeeper. Despite enjoying slightly more possession, Maldives struggled to threaten Pakistan's defence. Pakistan proved far more dangerous in attack, registering 15 shots, including five on target, compared to Maldives' seven attempts, with just one testing the goalkeeper. Both teams searched for goals after the break, but Pakistan maintained their control to secure a convincing 3-0 victory.

CDA chief reviews Margalla Avenue extension, Sangjani Interchange project

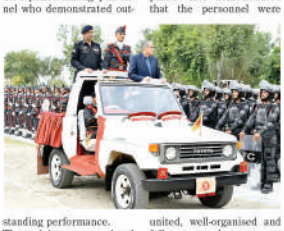
ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf, accompanied by relevant senior officers, visited the Margalla Avenue N5 to M1 Extension and Sangjani Interchange project and carried out a detailed review and inspection of different sections of the Margalla Avenue N5 to M1 Extension and Sangjani Interchange project. While briefing Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf, on the progress made so far on the project, relevant senior officers said that construction activities are underway on a 24/7 basis, vigorously and daily across the various sections of the project and that overall, 35 percent of the development work on the project has been completed to date.During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that work on the widening and extension of the main road over an approximate length of 2.7 kilometers is progressing rapidly, and that work on the service road alongside the main road is also proceeding swiftly. While briefing Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, it was apprised that the structural work on the underpass included in the Sangjani Interchange project has been completed. Similarly, the pile work for the abutments on both sides of the N-5 Interchange Bridge has been completed. During the briefing, he was informed that four of the culverts included in the project have been completed, while work on one culvert is ongoing while the work on all the loops and ramps included in the project is also proceeding rapidly, day and night. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf expressed satisfaction over the construction work carried out so far on the Margalla Avenue N5 to M1 Extension and Sangjani Interchange project in Islamabad and directed that all obstacles in the way be removed in order to complete the project within the stipulated timeframe. Chairman CDA said that special attention should be given to speed, quality and transparency in the project's construction work.–DNA

Call for aligning edu with IT, AI requirements

LAHORE: Former President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday called for aligning Pakistan's education and vocational training systems with emerging industry requirements to prepare the workforce for opportunities in information technology and artificial intelligence.
In a statement issued here, he said Pakistan needed to bridge the gap between academic education and practical skills to meet global challenges and strengthen its industrial and export sectors. He noted that expanding university enrollment alone would not be sufficient unless graduates also possessed technical expertise, analytical thinking, communication skills, and adaptability to rapidly changing technologies. He urged treating education as an economic strategy, emphasizing that industrial development, export growth, and technological advancement depended heavily on a skilled and productive workforce. Referring to the IT sector, Iftikhar Ali Malik highlighted that Pakistan's IT and IT-enabled services exports reached $4.6 billion during the last fiscal year, including $1.76 billion earned by freelancers. He stated that flexible vocational courses, workplace-based training._APP

FC's special protection & anti-riot wings first badge passes out

PESHAWAR: The passing-out parade of the first batch of the Special Protection Wing and Anti-Riot Wing of the Federal Constabulary was held on Sunday at the Shabqadar Training Centre, Charsadda district, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi attending the prestigious ceremony as chief guest.
For the first time in the history of the force, a total of 983 personnel, including 35 women, belonging to all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, successfully completed their professional training.
The Interior Minister inspected the parade, while a smartly turned-out contingent presented him with a salute. He also witnessed demonstrations of professional training by the Special Protection Wing and Anti-Riot Wing and distributed prizes among personnel who demonstrated outstanding performance.



The minister appreciated the high standards of professional training and the capabilities displayed by the newly trained personnel.
Addressing the ceremony, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the impressive parade had demonstrated that the personnel were united, well-organised and fully prepared to accomplish their mission.
He said their performance reflected not only their practical training but also their determination, courage and spirit of serving the country. "You are the practical representatives of a major transformation taking place in the Federal Constabulary. You are the first soldiers of a new era founded on responsibility, clear direction, modern requirements and a renewed spirit of national service," he remarked. The Interior Minister said the conduct and performance of the personnel would translate these reforms into reality. Federal Constabulary, formerly known as the Frontier Constabulary, was a force with a history spanning more than a century and had always maintained a distinguished position because of its heritage, traditions and professional role.–DNA



The Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Monday, November 09, 2026

Expressway service road project 28pc complete

Separately, the CDA has launched an enforcement drive against illegal constructions, encroachments, unauthorised commercial activities and violations of building regulations along the service road. During the operation, 58 buildings have been sealed, while 124 structures identified between Sohan and Khanna Bridge have been demolished, according to the authority

ISLAMABAD: More than 28 per cent of the Islamabad Expressway Service Road (East) project, stretching from Faizabad to Gulberg, has been completed, while the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has intensified enforcement measures against illegal constructions and encroachments along the route, sealing 58 buildings and demolishing 124 structures. The 9.3-kilometre-long project is aimed at improving traffic management and providing an alternative route for commuters travelling between Faizabad, Sohan, Khanna and Gulberg. The dual carriageway, featuring three lanes on each side, is expected to facilitate local traffic, reduce congestion on the main Islamabad Expressway and improve access to residential and commercial areas along the corridor. According to the CDA, construction activities are progressing at several locations, with excavation, subgrade preparation and sub-base work under way. These activities form the foundation of the road infrastructure and are essential for ensuring the durability and quality of the carriageway. A major component of the project, the construction of an underpass, is also advancing. The authority said all 153 piles required for the underpass had been completed, while work on culverts, bridge-related structures and drainage infrastructure was continuing. The development scheme is particularly significant for commuters travelling between Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as the Islamabad Expressway serves as one of the major road links connecting the twin cities. The growing population of residential localities along the Expressway, including Sohan, Iqbal Town, Khanna, Korang and Gulberg, has increased pressure on the existing road network, making improvements to the service road increasingly important.



The CDA initiated the project after undertaking the planning and consultancy process earlier this year. Construction formally began in August 2026, with the authorities directing the relevant departments to accelerate work and ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe.—DNA

Suthra Punjab intensifies cleanliness, anti-dengue campaigns

RAWALPINDI: The Suthra Punjab Agency Rawalpindi intensified its cleanliness, anti-smog and anti-dengue campaigns across the city and its tehsils during the past week to improve sanitation and promote public awareness. On the directions of Managing Director Suthra Punjab Agency Rawalpindi and CEO Rawalpindi Waste Management Company Rana Sajid Safdar, special cleanliness operations were carried out along major roads, streets, markets, commercial centres and residential areas.

The operations included mechanical and manual sweeping, road washing, waste lifting, drain desilting and removal of garbage from vacant plots to improve sanitation and prevent environmental pollution. The agency's field teams also monitored cleanliness arrangements, staff attendance, machinery and waste collection activities to ensure timely disposal of garbage. Meanwhile, the communication team conducted awareness activities in markets, commercial centres and residential areas, urging citizens and shopkeepers to dispose of waste at designated points, avoid littering and prevent water accumulation to curb dengue breeding.

The anti-littering squad also remained active and issued warnings to people found dumping garbage in open spaces or burning waste, highlighting the harmful effects of such practices on the environment and public health. Special attention was also given to removing dust and waste from roads, footpaths and green belts under the anti-smog drive, while sanitation activities were carried out at potential dengue breeding sites. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Sajid Safdar said that all available resources were being utilised to improve sanitation across Rawalpindi and its tehsils in line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He said that a zero-tolerance policy was being followed against open dumping and burning of waste, adding that maintaining cleanliness was a shared responsibility of government institutions and citizens.—DNA

Iqbal's philosophy of self-respect key to progress: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Sunday said that the philosophy of selfhood (Khudi), dignity, honour and self-respect preached by Allama Muhammad Iqbal continued to serve as a guiding light for the nation, particularly the younger generation.

In his message on the occasion of Allama Iqbal Day, he said the Poet of the East had envisioned the Muslims of the subcontinent as a self-respecting, dignified and sovereign nation, whose aspirations and struggle ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan.Abdul Aleem Khan stated that Iqbal's thoughts and teachings form the foundation of national progress, sovereignty and unity. He emphasized that a strong national defence, a stable economy and national solidarity are essential to realizing Iqbal's vision of Pakistan. A strong, prosperous, sovereign and invincible Pakistan, he added, represents the true fulfillment of Allama Iqbal's dream. Aleem Khan said that the Armed Forces of Pakistan are the guardians of the country's sovereignty, security and national honour. He paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for its unparalleled sacrifices in safeguarding the country's defence and stability. He added that the courage, professionalism and bravery of the armed forces are a source of pride for the entire nation. He further stated that Pakistan's Armed Forces have demonstrated exceptional courage and professionalism in fulfilling their responsibilities towards national defence and security during every challenging situation. The PTI President said that Allama Iqbal's message to the Shaheens continues to inspire the younger generation with courage, self-confidence, determination and perseverance. He stressed the need to incorporate Iqbal's teachings into practical life and collectively steer Pakistan towards progress, prosperity and stability. Abdul Aleem Khan further said that the entire nation stands firmly alongside its national institutions and the Armed Forces of Pakistan for the country's security, stability and development.—DNA

RCB concludes food safety, public awareness campaign

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has successfully concluded its three-day food safety, hygiene and public awareness campaign aimed at ensuring the provision of safe and hygienic food to residents of the cantonment area. The campaign was conducted under the directions of Headquarters Military Lands and Cantonments under the direct supervision of Cantonment Executive Officer Aamir Rashid. On the concluding day, the Assistant Health Officer and In-charge Food Control Cell, along with his team, inspected various food outlets, commercial centres and catering services to review food preparation and storage practices and cleanliness arrangements in kitchens.—APP

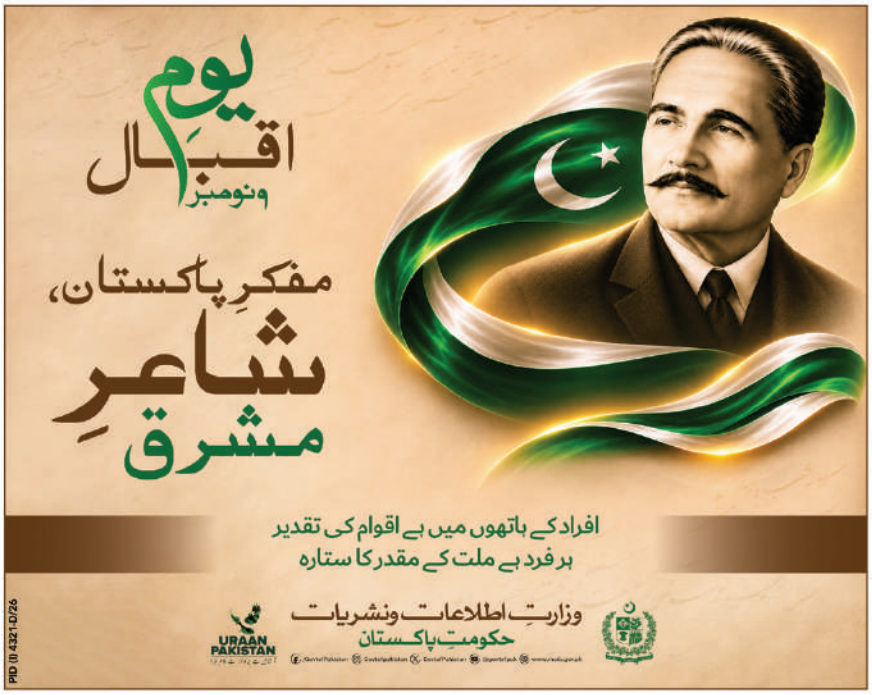
CMU renews nationwide campaign to promote HIV awareness

ISLAMABAD: The Common Management Unit (CMU), under the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, has renewed its nationwide efforts to strengthen HIV awareness, prevention, testing, and treatment by reviving its landmark campaign. The initiative is being carried out in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), with the support of national and international health partners.

Originally launched in 2022, the campaign aims to encourage open and informed discussions about HIV, improve access to prevention and treatment services, and address the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with the virus. The renewed initiative focuses on raising public awareness, promoting HIV testing and early diagnosis, improving access to treatment and highlighting the experiences and voices of people affected by the disease. The World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Association of People Living with HIV-Pakistan are among the key partners supporting efforts to strengthen the national HIV response. The CMU acknowledged the continued commitment of government institutions, development partners, community organisations and UN agencies in advancing HIV awareness and prevention across the country. It emphasized that collective action, accessible healthcare services and a stigma-free environment were essential to ensuring an effective and inclusive response to HIV in Pakistan.—DNA

Parents urged to vaccinate girls against cervical cancer

ISLAMABAD: Health authorities have urged parents to ensure vaccination of their daughters aged 9 to 14 years against cervical cancer during the upcoming immunization campaign scheduled to run from November 11 to 24 across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The campaign aims to protect adolescent girls against human papillomavirus (HPV), the primary cause of cervical cancer, through the administration of a safe and effective vaccine. According to health authorities, the HPV vaccine provides effective protection against cervical cancer and plays an important role in reducing the risk of the disease in later life. They emphasized that timely vaccination during adolescence is an important preventive measure and urged parents to actively participate in the campaign to safeguard their daughters' health. Parents have been advised to contact the Sehat Tahaffuz helpline at 1166 for further information about the vaccination campaign and related services. The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen preventive healthcare and raise awareness about cervical cancer, which remains a major public health concern among women, they added.—APP



National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

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RGH	9290301-7
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Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad 0321-5744480

Briefs

Rs 2.94m for woman defrauded of Rs 9.5m recovered

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Islamabad has recovered Rs 2.94 million and returned the amount to a woman who had allegedly lost Rs 9.5 million in an online financial fraud case, while efforts are underway to recover the remaining money.
According to an NCCIA official, the recovery was made during an investigation conducted under the supervision of Inspector Waqar Masih Ghouri.
He said the woman had suffered a financial loss of Rs 9.5 million in the alleged fraud, prompting the agency to initiate an investigation into the matter.
The official said Rs 2.94 million had so far been recovered and handed over to the complainant, while further investigation was underway to trace the remaining amount and determine the involvement of those responsible. Meanwhile, the woman expressed satisfaction over the recovery of part of her money and thanked NCCIA Islamabad for its timely action and cooperation. She appreciated the efforts of the investigation team, particularly the assistance provided during the recovery process, and expressed hope that the remaining amount would also be recovered.–APP

DHO to organize walk to mark World Diabetes Day

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, will organize a walk and run at F-9 Park on November 14 to raise awareness about diabetes, obesity and other non-communicable diseases. The event will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday as part of activities marking World Diabetes Day, with a focus on promoting physical activity, healthy lifestyles and preventive healthcare. According to the organizers, the initiative aims to engage citizens, families and young people in raising awareness about the growing burden of diabetes and other lifestyle-related diseases. The event will highlight the importance of regular exercise, balanced nutrition, weight management and healthy daily habits in reducing the risk of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases.
The DHO has invited citizens, families and youth to participate in the activity and contribute to promoting a healthier and more physically active community. The initiative also aims to encourage greater public participation in preventive healthcare and reinforce the message that regular physical activity can play an important role in maintaining overall health and well-being.–APP

NCCIA recruitment tests enter fifth day

ISLAMABAD, Nov 08 (APP):Physical recruitment tests for various posts in the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) continued for the fifth consecutive day in Islamabad on Sunday, with candidates undergoing different fitness assessments under the supervision of senior officers. According to an NCCIA official, the tests were being conducted under the supervision of Additional Director NPF Hakim Khan and Deputy Director NCCIA Islamabad Asif Nawaz to ensure that all stages were completed in accordance with the prescribed procedures. He said candidates were participating in different physical activities, including running, to assess their fitness and suitability for the posts. The official said Islamabad Police officers were also performing duties at the testing venue to manage administrative arrangements and facilitate the smooth conduct of the recruitment process.–APP

Hamza celebrates Diwali with Hindu community

He said, "Pakistan's Hindu community is an integral part of our national life. Its contributions to education, healthcare, business, public service, social welfare, arts and culture have enriched our country." He said, "On this occasion, I pay tribute to these contributions and reaffirm that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens"



ISLAMABAD: Former Punjab chief minister Hamza Shahbaz Sharif on Sunday met a delegation of the Hindu community, led by Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Dr Darshan, at the Prime Minister's Office here on the occasion of Diwali. The meeting was held at the invitation of Hamza Shahbaz to celebrate the Hindu community's festival of Diwali. MNAs Dr Kesoo Mal Kheal Das and Ishpanyar M. Bhandara, both belonging to minority communities, were also present on the occasion. Hamza Shahbaz and members of the delegation cut a cake to mark the festival and exchanged views on ensuring necessary arrangements and facilities for the Hindu community to celebrate Diwali with traditional enthusiasm. Speaking on the occasion, Hamza Shahbaz appreciated the contributions of the Hindu community to Pakistan's social, cultural and economic development. He expressed hope that the Hindu community across the country would celebrate Diwali with full enthusiasm, adding that the festival would serve as a message of peace, goodwill and hope in society. Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari extended his warm greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and around the world on the auspicious occasion of Diwali. In a message on the occasion of Diwali, he said, " The festival of lights celebrates the symbolism of triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and hope over despair. Its message of compassion and renewal reminds us that each of us can bring light into the lives of others through kindness, understanding, compassion and care."
He said, "Pakistan's Hindu community is an integral part of our national life. Its contributions to education, healthcare, business, public service, social welfare, arts and culture have enriched our country." He said, "On this occasion, I pay tribute to these contributions and reaffirm that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens." "Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned a country where faith, caste or creed would be no barrier to equal citizenship and equal rights. We must honour that vision by ensuring that every citizen can practise their faith freely, live in dignity and enjoy equal protection under the law," he stressed. He said, "For me, Quaid-e-Azam's promise of equal citizenship is a sacred national commitment. The Pakistan Peoples Party's tradition, carried forward by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, also calls upon us to defend that promise without fear or favour. No Pakistani should ever have to prove their belonging because of their faith. This country is their home, its freedoms are their right, and its future is theirs to shape."
"Diwali is also an occasion to strengthen the bonds that unite us as Pakistanis. By sharing in one another's celebrations, standing together in times of difficulties and rejecting prejudice and discrimination, we can build a more just and compassionate society. Our diversity is not our weakness but a great strength. It should be clear to all of us that protecting the rights of religious minorities is our shared responsibility," he remarked. _DNA

Over 23.8m children vaccinated

ISLAMABAD: More than 23.8 million children have been vaccinated against polio during the first six days of the ongoing sub-national immunisation campaign, which entered its final day on Sunday across 97 selected districts of the country, the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) said. The campaign, which commenced on November 2, is targeting approximately 24 million children under five years of age, with more than 200,000 frontline polio workers participating in the nationwide vaccination drive. According to the NEOC, the vaccination campaign is being conducted simultaneously in Pakistan and Afghanistan as part of coordinated regional efforts to eliminate poliovirus transmission and protect children against the crippling disease. The provincial and regional vaccination figures showed that more than 9.126 million children had received polio drops in 13 selected districts of Punjab, while over 7.019 million children were vaccinated in 20 selected districts of Sindh. Similarly, more than 4.673 million children received polio drops in 27 selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), while over 2.212 million children were vaccinated in 31 selected districts of Balochistan. In Islamabad, more than 450,000 children were vaccinated, while over 161,000 children received polio drops in three selected districts of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), approximately 192,000 children were vaccinated in two selected districts during the campaign. =The NEOC further reported that Pakistan had recorded nine polio cases so far this year, warning that the threat of poliovirus continued to persist across the country. It stressed that polio was an incurable disease and vaccination remained the only effective means of preventing the lifelong disability caused by the virus.= The NEOC urged parents and caregivers to cooperate with vaccination teams and ensure that all children below five years of age received polio drops during the campaign. It also advised parents to complete their children's routine immunisation schedules on time. Parents can contact the polio helpline at 1166 or send a WhatsApp message to 0346-7776546 for assistance or information regarding vaccination services. The NEOC emphasized that sustained public cooperation and repeated vaccination were essential to achieving a polio-free Pakistan.–DNA

SECP seeks export records from seven banks

ISLAMABAD:The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has sought export records from seven banks as its investigation into the proposed IPO of SE Fruits and Vegetable Limited progresses. The banks were asked to provide export details for the company, formerly known as Shaheen Enterprises, said a news release. The SECP also sought information from 30 banks on foreign remittances, export proceeds and other foreign exchange transactions received in accounts of the company's sponsors and directors. Some banks have responded, and their submissions are under review.
The SECP initiated the investigation on October 21 under Section 29 of the SECP Act, 1997, read with Section 139 of the Securities Act. It has received information from the IPO's joint lead managers, Topline Securities and Growth Securities. The response from consultant Parker Russell-A.J.S. is also under review.
The investigation team is examining the IPO application and shareholder information. The Central Depository Company (CDC) provided an investor list and later received a request for shareholder lists and transfer histories for people named in the prospectus. Its response, received on November 2, was partial and remains under review. The company's auditor, Ilyas Saeed & Co., sought an extension to provide requested information and records. The SECP granted the extension. The probe follows concerns about the company's financial information and audit. SE Fruits had planned to raise up to Rs1.92 billion by offering 30 million shares at Rs40 each. The SECP halted the IPO in October, and the company subsequently withdrew the offering.–APP

Efforts afoot to empower women, extends free scooty training



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has extended its free scooty training programme for women until November 30 following an overwhelming response, allowing more women to learn riding skills and gain confidence in independent travel. According to ITP Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Kainat Azhar Khan, the programme has been divided into two phases to accommodate the growing number of women interested in receiving free scooty training. She said the first phase would run from November 1 to 15, while the second phase would be held from November 16 to 30. The CTO Kainat said women who could not secure a place in the first phase would now have an opportunity to receive training during the second phase without paying any fee. Kainat said the decision to extend the programme was taken in view of the encouraging response from women seeking to learn scooty riding. She said ITP was committed to empowering women by providing them with opportunities to develop practical riding skills and improve their mobility. The CTO added that similar initiatives would continue in the future to encourage greater participation of women in safe and independent travel. "Our commitment is to empower women," she said, reaffirming ITP's resolve to continue such programmes. –DNA

HSA explores medical coop with Chinese institutions

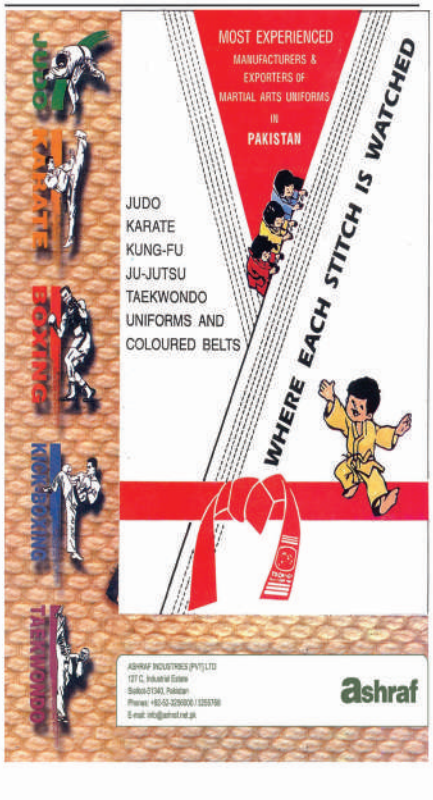
ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad, has explored new avenues of academic, medical and institutional cooperation with Chinese healthcare institutions during an official visit by its Additional Registrar, Syed Murtaza Gillani, to Wuhan and Nanning.
Syed Murtaza Gillani represented the academy at the World Union of Manual Medicine Conference in Wuhan, China, where he engaged with international health experts and leaders on public health, medical education and strengthening healthcare systems. The participation provided an opportunity to explore potential areas of collaboration between Pakistan and China in medical education, research and professional capacity building. During his subsequent visit to Nanning, Guangxi, he visited the second affiliated hospital of Guangxi, where he held meetings with the hospital's Party Chairman and President to discuss opportunities for institutional cooperation. The discussions focused on weight management initiatives, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in radiology, modern diagnostic technologies and academic collaboration with the Health Services Academy. The Chinese hospital leadership assured its full support and cooperation with HSA, including assistance for its students and faculty through potential joint training, research and academic exchange programmes. The visit highlighted opportunities to strengthen institutional linkages, promote knowledge-sharing and introduce modern healthcare practices through bilateral cooperation. The engagement also reaffirmed both sides' commitment to further strengthen Pakistan-China friendship and expand collaboration in the health and medical education sectors.–DNA

ANF seizes 50.702kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI:The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has seized 50.702 kilograms of drugs during 10 operations conducted across the country, arresting 15 suspects.
According to an ANF spokesman, the operations were conducted in Multan, Karachi and Peshawar airports, Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mianwali, Peshawar, Gujrat, Attock and Sheikhupura. During international operations, 402 grams of heroin concealed in 70 capsules were recovered from three Umrah pilgrims at Multan International Airport, while 700 grams of heroin concealed in welding gloves were seized from a parcel destined for the UK in Karachi. Another 700 grams of ice were recovered from a passenger travelling to Bahrain at Bacha Khan International Airport, Peshawar.
In domestic operations, 500 grams of weed were seized in Islamabad, 2.4kg of hashish in Rawalpindi, 18kg of hashish and 6kg of opium in Mianwali, and 12kg of opium in Peshawar. During inter-provincial operations, 400 grams of ice were recovered in Gujrat, 3.6kg of hashish in Attock, and 4.8kg of opium and 1.2kg of hashish in Sheikhupura. Cases have been registered under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997.–APP

Training conducted to strengthen midwives' capacity

ISLAMABAD:A 10-day capacity-building training programme for midwives was conducted at the Mother and Child Health (MCH) Centre of the Federal Government Polyclinic to improve the quality of maternal and newborn healthcare services. The training was organized by the Pakistan National Forum on Women's Health (PNFWH) with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), marking the third training cohort for midwives serving at the Midwifery-Led Care Unit (MLCU) in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Under the guidance of experienced master trainers, participants enhanced their professional competencies, practical skills and confidence to provide high-quality, woman-centred and respectful maternity care to pregnant women and mothers. The programme included hands-on practical sessions focusing on essential maternal healthcare practices, particularly Respectful Maternity Care (RMC), breastfeeding support and effective breastfeeding positioning. Participants appreciated the practical learning opportunities, particularly their direct engagement with mothers._APP



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Iqbal's Spiritual Legacy and the Unity of the Muslim Ummah

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

The history of humanity is, in essence, a continuous journey in search of divine guidance. From the creation of mankind, when Allah Almighty bestowed His guidance upon Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), this sacred mission continued through a succession of prophets until it reached its ultimate perfection with the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the Seal of the Prophets. With his departure from this world, the institution of prophethood came to its completion, but the light of divine guidance did not diminish. It continued to illuminate human hearts through the teachings of the Holy Quran, the Sunnah and the lives of those chosen servants of Allah who devoted themselves to spiritual enlightenment, moral excellence and the awakening of humanity. Among such distinguished personalities, Allama Muhammad Iqbal occupies an exceptional place. Iqbal was not merely a poet whose verses appealed to the imagination; he was a visionary who sought to restore the spiritual consciousness, intellectual confidence and collective dignity of the Muslim Ummah. His poetry was a call to awaken a nation that had gradually lost faith in its own potential and had become accustomed to political subjugation, intellectual stagnation and spiritual indifference. His message transcended geographical boundaries, reaching Muslims from the shores of the Nile to the valleys of Kashgar, reminding them that their strength lay not in territorial possessions or political arrangements alone, but in their common faith, historical identity and spiritual bond. The idea of Pakistan was deeply rooted in Iqbal's political and philosophical vision. His Allahabad Address of 1930 provided a significant intellectual foundation for the political aspirations of the Muslims of the subcontinent. He envisaged a political and social order in which Muslims could organise their collective existence in accordance with their religious, cultural and civilisational identity. Although he did not live to witness the emergence of Pakistan, his intellectual contribution helped shape the aspirations that ultimately culminated in the establishment of an independent homeland in 1947. In this sense, Pakistan represents not merely a geographical achievement but also an enduring expression of a vision that sought dignity, identity and freedom for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Through his remarkable poetic collections, Iqbal attempted to revive the relationship between man and his Creator. His celebrated compositions, Shikwa and Jawab-e-Shikwa, hold particular significance in this regard. In Shikwa, he gives eloquent expression to the anguish of a Muslim community questioning its declining fortunes, while Jawab-e-Shikwa offers a profound spiritual response, reminding Muslims that the restoration of their former glory requires faith, unity, sacrifice, discipline and action. These works were not simply poetic exchanges; they were an intellectual and spiritual dialogue intended to awaken a dormant nation and make it conscious of its responsibilities. Perhaps one of Iqbal's most enduring contributions was his insistence that the Muslim world must rise above geographical, linguistic, racial and political divisions. His memorable verse, "United by the guardianship of the Sacred Sanctuary, Muslims–from the shores of the Nile to the lands of Kashgar–are one," conveys a timeless message of fraternity. The unity he advocated was neither an artificial political arrangement nor a demand for uniformity among Muslim societies. Rather, it was a call for shared purpose, mutual respect, collective responsibility and solidarity founded upon the common spiritual heritage of Islam. Regrettably, the contemporary Muslim world presents a picture that would have deeply troubled Iqbal. Despite possessing enormous human resources, strategic locations, natural wealth and considerable economic potential, Muslim countries remain divided by political rivalries, regional conflicts and competing strategic interests. Tensions in the Gulf, instability in the Middle East and the continuing suffering of innocent people in different parts of the Muslim world demonstrate how far the Ummah remains from the collective strength that Iqbal envisioned. The tragedy is not merely that Muslim nations disagree; it is that their disagreements frequently prevent them from responding collectively to challenges that threaten their common interests and shared future. In these circumstances, Pakistan carries a particular responsibility. Established through a movement inspired by the intellectual and political aspirations of Muslim identity, it must continue to serve as a voice for reconciliation, cooperation and solidarity within the Muslim world. Its diplomatic engagement, efforts to reduce regional tensions and initiatives for dialogue among Muslim countries should be viewed in the light of Iqbal's philosophy. The Pakistani leadership's efforts to promote understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran, strengthen relations among Muslim nations and encourage peaceful solutions to regional disputes reflect an important dimension of this vision. Such endeavours require consistency, wisdom and collective support, for lasting peace cannot be achieved through declarations alone; it demands sincerity, confidence-building and a willingness to place the greater interests of the Ummah above narrow political considerations. Iqbal's message also places a responsibility upon the intellectuals, scholars, political leaders and younger generations of the Muslim world. Unity cannot be secured merely through emotional expressions or ceremonial gatherings. It must be cultivated through education, scientific advancement, economic cooperation, institutional strength, social justice and the promotion of tolerance. A community that neglects knowledge, abandons moral discipline and allows internal divisions to weaken its foundations cannot reclaim its rightful place in the world simply by recalling its glorious past. The spiritual legacy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal therefore remains as relevant today as it was during his lifetime. His poetry continues to awaken consciences, his philosophy continues to challenge intellectual complacency, and his vision continues to inspire those who believe that the Muslim Ummah can overcome its divisions and reclaim its dignity. His enduring message is that nations are not transformed by wishes alone; they rise when faith becomes conviction, conviction inspires action, and action is guided by wisdom and collective purpose. Iqbal's greatness lies not only in what he wrote or what he envisioned for Pakistan, but also in the spiritual confidence he sought to restore among Muslims. His legacy is a continuing invitation to rediscover the essence of Islam, strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and serve humanity with courage, compassion and wisdom. As long as the Muslim world continues to seek spiritual awakening and collective uplift, the light of Iqbal's thought will remain alive, reminding generations that the destiny of the Ummah lies in unity, knowledge, faith and purposeful action.



Jewish religious extremism: When faith defies strategic alliances

Qamar Bashir



His pronouncements confront strategic alliances with a theological challenge: India's friendship with Israel counts for less than its religious practices, while Pakistan's hostility becomes secondary to Muslim monotheism. His argument places religious judgment above national advantage, raising consequential questions for Israel's partners. His message exposes a fundamental tension between the pursuit of national advantage and a religious doctrine that ranks nations by their worship

Strategic alliances rest on an expectation of reciprocity: friendship should command respect, cooperation should earn trust, and support should carry political value. Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi's(Rabbi Yosef (Yossi) Mizrachi, an Israeli-American ultra-Orthodox preacher and founder of Divine Information, has spent three decades promoting Torah observance through lectures and digital outreach. Born in Israel in 1968, he served in the Israeli Air Force and worked in Manhattan finance before turning to religious outreach in 1994.

His pronouncements confront strategic alliances with a theological challenge: India's friendship with Israel counts for less than its religious practices, while Pakistan's hostility becomes secondary to Muslim monotheism. His argument places religious judgment above national advantage, raising consequential questions for Israel's partners.

His message exposes a fundamental tension between the pursuit of national advantage and a religious doctrine that ranks nations by their worship. For Israel's partners, the implications deserve examination beyond the controversy surrounding a sermon. Mizrachi begins by acknowledging the strength of India's relationship with Israel. He describes cooperation encompassing weapons, cybersecurity, agriculture, medicine and science, portraying India as perhaps Israel's closest friend, even ahead of the United States. His account stresses mutual benefit, commercial exchange and goodwill. This recognition is essential to his argument: he understands the strategic value of the partnership before declaring that religious considerations must override it. His description of Pakistan establishes the opposite pole. He portrays it as an adversary sympathetic to Israel's opponents and hostile to Jewish security. Yet he then asks his audience which country deserves its sympathy in a conflict. The question places political loyalty and religious classification in direct competition. Friendship, in his reasoning, cannot settle the matter because the decisive criterion lies elsewhere: whether a population worships the God he recognises. The answer reverses the apparent logic of the comparison. Mizrachi categorises Hindu worship as idolatry and argues that it constitutes a greater offence against God than hostility towards Jews that has not resulted in an attack. Pakistan consequently receives theological preference because of its Muslim identity. He admits that personal calculation would favour India, but insists that divine judgment requires another standard. Religious obligation, as he interprets it, supersedes strategic gratitude. This distinction carries implications extending beyond India and Pakistan. It establishes a framework in which an accommodating ally may remain religiously unacceptable while an antagonistic neighbour occupies a superior theological position. Conduct towards Israel becomes subordinate to belief. The argument also provides a justification for disregarding established partnerships: if cooperation with one country becomes religiously objectionable, God will supposedly provide another source of benefit. Dependence is answered with an assurance of divine substitution. For New Delhi, this is a challenge to assumptions about the durability of friendship. Commercial cooperation and security coordination may generate mutual interests without removing ideological hostility towards the partner's faith. Mizrachi's argument makes that separation explicit. Indu is valuable for what it provides, yet its predominantly Hindu identity becomes grounds for condemnation. The resulting question is whether strategic usefulness offers sufficient protection when religious judgment is presented as a higher authority. Pakistan faces a different calculation. The preference expressed for it arises from monotheism rather than endorsement of its policies or recognition of its grievances. Nevertheless, the argument disrupts the familiar division between friend and enemy. It introduces a religious basis for sympathy across an otherwise adversarial relationship. For Pakistani analysts, the significance lies in examining that contradiction and its possible influence, rather than assuming that theological preference automatically produces diplomatic recognition or practical support. Mizrachi's treatment of Christianity reveals a similar collision between dependence and disdain. He acknowledges Christian assistance to Israel while ridiculing Christian beliefs concerning Jesus, sacrifice and salvation. Benefactors are recognised for their contributions even as their faith is subjected to contempt. The contradiction is particularly consequential for supporters whose commitment to Israel is itself religiously motivated. Their devotion becomes useful as a source of support but objectionable as a form of worship.

His remarks about churches take the argument beyond theological disagreement. By describing them as sites of idolatry and invoking the destruction of idols in the land of Israel, he raises questions about the place of Christian worship within his religious vision. The issue concerns the security of sacred spaces and the conditions under which communities can practise their faith. A doctrine that treats another community's worship as an offence creates tension with religious coexistence.

The discussion of punishment intensifies these concerns. Mizrachi presents idolatry as an offence exceeding murder, theft and rape in severity, then describes execution by stoning or sword.

Elsewhere, his language of vengeance extends destruction to children. These statements establish a hierarchy in which religious transgression can outweigh violence against human beings. Their significance lies in the moral reasoning they communicate: identity and worship become grounds for judgments detached from an individual's conduct towards others.

His condemnation of expressions of empathy towards gay people follows the same pattern. Compassion itself becomes punishable when directed towards those he condemns. Across these passages, the central demand is obedience to a religious classification that overrides ordinary considerations of reciprocity, sympathy and individual dignity.

The consequences are therefore social as well as diplomatic. Such reasoning influences how audiences understand neighbours, minorities, allies and adversaries, assigning moral status before examining particular actions.

The geopolitical question is how such ideas interact with political power. A sermon can articulate a standard by which supporters subsequently judge leaders, agreements and compromises.

If religious conformity becomes the measure of legitimate partnership, diplomatic flexibility may be denounced as disobedience. Existing alliances can then face pressure from constituencies that regard strategic calculation as an inadequate justification for cooperation. Assessing that possibility requires attention to audiences, institutional connections and the reception of these arguments.

A second interpretation concerns bargaining. Rhetoric that diminishes the value of established allies can communicate that their support should never be taken as decisive. Yet identifying a deliberate pressure campaign requires evidence connecting the language to political actors and specific objectives. The distinction matters because theological conviction and strategic signalling can produce similar words while serving different purposes. The proper inquiry is into their relationship, including whether decisionmakers adopt, amplify or act upon the reasoning.

For Washington and New Delhi, the practical response begins with examining the ideological assumptions accompanying their partnerships. For Pakistan and other Muslim states, it begins with distinguishing religious affinity from dependable political commitments.

Across these relationships, the same question persists: what happens to negotiated interests when an asserted divine obligation demands their abandonment? Mizrachi's remarks give that question a concrete form, placing the friend who worships differently below the adversary who professes one God.

The significance of this discourse lies in its proposed ordering of international relationships. Gratitude, shared interests and cooperation are made conditional upon religious judgment.

An ally can be praised as indispensable and condemned as spiritually criminal within the same argument. That contradiction warrants sustained scrutiny wherever religious authority intersects with political ambition. Alliances become vulnerable when the value of friendship is acknowledged, then dismissed because the friend prays differently.

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Iqbal's Shaheen and PAF's wings of resolve

Izmi Herlani

ts promise is exacting: we need not remain confined by the limits we inherit, but we must earn the heights we seek. For PAF, that promise takes wing in Iqbal's Shaheen, high-flying, keen-eyed, restless in spirit and sustained by its own strength. As Pakistan commemorates the poet's 149th birth anniversary, the question is not simply how deeply we admire his vision, but how faithfully we live it. Iqbal does not ask the Shaheen to admire its wings. He challenges it to use them. Beyond achievement lies another horizon; beyond recognition, another responsibility

One of the most enduring influences on the spirit of Pakistan Air Force came not from a military strategist or an aviation pioneer, but from a poet, Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal. His poetry offers neither the comfort of easy praise nor the promise of effortless greatness. It demands courage, self-belief and relentless endeavour. Its promise is exacting: we need not remain confined by the limits we inherit, but we must earn the heights we seek. For PAF, that promise takes wing in Iqbal's Shaheen, high-flying, keen-eyed, restless in spirit and sustained by its own strength. As Pakistan commemorates the poet's 149th birth anniversary, the question is not simply how deeply we admire his vision, but how faithfully we live it. Iqbal does not ask the Shaheen to admire its wings. He challenges it to use them. Beyond achievement lies another horizon; beyond recognition, another responsibility. Yesterday's accomplishment must never become tomorrow's excuse. Here, inspiration meets its test: aspiration must become preparation, confidence must become competence and pride must answer to duty. The Shaheen's qualities give that pursuit its discipline. High flight demands high purpose; keen sight suggests foresight. Its restless spirit rejects stagnation, while its solitary struggle speaks of endurance and self-reliance. Together, these qualities offer an uncompromising ideal: strength earned through effort, not distinction borrowed from privilege.

That ideal has a contemporary institutional expression in PAF's modernization and indigenization drive under Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Describing a transition towards a "Next Generation Air Force", the Air Chief has outlined changes in operational doctrine and the induction of capabilities in Kinetic domains, Unmanned Systems, Electronic Warfare, and Space & Cyber capabilities. The stated ambition reaches beyond individual platforms towards a connected, Multi-Domain Force. The connection with Iqbal is not in the terminology. It is in the refusal to stand still. An institution honours that spirit when it encourages inquiry, rewards initiative and prepares its people for challenges that yesterday's methods cannot answer.

For every young Shaheen, the blue uniform therefore marks both an arrival and a beginning. Selection opens the door; character determines what follows. The aircraft commands the gaze, but the instructor's patience, the engineer's ingenuity, the technician's precision and the fighter pilot's preparation make flight possible. There is patriotism in exactness. There is honour in work done faithfully when no one is watching.

palace offers comfort. The mountain demands endurance. Iqbal places the Shaheen on the rock, not beneath the gilded dome: stature must be earned, not bestowed. For the Men in Blue, the lesson is not hardship for their own sake. It is the refusal to let convenience outrank duty.

That distinction gives remembrance its purpose. The courage of Air Commodore M M Alam, Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Rafiqui (Shaheed) and Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas (Shaheed) places a demanding inheritance before succeeding generations. The remembrance of 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars & Operation Swift Retort carries its own call to readiness. A legacy is not a shelter beneath which to rest. It is a standard to carry forward.

During the conflict of May 2025, one of the largest Beyond-Visual-Range aerial engagements of the 21st century, PAF demonstrated the significance of preparation, coordination and effective employment of technology. Its success in the air battle included independently corroborated Indian aircraft losses, among them 04 Rafale, 01 MiG-29, 01 Mirage 2000, a Su-30 MKI and a Heron UAV worth nearly USD 09 million. Additionally, the breach of Indian Air Defence Shield in the shape of destruction of 02x S-400 Air Defence Systems speaks volumes of PAF's professional prowess.

The strategic lesson extends beyond a tally of aircraft and equipment lost by the enemy. Modern air combat demands that detection, tracking, decision-making and engagement work together. The Shaheen's keen vision finds a contemporary parallel in situational awareness: seeing the threat, understanding its significance and acting before the opportunity passes.

The Air Chief has described PAF's transformation in terms of a home-grown, Multi-Domain Kill Chain, bringing Unmanned Systems, Electronic Warfare, Space and Cyber assets into its operational approach by prioritizing indigenization through National Aerospace Science and Technology Parks. In that stated vision, strength rests not in an aircraft alone, but in the coordinated capabilities behind it.

poetry does not explain a missile's trajectory or establish a combat result. It speaks to the human discipline behind capability: the willingness to learn, the composure to judge and the resolve to act. Achievement must deepen that discipline, not diminish it. The Shaheen cannot remain aloft on yesterday's flight.

The impulse here is unmistakable: no station is final while the desire for flight endures. For the professional, that means remaining teachable after success, inquisitive after qualification and alert after recognition. Knowledge loses its power when its possessor decides there is nothing left to learn.

The National Aerospace Science and Technology Parks initiative brings a practical dimension to this pursuit. By seeking to connect industry, academia and government across aerospace and emerging technologies, NASTP spearheaded by Pakistan Air Force, places research and innovation within the larger ambition of national capability. Its deepest promise lies in the people and institutions able to turn an idea into a working system and to improve, sustain and eventually replace it.

The JF-17 Thunder offers another expression of that ambition through indigenization at Pakistan Aeronautical Complex. Self-reliance is built through such cumulative work: a design refined, a process mastered, a difficult problem solved. Its foundations lie as much in workshops and laboratories as in the aircraft that finally takes to the sky.

And the summons reaches beyond any PAF Air Base. To the young Pakistani Shaheen looking upwards, the first instrument of ascent may be a book, a skill or a question pursued with patience. The future needs those who can fly, but also those who can teach, design, build and discover. Each has a part in making national ambition real.

This Iqbal Day, let remembrance become resolve: excellence in uniform, integrity at work and purpose in youth. Let the child watching an aircraft cross the sky see more than the splendor of flight. Let that child recognize what learning, discipline and courage can make possible and find the resolve to begin.

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Briefs

Shehbaz, Nawaz discuss political...

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aimed at sustaining economic stability, attracting investment and maintaining the momentum of ongoing reforms. The leadership emphasised the need for political continuity to consolidate gains achieved in recent months.

The discussions took place amid growing political debate triggered by recent remarks from Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, who suggested that certain forces may be interested in replacing the existing political arrangement with a new system. His comments have fuelled speculation in political circles regarding possible efforts to reshape the country's political framework. Although the defence minister did not identify any specific individuals or groups, his remarks have prompted fresh debate about the future direction of national politics and the durability of the current setup.

Against this backdrop, the Jati Umra meeting is being viewed as part of the PML-N leadership's efforts to assess emerging political challenges and formulate a coordinated response. Sources said the leadership remains confident about the government's position but is closely monitoring developments involving coalition partners and opposition groups. The meeting concluded with consultations on future political strategy and governance priorities. While no formal statement was issued following the discussions, party insiders described the meeting as significant given the evolving political environment and the questions being raised about the cohesion of the ruling alliance.

Karachi-born US Senator ...

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a special connection with Pakistan, having been born in Karachi as the son of an American foreign service officer. "Throughout my life, I have experienced first hand the generosity, the goodness and the determination of the Pakistani people. I am proud to celebrate the strong people-to-people ties between the our two countries [...] I look forward to further strengthening the ties of friendship between the Americans and the Pakistani people," he said in a short message.

In 2021, Van Hollen had thanked Pakistan among other countries for helping evacuate American nationals and others stranded in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover of the country. Apart from Pakistan, the Maryland senator also spent time in India, where he studied at Kodaikanal International School in the Tamil Nadu state. He later studied philosophy at Swarthmore College, followed by his masters in public policy from Harvard University. He earned his Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University and was admitted to Maryland Bar in 1990.

He is a member of the US Senate since January 2017. Previously, he had also been a member of the US House of Representatives from 2003 to 2017. Following the Republicans' thumping defeat in the recently held midterms, Van Hollen was seen as the potential candidate for the Senate majority leader.

However, he put the speculation to rest by telling Fox 5, which is owned by the Fox Broadcasting Company, he had "made clear that I'm not looking to be the next Democratic leader.

KP announces ...

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potential threats posed by terrorists or their networks.

Legislation is being introduced for this purpose. However, under the proposed judicial system, the parties concerned will retain the right to appeal against a decision before the High Court.

It was also decided to strengthen public engagement by the police and the system for resolving disputes at the local level.

In this regard, Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) and liaison committees in tribal areas will be made functional and strengthened, while the jirga system will be promoted. In addition, 400 police facilitation smart desks will be established to make it easier for citizens to access police services and register complaints.

Serena hotels hosts 'Pankh Power to Rise' fundraiser

Renowned actor Fawad Khan hosted the evening. He said the TFP Fellowship is a conscious choice by the few and the brave who place themselves within the ecosystem of inequity to understand and change it

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs a human resource pipeline that can envision transformative reform and has the skills and experience to implement it. To propel this mission, Teach For Pakistan (TFP) hosted 'Pankh – The Power to Rise', a fundraiser with Serena Hotels' sponsorship, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. "Pakistan's youth are the strongest ambassadors for its growth. Teach For Pakistan helps them realise that potential, and we are proud to stand with them. Through our Public Diplomacy programme, Serena Hotels opens its doors to the causes that shape the young and talented people of Pakistan," said Aziz Boolani, Chief Executive Officer, Serena Hotels. Teach For Pakistan is a non-profit organization, working to expand educational opportunities for children across Pakistan. Every year, it recruits and develops talented university graduates and young professionals, placing them as Fellows in under-resourced schools for a two-year commitment. Through this experience, TFP Fellows become purpose-driven leaders who go on to drive lasting change in education, policy, and social development. "Beyond the classroom, our growing community of Alumni continues to work collectively toward a more equitable and prosperous Pakistan, ensuring that every child, regardless of circumstance, has the chance to discover and realize their full potential," Said Khadija Baldshair, Founder & CEO, Teach For Pakistan, in her opening address. Renowned actor Fawad Khan hosted the evening. He said the TFP Fellowship is a conscious choice by the few and the brave who place themselves within the ecosystem of inequity to understand and change it. He said the public-private partnership is producing impact, transforming schools and closing the achievement gap for children from under-resourced communities. He urged the audience and Pakistanis at home and abroad to support the broader reform process and join the TFP movement for equity. The evening also featured a musical performance by renowned singer Zeb Bangash, adding a special touch to the gathering. Her soulful performance created a memorable atmosphere, bringing together music and the shared spirit of supporting educational opportunities for children across Pakistan. "To visit the school, witness the dedication and love of the fellows for the students and also see its impact on the students has truly moved me. Two years is not a long time, and yet, this organization and everyone involved in it are changing the landscape of education in this country, and with it, the future of our children. It is a wonderful initiative, and I am just so grateful to have been a part of it." Shared Zeb Bangash. The event was attended by nearly 300 leaders from the business community, diplomatic corps, and civil society who pledged to support equitable education and leadership development. 100% of proceeds raised will directly fund Teach For Pakistan's Fellowship Program.





Pakistan's first astronaut to board Chinese space station

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan is set to make history in its space exploration as one Pakistani astronaut will join the Shenzhou-24 crewed flight mission as a payload specialist, according to an announcement by the China Manned Space Agency on Saturday. The mission will mark the first joint space-flight involving Chinese and foreign astronauts in the history of China's manned space program, representing a significant milestone in China-Pakistan space cooperation. After completing a short-term stay in orbit, the astronaut will return to Earth aboard the Shenzhou-23 spacecraft, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. In February 2025, China and Pakistan signed a cooperation agreement in Islamabad to select and train Pakistani astronauts for missions to China's space station.Following three rounds of rigorous selection and assessment, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Dand, were selected as reserve astronauts. They subsequently joined China's astronaut training program to prepare for the mission. After completing the required training and evaluations, one of the two candidates will carry out the crewed flight mission while the other will serve as a backup.



We aim to build strong team for next World Test Championship: Babar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Skipper Babar Azam has said that the inclusion of young and talented players in the squad aims at preparing a strong team for the next World Test Championship, adding that the blend of senior and junior players will give new energy to the team. Speaking at a press conference at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Sunday, Azam said that after the tour of England, it was decided to adopt a new strategy keeping in view the future of the team. "In the current World Test Championship, Pakistan's position is such that now our focus is on preparation for the next championship. For this purpose, six to eight new players have been included in the team. These players have been selected keeping in view their performances in first-class and A team cricket," he said. "All players have come after playing domestic and first-class cricket and are ready for the competition. Our effort will be to give opportunities to young players so that they can express their talent and take the team forward through good performances," Babar said. He said as captain, it is his responsibility to get the best performance from the players, take correct decisions on the field, use the bowlers in an appropriate manner and give every player responsibility according to his role. "We will learn lessons from past performances, focus on the future and try to play positive cricket," he added. To a question about his individual form, Azam said his thinking is always positive and he believes in improving his performance by playing as much cricket as possible. He admitted that there is a need for further improvement in the area where he has not shown the desired performance in recent times, and he is working on it in consultation with his coaches. "My effort is to perform better for the team through my preparation, training and hard work," he said. On a question about team selection and dropping players without giving them opportunities, the Test captain said after returning from England, the selectors and coaches selected the team through mutual consultation. "It is my responsibility to field the best eleven from the 15 players given to me and get performance from them. Selection matters fall within the domain of the selectors, however, where my opinion and rule are involved, I definitely give my suggestions. Consultation is held with coaches and selectors so that the best possible decisions can be taken for the team," he said. He said the success in the recent trination series has increased the confidence of the team and the players, adding that success in any series or match encourages the players and it also benefits in future competitions. "Our effort will be to maintain this positive environment and confidence in Test cricket as well. The inclusion of young players gives new energy to the team and I hope it will also be reflected on the field," he said.—DNA

Usman Khawaja denies throwing 'anyone under bus'

DNA

LONDON: Usman Khawaja insisted on Sunday he did not "throw anyone under the bus" by claiming the entire Australian team was in on the 2018 "Sandpapergate" plot and defended taking eight years to go public. The retired batsman re-ignited the infamous ball-tampering scandal in Cape Town on Saturday ahead of the release of his autobiography this week, where a chapter is dedicated to the issue. He alleged that it was not just Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft – who were all subsequently banned – who were responsible. "It was all of us. Not the batters, not the bowlers, not the staff. All of us," he said. Khawaja claimed Australia also employed the tactic during the previous Test at Port Elizabeth. In response Darren Lehmann, who was head coach at the time, denied there was widespread knowledge of the plot while Cricket Australia said it was "comfortable" with the findings of its original investigation. That probe found only Smith, Warner and Bancroft were in the know. "When I mentioned it was all of us, that's implying that whether we like it or not, we're all responsible for what happened together as a team," Khawaja said in a lengthy Instagram post on Sunday. "We need to take that collectively. That is all." He added: "I haven't thrown anyone under the bus. "The guys that are currently in the team right now and the other people that were there on the South African tour.

Govt weighs

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should be decided by the people rather than becoming solely a matter of political bargaining among parties.

The proposal, however, is already showing signs of becoming politically contentious, with several major political parties historically expressing reservations about the creation of new provinces and changes to provincial boundaries.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which has traditionally positioned itself as a defender of provincial autonomy under the 18th Amendment, is expected to closely scrutinise any plan that could alter Sindh's existing boundaries. Party leaders have consistently opposed measures they believe could weaken provincial powers or undermine the federation's balance.

Similarly, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), despite previously supporting the idea of a separate South Punjab province, may approach a broader nationwide restructuring plan with caution.

Six killed

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shooter's parents (24 years old) and his sister in their home, while he remained in critical condition in the hospital. "Closure of Streets in Krakow, the main market square in the old city and surrounding streets remained closed, with police allowing only essential workers to pass. Nearby stores closed their doors, and flags were lowered at the town hall. Residents placed candles at several locations in the area. The police in the capital Warsaw announced on Saturday the strengthening of security measures in crowded tourist areas.

President , PM...

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recognize their distinct national identity, a realization that ultimately became a driving force behind the struggle for Pakistan.

The prime minister noted that Iqbal's thoughts continue to inspire generations of young people, promoting intellectual growth, self-awareness and a broader understanding of the challenges facing the Muslim world. He said the poet-philosopher's interpretation of Islamic teachings continues to provide practical guidance to Muslims in the modern era.

Announcing a major national initiative, Shehbaz Sharif said the government would formally launch a yearlong programme of national and international events to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal. The celebrations will continue until November 9 next year and will include international conferences, academic and research seminars, literary festivals, exhibitions, educational competitions and cultural activities

Global Climate Summits, from Paris to Antalya

TARIQ USMANI



The scene from the year 2000 is still vividly etched on the canvas of my mind when Dr. Abdelhafedh, the former Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, and Dr. Norman Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution and Nobel Laureate, visited Pakistan. Dr. Abdelhafedh, who rendered invaluable services to the agricultural sectors of Turkey, Egypt, and several Middle Eastern countries, became my true environmental and agricultural motivation teacher in Pakistan. In Islamabad, I organized a prestigious ceremony in honor of these two great personalities, where both visionaries entrusted me with the monumental task of promoting modern scientific agriculture and preserving the land in Pakistan. We launched this mission through the platform of Pakistan's first agricultural and rural newspaper, the 'Daily 'Dehat'. However, within a few years, we realized that the biggest enemy of Pakistani agriculture was not traditional methods, but a silent killer known to the world as 'environmental pollution' and 'climate change'. Today, as the world prepares for the historic COP31 climate conference in the Turkish city of Antalya, I am reminded of the old archive scattered across the Facebook pages of Daily 'Dehat'. Following the devastation of the worst floods of 2010, we ran a year-long public awareness campaign against climate change. When the mainstream media of that era was fully engrossed in political glamour, 'Dehat' raised its voice for 12 consecutive months, going directly to the doorsteps of farmers, fighting for their rights and the protection of the land, highlighting how global industrial carbon is devouring our agricultural calendar and glaciers. Long before the Paris Agreement was signed, that digital archive from the 2010 Daily 'Dehat' campaign has today become Pakistan's greatest documentary evidence in this long journey from Paris to Antalya.

If we review the journey from the historic Paris Agreement (COP21) in 2015 to the present day, a massive gap is visible between the progress made on international forums and the ground reality. The year-by-year accounts of these summits are as follows:

• Paris, France (COP21 - 2015): The world dreamed of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. This was the exact dream we were screaming about during our 2010 campaign, warning that if temperatures rose, the Himalayan glaciers would melt.

• Marrakesh, Morocco (COP22 - 2016): The central focus of this meeting was to initiate the implementation rules of the Paris Agreement, and a roadmap for climate funding was negotiated.

• Bonn, Germany (COP23 - 2017): Under the presidency of Fiji, the "Talanoa Dialogue" was launched to allow countries to collectively review their climate targets and carbon emission reductions.

• Katowice, Poland (COP24 - 2018): The "Paris Rulebook" was finalized here for monitoring and transparency of carbon emissions, but documentary formalities were prioritized over practical action on the ground.

• Madrid, Spain (COP25 - 2019): Under the presidency of Chile, intense disagreements over carbon market rules (Article 6) prevented any major or final agreement from being reached.

• Glasgow, Scotland (COP26 - 2021): For the first time in history, a commitment was made to gradually "phase down" the use of coal, and the Glasgow Climate Pact was adopted, but no substantial technical assistance was provided to developing countries to transition to clean energy.

• Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt (COP27 - 2022): In the backdrop of Pakistan's catastrophic 2022 floods, our decades-old environmental advocacy achieved a moral victory, and the historic Loss and Damage Fund was approved.

• Dubai, UAE (COP28 - 2023): This summit marked a historic global consensus to transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy alternatives.

• Baku, Azerbaijan (COP29 - 2024): A new financial target (NCQG) of $300 billion annually was set for developing nations, but the truth is that it consists mostly of loans rather than grants, putting a further economic burden on poor countries.

• Belém, Brazil (COP30 - 2025): Held at the threshold for the Amazon rainforest, countries presented their new and more stringent climate targets (NDCs) and emphasized scaling up clean energy funding.

Today, we stand at the crossroads of Antalya (COP31 - 2026). The biggest agenda of this conference is "to build a bridge between the Arctic and the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya (HKH) region." The proposals presented by Pakistan in this dialogue for a "Green Cloud" (an informative database for data sharing) and a "Green Virtual University" are the critical need of the hour.

In the light of the agricultural mission entrusted to me by Dr. Norman Borlaug and Dr. Abdelhafedh, our historic 2010 environmental campaign, and the true testimonies of farmers present in our archive, I present this case before the global community through my newspaper and YouTube channel, CTV: the time for paper promises and lengthy meetings is officially over. The Pakistani farmer and the snow of Pakistan's mountains share a deep, unbreakable bond. If developed nations do not take immediate practical steps in Antalya to reduce carbon emissions and provide debt-free adaptation funds to poor countries, this climate crisis will not remain confined to our borders. Instead, it will engulf the food security of the entire world. The climate havoc and destruction unleashed upon our planet today is no longer just the issue of a single country, nation, or region—it is the final battle for the existence and survival of the human race. The world must accept the absolute truth that the deadly emissions of carbon gases know no specific geography, and nature's wrath does not differentiate based on color, race, or economic power. If we do not take emergency measures today to save our Mother Earth by rising above political expediencies and corporate profits, our name and trace will be erased from the pages of history. The Earth is no longer just calling out; it is suffering! This blue planet is our only and shared home; if it does not survive, we have no secondary refuge in the vastness of space. Time is slipping away like sand through our fingers, and if the global conscience does not wake up now, the next climate storm will not even give anyone the luxury of regret!

Islamabad POST
Monday, November 09, 2026

Briefs

Iran executes three men linked to anti-govt protests

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities executed three men on Sunday after convicting them of carrying out operations on behalf of Israel and the United States during anti-government protests in January, the judiciary said.
The death sentences against Hassan Divband, Hamid Kazemi and Reza Zanganeh "were carried out this morning after being upheld by the Supreme Court," the judiciary's Mizan Online website reported.
It said they were found guilty of "participating in operational activities on behalf of the Israeli Zionist regime, the United States and hostile groups" during the protests.
Mizan said the men threw Molotov cocktails and grenades, used bladed weapons and firearms and set fire to public facilities in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran.
Other defendants in the case received sentences ranging from five to 10 years in prison, it said.
The protest movement initially sparked in December by the high cost of living rapidly evolved into widespread anti-government demonstrations that peaked on January 8 and 9.
Iranian authorities reported more than 3,000 deaths, attributing the violence to "terrorist acts" orchestrated by the US and Israel.
Foreign-based NGOs, however, have cited higher figures and maintain that Iranian security forces fired on protesters.
The number of executions in Iran has risen since the start of the Middle East war, which was triggered in late February by US-Israeli strikes on the Islamic republic.–**APP**

Culture Day opened at Pakistan embassy college Beijing

BEIJING, Nov 7 (APP):Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Dr Syed Ali Asad Gillani on Saturday inaugurated the annual International Culture Day at Pakistan Embassy College Beijing (PECB). The event served as a medium of celebration of global diversity, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and reinforcing the spirit of international friendship.
Upon arrival, Ambassador Gillani toured the exhibition stalls, engaging with students and participants of over 50 countries, who showcased their distinct heritage, traditions, and customs. The campus was alive with traditional music, art, cuisine, and cultural displays representing Pakistan, China and various other global communities, creating a dynamic platform for intercultural engagement.
The programme featured a series of student performances highlighting the rich cultural mosaic of Pakistan's provinces, complemented by Chinese and African artistic presentations. An International Cultural Walk further accentuated the diversity of national identities represented within the College's student body. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Gillani underscored the historic significance of PECB as Beijing's first international school. He acknowledged its longstanding contribution to academic excellence and its pivotal role in strengthening the educational and cultural pillars of the Pakistan-China partnership. He noted that the College provides a unique environment that nurtures global citizenship, mutual respect, and international awareness among the next generation. Emphasizing the strategic value of soft power, the Ambassador stated, "Cultural exchanges are indispensable in bringing peoples and communities closer. They foster mutual appreciation and build the enduring bonds of friendship that underpin strong bilateral relations." He extended his appreciation to the College administration, faculty, students, and parents for their concerted efforts in organizing the event. The event was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, academics, media representatives, Chinese citizens, parents and the Pakistani community in Beijing, reflecting the inclusive and international nature of the event.–**APP**

Call for incentives to double tourism's contribution to GDP

The RCCI President appreciated the festival's efforts to promote tourism, cultural exchange and economic activity, emphasizing that sustained collaboration between the government and private sector can transform tourism into a major contributor to economic growth, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings



ISLAMABAD: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Nosherwan Khalil Khan, has called for providing incentives and facilitation to the private sector to unlock Pakistan's vast tourism potential and double the sector's contribution to the national economy over the next few years.
He emphasized that tourism currently contributes approximately 5.8 to 6 percent to Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which can be significantly increased through effective policies, public-private partnerships and investment-friendly initiatives.
"Pakistan has immense tourism potential. If domestic tourism is promoted and strengthened, it will pave the way for foreign investment and attract more international tourists. Providing incentives to the private sector is essential to developing tourism infrastructure, improving facilities and creating new economic opportunities," he said.
RCCI President Nosherwan Khalil Khan, along with Vice President Ikram Abbasi and Executive Committee members, attended the inaugural ceremony of the Second Pakistan Tourism, Sports and Family Festival at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, and other distinguished dignitaries were also present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.
Pakistan's largest Tourism, Sports and Family Festival commenced on Friday, showcasing the country's cultural diversity, traditional cuisine, handicrafts, sports and tourism potential through a range of colourful events and recreational activities.
The festival features cultural stalls representing all provinces, highlighting their distinctive heritage, traditions, lifestyles, cuisines and handicrafts. Traditional Pakistani food, products of renowned brands and handcrafted items made by artisans from across the country are among the major attractions.
Pakistan possesses extraordinary tourism potential, including five of the world's 14 peaks above 8,000 metres, extensive coastlines, deserts, river valleys, scenic landscapes and historical sites. However, the country's international tourism remains below its potential.
According to tourism sector analysis, Pakistan attracted approximately 97,500 international tourists in 2023. Meanwhile, Gilgit-Baltistan recorded a significant increase in tourism during 2024, with 21,862 international and 486,571 domestic tourists, reflecting growing interest in the region. Following the inauguration, the RCCI delegation, comprising President Nosherwan Khalil Khan, Vice President Ikram Abbasi and Executive Committee members Khurram Aftab and Zaid Iqbal, visited various stalls showcasing Pakistan's tourism potential, cultural heritage, traditional crafts, food, sports and recreational attractions.
The RCCI President appreciated the festival's efforts to promote tourism, cultural exchange and economic activity, emphasizing that sustained collaboration between the government and private sector can transform tourism into a major contributor to economic growth, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings.–**DNA**

Erdogan visits Azerbaijan in bid to ease rift

BAKU: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan on Sunday for Victory Day celebrations, hoping to ease an unusually public rift between two close regional allies. Tensions flared in September, when Baku revised school uniform regulations to prohibit additions deemed incompatible with secular education, effectively barring Islamic headscarves from classrooms. Erdogan's government has dismantled restrictions on hijabs in Turkiye.
Baku's move sparked protests at home and drew criticism from Erdogan's Islamist-rooted ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), including presidential adviser Oktay Saral, who demanded that Azerbaijan reverse the restrictions.
Aliyev's ruling party, Yeni Azerbaijan, denounced such comments as "interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs."
Baku also declared 31 Turkish nationals, including an opposition lawmaker and party leaders, persona non grata over critical social media posts. Erdogan subsequently dismissed Saral, but Aliyev stayed away from the October 30 summit of Turkic leaders in Ankara — despite a personal invitation from Erdogan. Instead, he sent Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. On Sunday, Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan's Fizuli district, which Baku recaptured in 2020 from Armenian separatist forces. A guard of honor was lined up at the local airport, where Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, welcomed Erdogan and his wife Emine, Azerbaijani media reported. Erdogan is expected to hold a joint press conference with Aliyev later in the afternoon. Ahead of his visit, Erdogan congratulated "dear brother" Aliyev, on Azerbaijan's "great victory" in its 2020 war with Armenia. Baku at the time retook part of the breakaway Karabakh region and surrounding districts, before seizing the rest of Karabakh in 2023. In the letter, Erdogan expressed confidence that "Drawing strength from our unwavering bonds of friendship and brotherhood, founded on the principle of 'One nation, two states,' the two countries would continue to work in "close cooperation and solidarity." He said earlier that he hoped the trip would provide an opportunity to take "necessary steps." "There is no obstacle that the brotherhood between Turkiye and Azerbaijan cannot overcome," he told reporters on Thursday. Analysts say the quarrel also reflects deeper disagreements over Baku's diplomatic independence and its close ties to Israel. "Azerbaijan-Turkiye tensions stemmed from the fact that Baku does not see itself as the younger brother in this alliance and insists on relations between equal partners," Elkhan Shahinoglu, head of the Baku-based Atlas Research Center, told AFP.–**APP**

'Dare' to marry, have kids: Pope's advice to young people

His remarks came against the backdrop of a significant demographic transformation in Latin America, where fertility rates have fallen sharply over the past several decades.

MONTEVIDEO:Pope Leo XIV has urged young people to embrace marriage and family life, calling on them not to fear lifelong commitment as he continued his 12-day tour of South America amid declining fertility rates, changing social attitudes and growing secularisation across the region. Addressing a large gathering of young people during an evening prayer vigil at Montevideo's Centenario Stadium on Saturday, the Pope encouraged the younger generation to take the decision to marry and raise children, describing marriage as a commitment that should be embraced with confidence rather than fear. "Friends, young people, dare to take the step of marrying, starting a family yourselves. Do not be afraid of 'forever'!" he said. The pontiff also appealed to married couples to welcome children despite growing economic and social pressures, saying: "Married couples, open your home to life, even when the world tells you that a child is a burden." His remarks came against the backdrop of a significant demographic transformation in Latin America, where fertility rates have fallen sharply over the past several decades. According to the United Nations-based demographic data cited by regional development agencies, the average fertility rate in Latin America and the Caribbean declined from nearly six children per woman in the 1950s to around 1.8 in 2024, below the replacement level of approximately 2.1 children per woman. Uruguay is among the countries experiencing particularly low fertility. Its rate stood at approximately 1.40 children per woman in 2024, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Chile, Costa Rica and Argentina have also recorded low fertility levels. The declining trend has been attributed to several interconnected factors, including increased access to education, greater participation of women in the workforce, wider availability of modern contraceptive methods, lower child mortality and changing family preferences. Rising living costs and the postponement of marriage and parenthood have also become important considerations in discussions about family formation. During his address, Pope Leo also spoke about the growing challenge of secularisation and religious indifference, observing that the Christian faith was no longer being passed on as readily in some communities as it had been in previous generations. He said that religious communities in Uruguay had learned to preserve their faith despite becoming a smaller part of an increasingly secular society. He urged believers to strengthen their relationship with Christianity through prayer, worship and service to others. Referring to the biblical town of Bethlehem, the Pope said that a community's importance should not be measured by its size or social influence. He noted that even when religious communities become smaller, their contribution to society and the lives of individuals can remain significant. The pontiff also encouraged young people to consider religious vocations, including priesthood and consecrated life, urging those who felt called to such service not to allow fear of missing other opportunities to prevent them from following their convictions. He further called for greater compassion, forgiveness, honesty and generosity, asking Christians to put the needs of others before personal comfort and material interests. Earlier on Saturday, Pope Leo visited Casavalle, a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Montevideo affected by drug trafficking, gang violence and social deprivation. During the visit, he met residents and highlighted the difficulties faced by children growing up in communities affected by crime and insecurity. He expressed concern over the impact of violence on young people and their access to education and a safe childhood. "We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that there are children in Uruguay who do not go to school for fear of never returning home," he said. He also criticised the conditions in which some families were living, stressing that children in a country with substantial natural resources should not have to suffer hunger, violence or the loss of their lives.–**DNA**

Pak-China discuss regional coop, CPEC strategic importance

The meetings in Beijing were significant in highlighting the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China and identifying opportunities for closer cooperation, particularly in relation to the future development of Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

BEIJING: A Pakistani delegation comprising foreign affairs expert Muhammad Mehdi and bureaucrats from Balochistan has visited China at the invitation of the Chinese government.
The visit was organised by the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad.During their stay in Beijing, the delegation held meetings with senior officials from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tianjin University and other key government and business institutions. Discussions focused on Pakistan-China bilateral relations, regional cooperation, the strategic importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the development of Gwadar Port and ways to expand trade ties between the two countries.
The Pakistani delegation met Cheng Wei, Counsellor in the South Asia Division of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Tianjin Li Xiang, Deputy DirectorGeneral at the ministry; and Gao Yuqing, Director of the Tianjin International Trade and Shipping Centre.The meetings provided an opportunity to discuss ways to further strengthen the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China and explore new avenues for economic and commercial cooperation, according to a statement issued here.Speaking during the meetings, foreign affairs expert Muhammad Mehdi said Gwadar was not merely a Pakistani port but also served as a potential trade gateway to West Asia. He said the port offered China one of the shortest maritime routes for trade with Europe and Africa.Mehdi said the security situation in Balochistan was gradually improving as a result of effective strategies adopted by Pakistan's security forces. However, he stressed that Pakistan and China needed to develop a coordinated joint strategy to address the security challenges facing CPEC.Congratulating Chinese officials on the initiative to make Tianjin Port the world's first carbon-free port, Mehdi expressed hope that similar modern, environmentally friendly and sustainable development projects could be developed for the ports of Karachi and Gwadar in the future.He said that bringing Pakistan's port infrastructure in line with modern international standards could open up new opportunities for economic cooperation between Pakistan and China.During the discussions, Gwadar Port Authority Director Qazi Nematullah appreciated China's ongoing support for social welfare initiatives in Gwadar. He also discussed the prospects for further cooperation in healthcare, including the establishment of a hospital in the port city.Himal Dashti, representing Gwadar Port Development, thanked the Chinese officials and expressed appreciation for Muhammad Mehdi's detailed and in-depth discussion of issues relating to Gwadar.During the meetings, Hayat Murad, representing Pakistan Customs, presented traditional Balochi shawls to the Chinese hosts and Muhammad Mehdi as a gesture of friendship and cultural goodwill. He also presented them with traditional Balochi caps, highlighting the cultural heritage of Balochistan.The meetings in Beijing were significant in highlighting the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China and identifying opportunities for closer cooperation, particularly in relation to the future development of Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The global ocean economy generated $3.5 trillion in gross value added in 2025 and supported 103 million full-time-equivalent jobs, according to a report released by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The scale of the sector reflects the ocean's central role in global trade, food production and coastal livelihoods.At the 7th Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance in Sanya, China, experts from several countries called for closer international cooperation in maritime security, fisheries and marine conservation. "The ocean connects all of us," said Jayanath Colombage, former chief of the Navy of Sri Lanka and former ambassador of Sri Lanka to Indonesia, in an interview during the forum. The nature of maritime security has changed significantly, Colombage said. "Gone are the days when maritime security was only about navies and ships. Now it has cyberspace, undersea cables, satellites and outer space." The growing importance of these networks is reflected in the global digital economy. Submarine telecommunications cables carry more than 99% of international data traffic worldwide, according to the International Telecommunication Union. Damage to these cables can disrupt communications, financial services and other essential operations. Maritime transport carries a similarly large share of global commerce. Global trade in ocean-related goods and services reached approximately $2.5 trillion in 2025, with services accounting for 58% of the total, according to data released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in June 2026. For nations positioned along key maritime arteries, safeguarding these commercial lifelines translates directly into regional cooperation. Citing Sri Lanka's strategic position in the Indian Ocean, Colombage highlighted its maritime and infrastructure cooperation with China as a concrete example of how major trade partners can support local port development and connectivity. Manufactured goods shipped from China to the Middle East, Europe and Africa pass close to Sri Lanka, as do oil and gas shipments from the Persian Gulf bound for China, Colombage said. He described port investment and maritime connectivity as important areas for continued cooperation between the two countries, adding that Chinese investment and technological capabilities could support Sri Lanka's economic development, CEN reported. Rethinking the Blue Harvest While trade routes form the circulatory system of the ocean economy, fisheries and aquaculture represent its vital lifeblood for millions of coastal residents.–**DNA**

Erdogan visits Azerbaijan

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan on Sunday for Victory Day celebrations, hoping to ease an unusually public rift between two close regional allies. Tensions flared in September, when Baku revised school uniform regulations to prohibit additions deemed incompatible with secular education, effectively barring Islamic headscarves from classrooms.
Erdogan's government has dismantled restrictions on hijabs in Turkiye.
Baku's move sparked protests at home and drew criticism from Erdogan's Islamist-rooted ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), including presidential adviser Oktay Saral, who demanded that Azerbaijan reverse the restrictions. Aliyev's ruling party, Yeni Azerbaijan, denounced such comments as "interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs."
Baku also declared 31 Turkish nationals, including an opposition lawmaker and party leaders, persona non grata over critical social media posts. Erdogan subsequently dismissed Saral, but Aliyev stayed away from the October 30 summit of Turkic leaders in Ankara — despite a personal invitation from Erdogan. Instead, he sent Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. On Sunday, Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan's Fizuli district, which Baku recaptured in 2020 from Armenian separatist forces.
A guard of honor was lined up at the local airport, where Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, welcomed Erdogan and his wife Emine, Azerbaijani media reported. Erdogan is expected to hold a joint press conference with Aliyev later in the afternoon. Ahead of his visit, Erdogan congratulated "dear brother" Aliyev, on Azerbaijan's "great victory" in its 2020 war with Armenia. Baku at the time retook part of the breakaway Karabakh region and surrounding districts, before seizing the rest of Karabakh in 2023. In the letter, Erdogan expressed confidence that "Drawing strength from our unwavering bonds of friendship and brotherhood, founded on the principle of 'One nation, two states,' the two countries would continue to work in "close cooperation and solidarity."–**APP**

DC removed for postponing exams

DNA

JEHLUM: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has removed Jhelum Deputy Commissioner Mir Reza Ozgen from his post over his orders to postpone Intermediate examinations due to her expected visit to the district on November 10. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Rawalpindi had postponed the Computer Science papers of the Intermediate Second Annual Examinations, scheduled for November 10, until November 30 on the recommendation of the Jhelum deputy commissioner. The recommendation was made in view of CM Maryam's visit to Jhelum and Pind Dadan Khan and anticipated traffic congestion.
In a post on X, the chief minister said the incident amounted to a clear disregard for her directions, announcing that the deputy commissioner was being removed from his post with immediate effect. The Punjab chief minister said she had explicitly directed that her visits to districts should not cause any inconvenience or disruption to the public, particularly students. She said no inconvenience should be caused to the public during her visits, adding that the authorities were expected to ensure that students and other members of the public did not face disruption. In a subsequent post, she shared a notification confirming the DC's transfer and directing the officer to report to the Punjab Services and General Administration Department for further instructions.

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Briefs

Two skydivers killed

CALIFORNIA: Two skydivers who were taking part in an organized skydiving event in California were killed after colliding mid-air and plummeting to the ground. The accident occurred Friday and involved two licensed, experienced skydivers at Skydive Elsinore, the company said in a statement. The Riverside County Fire Department said the two had suffered traumatic injuries and were taken to a local hospital in critical condition. Anadolu English (@anadoluagency) November 7, 2026 Skydive Elsinore says the free fall portion of the dive and the opening of the parachutes was normal, but as they were preparing to land, the two skydivers collided at approximately 150 feet (about 46 meters) above the ground. "The collision caused their parachutes to become entangled, and both sustained critical injuries when they reached the ground," Skydive Elsinore said in a statement.–DNA

Iran hangs three men

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities executed three men on Sunday after convicting them of carrying out operations on behalf of Israel and the United States during anti-government protests in January, the judiciary said. The death sentences against Hassan Divband, Hamid Kazemi and Reza Zanganeh "were carried out this morning after being upheld by the Supreme Court," the judiciary's Mizan Online website reported. It said they were found guilty of "participating in operational activities on behalf of the Israeli Zionist regime, the United States and hostile groups" during the protests.–DNA

President, PM call for inter-faith harmony

Diwali is a Hindu festival involving lighting candles, worship, celebrations and prayers. It is celebrated to mark the day when Hindu deity Lord Rama returned home after his 14-year exile

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday extended greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and worldwide on the occasion of Diwali, reaffirming their commitment to minority rights.

Diwali is a Hindu festival involving lighting candles, worship, celebrations and prayers. It is celebrated to mark the day when Hindu deity Lord Rama returned home after his 14-year exile. It is a five-day festival and during this time, houses are cleaned and windows are opened to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

In his message on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said, "The festival of lights conveys a profound message of promoting peaceful coexistence in human relations and social life. "The enduring belief in a bright, prosperous and hopeful future is one of the most cherished attributes of Diwali."

He described the Hindu community as "a valued and integral part of our national fabric". "The diverse cultural and religious traditions within our society constitute a valuable social asset. Pakistan takes immense pride in its religious and cultural diversity,"



he added. The premier reiterated the government's commitment to protecting the religious and civil rights of minorities, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. "The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of the religious and civil rights of minorities. The government remains firmly committed to safeguarding the rights, dignity and religious freedoms of all citizens, irrespective of religion, faith, colour or ethnicity. Promoting religious harmony, mutual unity and respect is our shared responsibility," he said. The premier added: "A society that embraces diverse cultures and traditions and upholds the principles of peaceful coexistence is one that ensures equal educational and economic opportunities for all its citizens." He called on the nation to foster inter-faith harmony, strengthen bonds of fraternity and brotherhood and work together towards a future founded on peace, tolerance and mutual understanding. 'Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens'

In his message, President Zardari said, "The festival of lights celebrates the symbolism of triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and hope over despair. Its message of compassion and renewal reminds us that each of us can bring light into the lives of others through kindness, understanding, compassion and care."

Departing UN chief calls this 'a moment of truth' about global warming

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: As United Nations climate talks kick off in Turkiye on Monday, Secretary-General António Guterres has an urgent message for world leaders: "This is a moment of truth." He's delivered variations of this ominous warning about climate change, caused by the burning of fossil fuels like oil and gas, in the past decade, often with increasingly hyperbolic language. Three years ago, he even said, "the era of global boiling has arrived, " referring to rising temperatures and increasing extreme weather, both results of climate change. But this time, it will be his last global warming sermon as head of the United Nations as his second and last term expires at the end of the year. And the sense of urgency is palpable in a world with worsening



killer heat waves, storms, floods and droughts amid ever higher temperatures and, on top of all of it, El Ni o, a naturally occurring climate pattern that scrambles weather systems around the globe.

"This is a moment of truths. We can no longer wait, we can no longer have endless discussions in which everybody tries to push the responsibility to someone else. Everybody must do more, everybody must do more now," Guterres said he will tell leaders of the UN climate conference, known as COP31, scheduled Nov. 9-20.

The "moment of truth" message weighs so heavily that the Secretary-General used the phrase three times in 20 minutes during a recent exclusive interview with The Associated Press from his 38th floor conference room at UN headquarters. He discussed his one last push in the fight against climate change and a ten-year tenure where he became one of the most visible advocates urging often recalcitrant countries to do more

Strong earthquake shakes Japan

TOKYO: A strong earthquake shook central Japan early Sunday, shattering store windows, causing people to flee buildings and leaving at least 22 people injured, according to local media. Japan's Meteorological Agency put the quake's magnitude at 5.7, while the US Geological Survey reported it at magnitude 5.5. Smaller aftershocks were reported.

A wide area near Aichi Prefecture was affected, including the city of Hamamatsu, the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Nara and nearby prefectures of Yamanashi, where Mount Fuji is located, as well as Gifu.

Japanese TV footage showed shattered store windows and scattered shards of glass on the streets. A bookstore was left with mounds of books that had flown off the shelves. The injuries included people who fell from stairs while they were trying to flee. The quake, which struck at 1:04 a.m., was located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) below the earth's surface in Shizuoka Prefecture. Aichi and Shizuoka are neighboring regions. They are far enough from Tokyo that the quake was not felt there. The most violent shaking was felt in Aichi, according to official seismic assessments.

The meteorological agency warned people to brace for possible strong quakes in the coming week, especially the next two to three days.

"Please be on the lookout for mudslides, falling rocks and the possible effects from rainfall," Ayataka Ebita, an agency official, told reporters. He said no apparent change was detected so far to the Nankai Trough plate, where scientists say a megaquake can possibly hit. The Shinkansen bullet trains were running at slower speeds in the affected areas as a precautionary measure. Sometimes quakes can damage the railways the trains run on. Japan is located in an area that is prone to earthquakes. Authorities frequently instruct people to stock up on bottled water, food and batteries, have plans ready to hide under tables and keep comfortable walking shoes at hand.–DNA

Impeached Paraguay leader charged

ASUNCION, Paraguay: Paraguayan prosecutors charged ex-president Santiago Pena and took him into custody Saturday over a banking crisis that saw millions cut off from their money and sparked major protests. Pena, Paraguay's youngest-ever president, was removed from office by the Senate on Friday, just three days after the collapse of a leading bank with which he had business links.

He had offered to resign but lawmakers impeached him instead, thereby stripping him of the immunity he would have enjoyed had he stepped down. In a fast-moving sequence of events, he was brought before prosecutors on Saturday and charged with "breach of trust and mismanagement for personal gain."

After a hearing with Pena, Judge Hernan Otazu told reporters he had ordered the former president taken into pre-trial custody and held at the same Asuncion facility where he was taken after his removal from office on Friday. An indictment against Pena states that "between 2023 and 2026, UENO BANK S.A. allegedly received deposits and loans from public and pension entities" and that it "was also allegedly granting loans to companies linked to the bank's economic group in an irregular manner." Pena was grilled for around three hours over his links to Ueno Bank, a digital-first fintech company with which nearly half of Paraguay's population of 6.5 million have accounts.–DNA

UK govt loses court appeals

LONDON: The UK government was wrong when it failed to consider whether a Syrian asylum seeker held for ransom in Libya had been "exploited" under human trafficking laws, a court has ruled. The Court of Appeal decision means that refugees who have been held hostage for money on their way to the UK may be eligible for the support and recovery package that trafficking victims are entitled to, The Guardian reported. The case was brought by an unnamed Syrian national who fled his country in 2021 to avoid being conscripted into the military, which was embroiled in a brutal civil war under President Bashar Assad. According to court documents, he traveled to Libya where he and other Syrian refugees were abducted by armed men, taken to a prison, beaten, and told they would not be released unless their captors received $7,000. The Syrian man was forced to phone his family to request the money while the other captives were beaten in the background.–DNA





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