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Portuguese FM hails Pakistan's constructive role

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Akcent brings dance-pop to Pakistan



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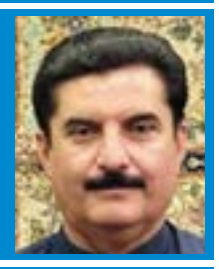
Kundi says KP to host PSL opener



Detailed News On Page-01

Briefs

Govt issues security alert for WhatsApp users

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Emergency Response Team on Monday issued an advisory highlighting multiple security vulnerabilities in WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business across several platforms.

The advisory identifies security flaws affecting WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business on Android, iOS and Mac Desktop, and WhatsApp for Windows.

"WhatsApp has published its 2026 security advisories covering five vulnerabilities fixed in the May and November 2026 updates: CVE-2026-102769, CVE-2026-44908, CVE-2026-23871, CVE-2026-23866 and CVE-2026-23863," the advisory said. According to the advisory, the flaws could allow deletion of locally stored files, limited leakage of chat database information, disclosure of a device's IP address, processing of attacker-controlled media or URLs on a victim's device, and execution of a malicious file disguised as a harmless document, it said.

Peshawar to host PSL opener

SPORTS DESK

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday that Peshawar will host the opening ceremony and the inaugural match for the 12th edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) scheduled for next year.

Naqvi made the announcement while addressing a press conference alongside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in Peshawar.

"The biggest announcement today, for which I congratulate both the governor and Peshawar Zalmi, is that after 12 years, PSL will hold its opening ceremony and first match in Peshawar," the PCB chief said. He added that multiple matches will be held in the provincial capital, with the schedule to be finalised later by PSL. The 12th edition of the cricket tournament will be held from March 18 to May 2, 2027.

Denmark to ban mobile phones in schools

COPENHAGEN: Denmark will propose a ban on mobile phones in its primary and lower secondary school system as well as content filtering on the schools' network starting from the new academic year in 2027, the Danish education ministry said on Monday. Countries including the Netherlands, South Korea and Italy have banned smartphones in schools due to concerns over their impact on concentration and behavior, while Poland and the Czech Republic in June proposed a similar ban.

"Children should be able to go to school without constantly being distracted by things like social media, online shopping, and gaming," Education Minister Magnus Heunicke said in a statement. The ban also includes other private electronic devices with Internet access. Content filters will be implemented to block websites that have no educational or pedagogical relevance, including social media, gaming and shopping sites, during lesson time. – **APP**

FM Paulo Rangel

Portugal supports Pakistan for GSP plus

Pakistan, Portugal Reaffirm Commitment to Stronger Bilateral Ties as Diplomatic Relations Mark 77 Years

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has Portugal's full support for the European Union's (EU) GSP+ status, Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel said on Monday during Pakistan-Portugal delegation-level talks held in Islamabad. Pakistan's current GSP+ status is set to expire in 2027, after which Islamabad will seek a renewal. GSP+ status is a special incentive awarded to developing countries to "pursue sustainable development and good governance" in exchange for cutting import duties to zero on two-thirds of the tariff lines of its exports.

The status was granted to Pakistan in 2014, resulting in a 108 per cent increase in Pakistani textile exports to the EU due to concessional tariffs. In October 2023, the European Parliament unanimously voted to extend the GSP+ status for another four years until 2027 for developing countries, including Pakistan. The upcoming GSP+ monitoring mission will scrutinise Pakistan's record on 32 international conventions tied to the trade scheme. Maintaining GSP+ status is critical for Pakistan to keep export costs low.

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Portuguese FM meets President PM

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasised the potential to further strengthen Pakistan-Portugal relations through greater cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, labour mobility, renewable energy, education, technology and parliamentary exchanges during a meeting with Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Paulo Rangel, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The President congratulated Portugal on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the term commencing on 1 January 2027 and wished it a successful tenure. He said Pakistan values Portugal as an important partner within the European Union and sees considerable scope for expanding

Continued on Page 06

Malaysian PM extends warm welcome to CDF Asim Munir



The COAS & CDF appreciated Malaysia's constructive role in promoting peace and stability in Southeast Asia and reiterated Pakistan's resolve to further deepen defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of both countries

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), undertook an official visit to Malaysia aimed at further strengthening bilateral defence and military cooperation.

The COAS & CDF called on the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Perdana Putra, Putrajaya. The meeting focused on bilateral relations, defence and security cooperation, and evolving regional and global security dynamics. Both leaders exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and underscored the importance of sustained engagement to promote regional peace, stability and security. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Field Marshal and acknowledged the longstanding bonds of friendship, mutual trust and

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal H.E. Paulo Rangel called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 23 November 2026. – DNA

PM Shehbaz says

Govt committed to meet housing needs of the have-nots

Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Programme crosses Rs100 billion loan milestone

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Programme" has crossed the milestone of providing loans worth over 100 billion rupees to citizens. A ceremony to celebrate this achievement was held in Islamabad. Addressing the ceremony, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the families who have received homes with dignity and said today is a day of happiness for thousands of families. He said disbursement of loans through banks to deserving families is a commendable achievement, adding that the process had been free from corruption and favouritism.

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Shujaat, Naqvi discuss creation of new provinces

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The debate over the creation of new provinces and devolution of powers came under discussion on Monday when Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence in Lahore.

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal urges political unity

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has called for political unity and reforms to restore public confidence in state institutions, saying the country must overcome divisions to tackle its economic and other challenges.

Addressing a Youth Card ceremony in Karachi on Monday, Bilawal said politicians must maintain public hope and confidence in the system, warning that if political leaders themselves became disillusioned, they could not expect people to trust it.

"Rulers should abandon the politics of hatred and division and focus on public welfare," he said, adding that the country could confront every crisis and disaster

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Bangladesh vows to arrest Hasina

DHAKA: Bangladesh will arrest and jail former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina if she returns from India, a senior government minister said, as her plans to come home in December fuel political tension and renewed street violence. Dhaka is instead seeking Hasina's extradition from India, where she has lived since fleeing Bangladesh in 2024, and expects New Delhi to comply with an existing extradition treaty, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam told Reuters.

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Armenia proposes new Constitution

NEWS DESK

TBILISI: Armenia published a draft proposal of a new constitution on Monday, a major step toward signing a formal peace agreement with its neighbor and longtime foe Azerbaijan. The charter's unveiling puts pressure on Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to secure a deal with Baku after he won a new term in office in June in a vote widely viewed as a referendum on his handling of the peace process.

"I stake my entire political, human and moral credibility on this issue and say that after the adoption of the new Constitution, we will not only sign and ratify a peace agreement with Azerbaijan,

Continued on Page 06

Opposition leaders write to SC, FCC about Imran Khan health

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly and Senate opposition leaders, Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, on Monday wrote to the chief justices of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), the Supreme Court (SC) and the Islamabad High Court (IHC), urging them to take notice of the health condition of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi.

Imran has been in prison since August 2023. The IHC has allowed him twice-a-week meetings — on Tuesdays and Thursdays — with his family, lawyers and other associates. But despite multiple court directives, the PTI founder has been restricted from meeting visitors. Concerns about his health have also arisen in the past year, with the PTI demanding he be given medical treatment by his personal physicians, a demand as yet unheeded by the government.

In an open letter to the same three judges last week, Imran appealed for medical treatment for himself and Bushra Bibi. Advocate Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry, counsel for the incarcerated PTI founder, told Dawn on Monday that the letter by Achakzai and Abbas urged the SC to convert the application into a petition and hear it as a case of basic human rights.

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National Day of Oman



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Malik Rashid State Minister for National Food Security, Ambassador of Oman Fahad bin Sulaiman bin Khalaf Al Kharusi and others cutting cake to celebrate the Glorious National Day of Sultanate of Oman. – DNA

Polio programme begins training ahead of campaign

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) has launched a Training of Trainers (ToT) session to prepare for the December 2026 National Immunization Days (NIDs), starting December 12, with a focus on strengthening campaign planning, coordination and technical capacity to ensure every child receives life-saving polio vaccines.

The session brought together polio programme master trainers and relevant teams to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to train district and union council-level vaccination teams.

The training covered the current polio epidemiological situation, key lessons from the November campaign, microplanning, monitoring and evaluation, vaccine management and targeted strategies to reach mobile and migrant populations._APP

Finance Division clarifies Rs 160b PM package for KP

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Division on Monday clarified that Rs160 billion announced by the Prime Minister for the Area Development Secretariat, comprising 12 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was in addition to the Rs151.1 billion allocated for the current and development budgets of eight Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) during FY2026-27.

In a clarification issued in response to commentary published in a section of the press regarding the Prime Minister's financial package for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Finance Division said that Rs10 billion had so far been released out of the announced Rs160 billion.

"This is in addition to the Rs151.1 billion current and development budget allocation for eight Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) in FY 2026-27," the Finance Division clarified.

It further said that the releases were being made in accordance with the existing fiscal transfer arrangements._APP

POL imports rise 9.34% to US$ 5.63 bln in July-October

ISLAMABAD: The imports of the overall petroleum group increased by 9.34 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2026-27), as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The total imports of the petroleum group during July-October (2026-27) were recorded at US$ 5,630.718 million against imports of US$ 5,149.760 million during the corresponding period of last year. Among the petroleum group, imports of petroleum products increased by 10.62 percent, from US$ 1,938.669 million to US$ 2,144.582 million during the period under review.

Similarly, imports of petroleum crude increased by 33.07 percent, from US$ 1,971.508 million to US$ 2,623.526 million, while imports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) rose by 18.88 percent, from US$ 314.748 million to US$ 374.177 million. However, imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) declined by 47.19 percent, from US$ 924.760 million to US$ 488.358 million. On a year-on-year basis, petroleum group imports increased by 17.14 percent to US$ 1,610.346 million in October.–**APP**



ISLAMABAD: Family photo of Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar with Paulo Rangel, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal, and members of both delegations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs .DNA.

Korea-Pak collaborate to boost heritage

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Republic of Korea have launched a joint initiative to strengthen the country's capacity for the conservation and management of World Heritage Sites, marking a new phase of bilateral cooperation in cultural heritage preservation.

Under the initiative, the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM), Ministry of National Heritage & Culture, in collaboration with the Korea Heritage Agency (KHA), commenced a four-day Capacity Building Programme for the Conservation and Management of World Heritage in Pakistan, running from November 23-26. The opening ceremony was attended by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, Han Sung-ho, and Secretary, Ministry of National Heritage & Culture, Asad Rehman Gilani, along with federal and provincial government representatives, international experts and other stakeholders.

The programme aims to enhance Pakistan's institutional, technical and professional capabilities in safeguarding its World Heritage properties through international expertise, knowledge-sharing and improved coordination among relevant institutions.

A key feature of the opening day was a Town Hall Meeting, bringing together federal and provincial representatives, international experts and stakeholders to review the existing conservation and management framework for Pakistan's

World Heritage properties and discuss challenges and priorities for their effective protection.

Over the next three days, participants will attend specialised lectures, technical discussions and practical training sessions conducted by three international experts. The sessions will cover the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), management planning, conservation methodologies and threat analysis.

A field monitoring exercise at Taxila, one of Pakistan's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, is also scheduled for November 25 to provide participants with practical exposure to heritage monitoring and management.

The programme marks the first year of a three-year cooperation framework between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea (2026–2028), designed to develop sustainable professional expertise and strengthen long-term institutional capacities for World Heritage conservation and management.–**DNA**

Maritime Technical Institute to be established

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Monday said that Pakistan-China cooperation will establish a new engineering and technology institute in Gwadar to train young people in specialised skills required by the port, shipping and maritime industries, He was speaking at a pre-board meeting of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), where development projects and initiatives to strengthen technical education in the port city were reviewed. Briefing the meeting, GPA Chairman Noorul Haq Baloch said the GPA, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI), University of Gwadar and China's Qingdao Harbour Vocational and Technical College had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish the Pakistan Overseas Engineering and Technology Institute in Gwadar. Welcoming the initiative, Junaid Chaudhry said the agreement would lay the foundation for specialised maritime education, technical training and human resource development. He stressed that technical education should be aligned with the operational requirements of ports and the maritime industry. Under the five-year cooperation framework (2026-2030), the partner institutions will collaborate on academic programmes, curriculum development, skills training, faculty development, joint research and practical learning. The proposed curriculum will cover navigation technology, marine engineering, maritime safety, ship technology and port machinery to prepare students for the evolving needs of the shipping and maritime sectors. The minister emphasised the importance of equipping young people in Gwadar and Balochistan with industry-relevant skills, saying technical education would improve employment prospects, support economic growth and develop a skilled workforce for emerging industries. He described the MoU as an important milestone in Pakistan-China educational cooperation, saying it would strengthen institutional capacity, promote industry-oriented education and expand professional opportunities for local communities.–**DNA**

AJK varsity to award degrees to 7,773 graduates

ISLAMABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) will award degrees to 7,773 students at its 22nd convocation on November 25 at the King Abdullah Campus in Muzaffarabad, with President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the university Dr Muhammad Najeeb Khan attending as chief guest, as the university has finalised arrangements for the ceremony. According to a university press release issued on Monday received here, the convocation will recognise the academic achievements of graduates from various disciplines and programmes, including 48 gold medalists, 18 PhD scholars and 145 MPhil/MS scholars. Of the total graduates, 5,204 will receive degrees in BA, BSc, MA, MSc and LLB annual programmes, while 1,366 students from on-campus BS and LLB programmes will be awarded degrees. Another 800 graduates belong to affiliated colleges, while 240 on-campus students will receive MA and MSc degrees. The university has constituted various committees through the Registrar's Office to oversee arrangements and ensure the smooth conduct of the ceremony. Preparations have been completed under the supervision of the Vice Chancellor.–**APP**

OIC-COMSTECH vaccinology course kicks off

ISLAMABAD: An international training course titled "Vaccinology: From Research and Development to Vaccine Production" commenced at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, on Monday. The six-week course has attracted more than 2,000 registrations from 70 countries. Around 100 researchers, students and health professionals are attending physically at ICCBS, while the remaining participants are joining the sessions online. The course, jointly designed and organised by OIC-COMSTECH, the Pasteur Institute of Iran and ICCBS, will continue until December 28. It aims to strengthen participants' understanding of immunology, vaccine design, research, emerging vaccine platforms and the scientific processes involved in vaccine development and production.

The programme comprises 15 technical lectures followed by a final examination. The sessions cover immune responses and protection, vaccine antigens.–APP

Pakistan invites Portuguese investors to tap into $40b

ISLAMABAD: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) of Pakistan and Portugal's Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (AICEP) recently convened a high-profile Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum, marking a significant step toward enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two nations. The forum served as a platform to invite Portuguese investors to explore promising investment projects worth $40 billion across diverse sectors of Pakistan's economy. Addressing the inaugural session, Dr. Erfa Iqbal, Additional Secretary (Country Wing) of SIFC, emphasized the enormous potential for investment and trade between Pakistan and Portugal. She highlighted sectors such as textiles and cotton, information technology, aerospace, defence, manufacturing, electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, agriculture, and food processing as key areas ripe for collaboration. Dr. Erfa underlined that Pakistan has a pipeline of projects valued at $22 billion in sectors including industry and production, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, mining, ports and maritime, tourism, oil and gas, power, food security, and agriculture. Despite this, the existing bilateral trade volume of approximately $250 million remains significantly below the untapped potential, signaling vast opportunities for expansion. The SIFC invited Portuguese investors to leverage Pakistan's attractive investment environment by engaging through various mechanisms such as joint ventures, public sector organizations, potential investment fund structures, and direct investment opportunities. The focus is on fostering mutually beneficial partnerships that can drive industrial development, technology transfer, and export growth. Dr. Erfa emphasized that strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and Portugal is expected to diversify economic engagement.–**DNA**

Free Hepatitis C screening available in GB

ISLAMABAD: Free Hepatitis C screening, testing and treatment facilities have been made available at designated health centres in Nagar, Ghizer and Hunza districts of Gilgit-Baltistan under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C.

According to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, residents of the three districts can avail themselves of free screening and treatment services at the listed health facilities to facilitate early diagnosis and access to care. The ministry has urged citizens to visit their nearest designated screening centre for free testing and share information about the facilities with family members and friends to encourage wider participation in the elimination programme. For further information and guidance, citizens can contact the toll-free Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline 1166.The initiative is part of he government's efforts to eliminate Hepatitis C in Pakistan by expanding access to free screening, diagnosis and treatment services._**APP**

CENTRELINE
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Piano donation supports opera edu for young Pakistani singers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Linkers International has donated a piano for young Pakistani singers enrolled in opera courses coordinated by the Embassy of Romania in Pakistan. The courses take place at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad and at other venues. The piano will allow students to rehearse with live professional accompaniment as they prepare to perform on stage.



Romanian soprano and music educator Georgiana Costea-Glugă has taught opera at PNCA since April 2025. Her students range from beginners learning to sing their first phrases to more experienced vocalists exploring Romanian and other European repertoire. Alongside vocal technique, they study how to interpret a score and convey a character's emotions on stage. In June 2026, four students received certificates recognising their work in the programme.

"When a young singer rehearses an aria with a pianist, we can stop at a single phrase and try it again. Where does the character take a breath? Which word matters most? A student begins to make those choices for themselves. That is what excites me about having this piano for our classes," said Costea-Glugă. Georgiana Costea-Glugă is a Romanian soprano and music educator trained in Bucharest and Rome, performing as a guest artist in theatres across Romania and abroad. She teaches in Constan a, at the very Cultural Centre where she took her first lessons. Since April 2025, she has also taught opera at PNCA in Islamabad through the Embassy of Romania, earning the Global Ambassador Award for Cultural Diplomacy through Music in November 2026. "I thank Linkers International for putting this piano at the service of young Pakistani singers. Since our courses began at PNCA last year, Georgiana and her students have given Romania and Pakistan a place in each other's musical lives. I look forward to hearing what these young artists bring to the music in their own voices," said Dr Dan Stoenescu, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan.

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

ICCI, Cuba to explore new avenues for bilateral trade

He highlighted its innovative online platform, which will facilitate direct interaction between international businesses and Cuban economic stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, providing an effective opportunity to explore partnerships and commercial arrangements

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Damián Cordero Torres, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a productive meeting with President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia to explore avenues for strengthening bilateral trade, investment and private-sector cooperation between Pakistan and Cuba. Both sides expressed their shared resolve to deepen economic engagement, build stronger institutional linkages and create mutually beneficial business opportunities for the private sectors of the two countries. The Cuban Ambassador briefed the ICCI leadership on Cuba's evolving economic framework and ongoing economic and social reforms aimed at improving living standards, enhancing domestic production, facilitating foreign trade and attracting international investment. He highlighted the opportunities emerging from these transformations and encouraged Pakistani businesses to explore Cuba as a potential trade and investment destination.



The Ambassador also made the mention of the special edition of the Havana International Fair (FIHAV 2026), scheduled for November 24–26. He highlighted its innovative online platform, which will facilitate direct interaction between international businesses and Cuban economic stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, providing an effective opportunity to explore partnerships and commercial arrangements. The discussions identified several promising areas for bilateral cooperation, including agriculture and food commodities, particularly direct supply arrangements for Basmati and non-Basmati rice, grains and other agricultural products. Textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, medical supplies and consumer goods were also identified as sectors offering considerable potential for expanding Pakistani exports to the Cuban market. Information technology and renewable energy also emerged as important areas of collaboration. Both sides discussed prospects for software development partnerships, cloud services and hardware supplies through Cuba's National Tech Hub, alongside opportunities in solar energy, micro-grid solutions and battery storage systems, particularly under Cuba's priority economic incentive framework. Infrastructure development and technology transfer were also highlighted as potential avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation. Earlier, President ICCI Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia apprised the Ambassador of the Chamber's initiatives to promote international trade, attract foreign investment and expand Pakistan's export footprint through stronger engagement with foreign diplomatic missions and international chambers of commerce. He emphasized that ICCI was keen to facilitate meaningful business-to-business linkages, joint ventures and direct engagement between Pakistani and Cuban entrepreneurs. He also highlighted Pakistan's diverse tourism potential, particularly the scenic northern areas, and invited Cuban investors and tourists to explore the country's emerging opportunities. Those present on the occasion included Executive Members Shahid Abbasi, Malik Rashid Tufail, Zohaib Arshad Malik, former Executive member Ishaq Sial, ICCI member Mubasher Rafiq Sanjrani Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza, and other.

Peace Festival 2026 celebrates unity, religious harmony

ISLAMABAD: The Peace Festival 2026 concluded at St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral, Lalkurti, Rawalpindi, bringing together students from different schools, religious leaders, teachers and distinguished guests on one platform to promote love, respect, unity and peaceful coexistence.

Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Isphanyar Bhandara, who attended the festival as the chief guest, highlighted Pakistan's commitment to religious harmony, peace and equal opportunities for minorities, emphasising that people from all religious communities have an important role in the country's progress and development.

Addressing the gathering, Bhandara said Pakistan's religious diversity was one of its greatest strengths, with minority communities, including Christians and Parsis, making valuable contributions to the country in various fields.

Calling for a peaceful and inclusive society, Bhandara emphasised the importance of providing children with quality education and opportunities to become responsible citizens and positive examples for future generations.

Expressing gratitude for the invitation, Bhandara thanked Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad and appreciated the opportunity to interact with the children, extending his best wishes for their bright future. Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, in his concluding remarks, reflected on the importance of peace, faith, unity and the shared responsibility of every individual in building a better society. He highlighted the importance of nurturing values of compassion, tolerance and brotherhood among children and young people, encouraging them to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to the country. In a symbolic gesture of unity and inter-faith harmony, Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad and MNA Isphanyar Bhandara jointly lit candles, reinforcing the festival's message of peace, hope and togetherness. The celebration took off with a colourful welcome band, beautiful garlands, vibrant balloons and the symbolic release of pigeons, creating an atmosphere of joy and excitement. Bouquets were also presented to Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad and Isphanyar Bhandara in recognition of their presence. The festival provided students with an opportunity to showcase their talents, strengthen their confidence, appreciate one another's abilities and understand their role as ambassadors of peace in their communities. Rev. Fr. Jacob Dogra, Rev. Fr. Shaveer, Rev. Fr. Amer, Rev. Fr. Asad, Babu Imran and Babu Farhan were also present, alongside teachers and students from various schools.–**APP**

Nationwide campaign against gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Poverty Aleviation Fund (PPAF) Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Barech, in an exclusive interview with the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), on Monday said that strong families, empowered women and cohesive communities are indispensable to building a peaceful, inclusive and violence free Pakistan, as the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund prepared to launch 396 community based events in 126 districts nationwide from November 25 to December 10, 2026, under its Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan Campaign during the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Under the theme "Strong Families Make Strong Societies," the nationwide campaign will span all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Islamabad Capital Territory, seeking to challenge harmful social norms, promote gender equality and strengthen community resilience through awareness, dialogue and behavioural-change interventions. Mr Barech told APP that sustainable peace required more than responding to violence after it occurred, stressing that society must confront the deeply rooted attitudes, behaviours and inequalities that perpetuate discrimination, exclusion and gender-based violence.

"The family is the foundation of social transformation, where values of mutual respect, equality, tolerance and shared responsibility are nurtured," he said, adding that the Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan Campaign sought to strengthen family institutions, empower women, engage young people and mobilise communities to promote a culture of dignity and non-violence.

Referring to the strategic direction of the initiative, the PPAF chief said the campaign built upon the outcomes of PPAF's two-day International Conference on Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth, held under the theme "From Poverty to Prosperity."

He said the conference brought together key stakeholders to deliberate on sustainable poverty reduction, inclusive economic growth and community resilience, identifying women's empowerment, youth engagement, social cohesion and equal opportunities as critical drivers of national development.

Barech said PPAF would implement the nationwide initiative through a broad-based partnership involving the federal and provincial governments and the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The key partners include the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan, Provincial Centres of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism and PPAF's nationwide network of partner organisations.

He said PPAF firmly believed that social cohesion, economic empowerment and equal opportunities were interconnected pillars of sustainable poverty reduction and national development.

The campaign will bring together families, women, youth, community leaders.–**APP**

STMU, NIH hold awareness session on AMR

ISLAMABAD: Department of Biosciences (DBS) of Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU), in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Islamabad, organized an awareness session and poster competition to highlight the growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The event featured expert talks focusing on antimicrobial resistance, its national and global impact, and the need for coordinated efforts to address the emerging public health challenge.

A poster competition was also organized, providing students an opportunity to showcase their research, knowledge and creativity on the subject.

The top three participants were awarded shields in recognition of their outstanding contributions and performance in the competition.

The initiative aimed to raise awareness among students about the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance and encourage responsible antimicrobial use, research and collective action to protect public health.–**APP**

Pak hosts IAEA Regional Workshop ahead of INSO 2027

ISLAMABAD: A five-day regional workshop on Building Sustainable Nuclear Science and Technology Talent Ecosystems through the International Nuclear Science Olympiad opened at a local hotel in Islamabad.

Organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in collaboration with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), the workshop runs from November 23-27 and supports preparations for the fourth International Nuclear Science Olympiad (INSO), which Pakistan will host in 2027. Trainees from 22 countries are participating in the workshop. Five IAEA experts will deliver lectures and share approaches to student selection, training and mentorship. Participants will exchange teaching methods and resources, including approaches suitable for schools with limited laboratory facilities. Addressing the inaugural session as chief guest, Ms. Wajiha Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, emphasised that investment in young people and education in nuclear science and technology must remain a long-term national development priority. She said, "There is no shortage of talent in Pakistan. Young people comprise more than 60 per cent of Pakistan's population, and their energy and ambition represent our greatest national strength. Our responsibility is to provide the education, mentorship and opportunities that allow this potential to flourish." Appreciating the support of the IAEA for the important educational initiative and commending PAEC for bringing together experts and educators committed to developing young scientific talent, the Minister said, "Pakistan will have the honour of hosting the fourth INSO in 2027, marking the first International Science Olympiad to be organised in the country. This is a milestone of national significance." Highlighting the peaceful applications of nuclear science, Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar said, "Pakistan's six nuclear power plants provide more than 3,500 megawatts of electricity, while PAEC's 21 cancer hospitals serve around 80 per cent of the country's cancer patients for their diagnosis and treatment.–**DNA**

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Parents urged to ensure timely vaccination of children

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office Islamabad has urged parents to ensure timely vaccination of their children under the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

The Office emphasized that completing the recommended immunization schedule was essential to protect them against life-threatening vaccine-preventable diseases. According to the DHO, routine vaccination protects children against measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio and several other preventable diseases. The health authorities stressed that parents should follow the prescribed vaccination schedule and ensure that their children receive all recommended doses on time to build lasting protection and safeguard their health.



Briefs

Preparations for moot on Sustainable Futures in full swing

ISLAMABAD: Preparations for the International Conference on Sustainable Futures 2026 have gained momentum, with the organisers stepping up arrangements for the two-day event scheduled to be held in Islamabad on December 2–3.
The Institute of Rural Management (IRM), in collaboration with the Climate Action Forum (CAF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), is organising the conference under the theme "Building Resilience in a Changing World."
Talking to APP, an IRM spokesperson said that preparations had entered their final stages, with teams constituted and regular meetings being held to review progress and assess on-ground arrangements.
She said the meetings were also aimed at incorporating consultations and constructive suggestions while reviewing key arrangements, including the conference brochure, publicity and advertising strategy, programme schedule, speakers and administrative and operational matters.
The spokesperson said all arrangements were being made to ensure the conference was organised in a transparent, fair and competitive manner.
She added that the conference brochure and other relevant information were available on the official website.
The two-day event is expected to bring together policymakers, international experts, development partners, researchers, civil society representatives, private-sector stakeholders, youth leaders and innovators to discuss solutions to pressing climate and development challenges.
The conference will provide a platform for knowledge exchange, partnership-building and exploring practical approaches to emerging challenges.
Scheduled to follow COP31, the conference will also provide an opportunity to link global climate commitments with national priorities and translate international ambitions into practical action.
The event will feature six thematic areas, covering climate-resilient economies, green growth and sustainable development; disaster risk management, nature-based solutions, resilience financing readiness and climate-resilient communities; and clean energy transition and sustainable infrastructure.
Other key areas will include youth leadership, technology and development initiatives, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), ecosystems, the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus, women's empowerment and resilient rural livelihoods.–**APP**

IRSA releases 88,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD, Nov 23 (AP-P):Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 88,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 46,200 cusecs.
According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1476.89 feet, which was 74.89 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 23,400 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively.
The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1177.75 feet, which was 127.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 6,900 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 56,600, 50,900, 35,700, and 13,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 2,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.–**APP**

Akcent brings Romanian dance-pop back to Pakistan

DNA



ISLAMABAD: More than 20,000 people gathered at Capital (F-9) Park on Sunday evening for Romanian artist Akcent's return to the Pakistani stage at Soulfest Rewind 2026. Dr Dan Stoenescu, Romania's Ambassador to Pakistan, was the guest of honour. Akcent also met with the team from the Embassy of Romania in Islamabad during his visit.
Akcent's Sunday night set was scheduled for around 9 p.m. on the closing day of the three-day festival. His signature Romanian dance-pop sound featured on a bill that also included Pakistani artists Bayaan, Farhan Saeed and Abrar-ul-Haq. "Adrian Sină aka Akcent has a history here in Pakistan, and the welcome he received in Islamabad tonight shows how much his music means to his fans," said Ambassador Stoenescu. "I thank everyone who came to F-9 Park to welcome him back. It means a great deal to us at the Embassy that a Romanian artist can come so far from home and find such a following here. I can truly say he is a second Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan thanks to his millions of fans here."
The Embassy's work in music also extends to the classroom. In partnership with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), the Embassy helped bring opera singing classes to Islamabad, where Romanian soprano Georgiana Costea-Gluga teaches local singers. The programme marked its first anniversary in April.
On 23 March 2026, the Embassy marked Pakistan Day by presenting the first-ever choral arrangement and written score of Pakistan's national anthem, Qaumi Tarana. Romania's National Chamber Choir "Madrigal – Marin Constantin" recorded the arrangement under conductor Anna Ungureanu, with support from the Embassy, as a tribute to the people of Pakistan.
Romanian dance-pop found a worldwide audience in the late 2000s and early 2010s with its bright melodies, steady club beats and instantly recognisable hooks. INNA's "Hot" topped Billboard's dance airplay chart in the United States, while the saxophone refrain of Alexandra Stan's "Mr. Saxobeat" helped carry the song to number one in Germany and Italy. In Pakistan, Akcent has been one of the most familiar voices of that Romanian pop generation.

Zawiya to honour poet Nazir Qaiser

ISLAMABAD: Literary and cultural organisation Zawiya, in collaboration with the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), will organise a literary ceremony on Tuesday (November 24) to honour eminent poet and intellectual Nazir Qaiser and celebrate the publication of his latest poetry collection, "Harf Se Konplain Nikal Aaein".
The event will be held at the Sheikh Ayaz Conference Hall of the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in Islamabad.
Renowned poet Iftikhar Arif will preside over the ceremony, while Dr Humaira Ashfaq will attend as the chief guest. During the event, Dr Farooq Adil, Naeem Fatima Alvi, Dr Sanober Altaf and Jamshed Peter will share their views on the newly published collection and discuss the literary contributions of Nazir Qaiser.
According to a Zawiya spokesperson, the ceremony aims to acknowledge and celebrate the valuable contributions of Nazir Qaiser to Urdu literature and recognise his distinguished place in the literary world.
The spokesperson described the poet as a valuable asset to the literary community, saying that honouring his literary services was a well-deserved tribute to his intellectual and creative contributions.–**APP**

Reciters begin arriving in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The arrival of internationally renowned Quran reciters in Pakistan has begun to participate in the Second International Qirat Competition, with judges from Iran and Egypt also reaching the country.
The Ministry of Religious Affairs is organizing the competition, which will be held in Islamabad from November 24 to 26, featuring reciters from 32 countries, including Pakistan. Reciters from Cameroon, Togo, Mozambique and Uzbekistan arrived in Islamabad on Sunday night, while participants from Germany, Jordan, Algeria, Iraq, Libya and Türkiye reached Pakistan on Monday. Reciters from Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Tanzania, Gambia, Nigeria, Qatar, Morocco and France have also arrived in Islamabad to take part in the three-day event. Renowned international Qari Syed Sadaqat Ali will serve as the chief judge of the Second International Qirat Competition. The arrival of reciters from other participating countries is expected to continue until Monday night. The three-day international Quran recitation competition will commence in Islamabad on Tuesday, bringing together prominent reciters from around the world to demonstrate their recitation skills.–APP

Global nuclear security experts convene

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan on Monday inaugurated the 2026 Annual Meeting of the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network) at the Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS), bringing together around 68 delegates from 49 member states to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear security.
The four-day meeting, being held in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has brought together senior policymakers, nuclear regulators, nuclear security professionals, technical experts, academics and representatives of international organizations to discuss emerging challenges, exchange best practices and enhance global capacity in nuclear security training and support.
Chairman Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA), Zia Hussain Shah attended the opening ceremony as chief guest, which was also attended by IAEA representatives, government officials, delegates from participating countries and members of the diplomatic corps. In his keynote address, Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Khalil Hussain Hashmi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to nuclear security and its longstanding partnership with the IAEA. Recalling Pakistan's hosting of the NSSC Network Annual Meeting in 2016, he observed that the Network's return to Islamabad after a decade reflected its expanding global reach and growing relevance.
He emphasized that effective nuclear security depended on strong national institutions, skilled professionals and sustained international cooperation, while underscoring the IAEA's central role in the international nuclear security architecture. In his inaugural address, Chairman PNRA Zia Hussain Shah highlighted the importance of human resource development in strengthening nuclear security and acknowledged the Network's contribution to professional capacity building and international knowledge-sharing.
He said the Network had evolved into an important global platform for developing sustainable nuclear security capabilities, with Pakistan actively contributing to its objectives through national institutions.
In a video address, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi thanked Pakistan for hosting the meeting for the second time, ten years after its previous edition in the country. He highlighted the importance of the NSSC Network in bringing together Nuclear Security Support Centres (NSSCs) as a global community of practice, emphasizing its role in translating nuclear security concepts into effective practical measures, particularly as countries expand the use of nuclear power and other nuclear applications in areas such as electricity generation, medicine and agriculture.
The chief guest also inaugurated a commemorative plaque marking the 15th Annual Meeting of the NSSC Network. Participants acknowledged Pakistan's longstanding partnership with the IAEA in strengthening national nuclear security infrastructure and technical capabilities. Pakistan hosted the Network's annual meeting for the first time in 2016, becoming the first country outside the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna to host the event.
On the occasion, foreign ambassadors, IAEA representatives and international experts also visited various laboratories at PCENS and appreciated the centre's state-of-the-art facilities for nuclear security training.
The meeting will continue until November 26 and include visits to the National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) at PNRA and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), alongside technical sessions, thematic discussions, working group meetings and expert exchanges to further strengthen international cooperation in nuclear security.–**DNA**

Pakistan, Türkiye sign MoU to boost judicial coop

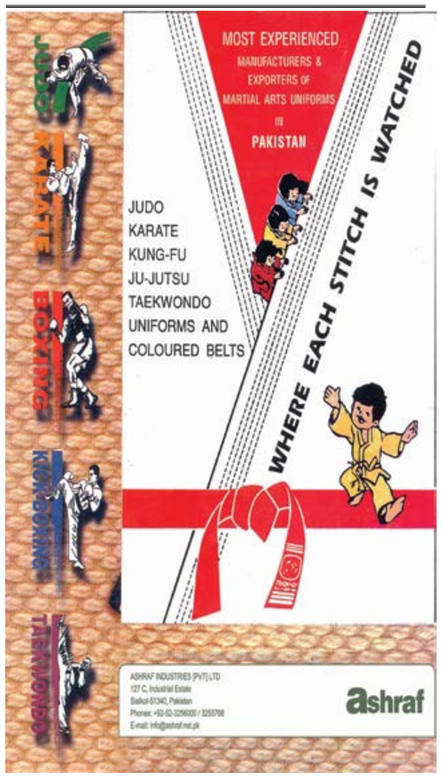
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Türkiye on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen judicial cooperation through institutional exchanges, professional training and sharing of legal expertise.
The agreement was signed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and President of Türkiye's Court of Cassation Ömer Kerkez during the visit of a high-level Turkish judicial delegation to the Supreme Court.
The MoU provides a framework for cooperation in judicial education, capacity building, legal research and professional training, including faculty exchanges and joint programmes between the Federal Judicial Academy of Pakistan and the Justice Academy of Türkiye. Key areas of collaboration include cybercrime, financial crime, constitutionalism, human rights, judicial ethics, climate justice, gender-responsive justice, alternative dispute resolution and the use of technology in courts. The agreement also envisages judicial exchanges, joint conferences, seminars and sharing of judgments and legal developments. A Joint Working Group on Judicial Cooperation will identify priority areas, coordinate initiatives and monitor implementation. Welcoming the delegation, Justice Yahya Afridi highlighted the historic and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Türkiye, recalling the support extended by the people of the subcontinent during Türkiye's struggle for independence and the contributions of Abdur Rehman Peshawri. He said the agreement would translate these longstanding bonds into practical institutional cooperation. Referring to ongoing judicial reforms in Pakistan, he stressed the importance of exchanging experiences and adopting best practices to improve access to justice, predictability and accountability. Ömer Kerkez appreciated the hospitality extended to the delegation and highlighted shared values of justice and impartiality between the two countries. He also emphasised the need for closer judicial cooperation to address emerging challenges relating to digitalisation, artificial intelligence, cross-border disputes and increasingly complex economic relations. The signing ceremony was attended by Supreme Court judges, chief justices of the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and high courts, the federal law minister, the attorney general for Pakistan, members of the district judiciary, representatives of the legal fraternity and other dignitaries.

HSA, UNFPA launch book on health supply chain management

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA), in collaboration with UNFPA Pakistan, has launched a book on Supply Chain Management of Public Health Commodities and started a five-day certification course to strengthen the capacity of health professionals and improve the availability of essential health supplies across Pakistan. The certification course, being held from November 23 to 27, aims to strengthen the knowledge and practical skills of professionals working in the health and population sectors. The opening ceremony commenced with the launch of the book, whose technical leads include Prof. Dr. Shakila Zaman, Dr. Mariyam Sarfraz, Imran Hameed Khaliq and Dr. Irfan Ahmed.
UNFPA provided technical support through its experts, including Dr. Jamil Ahmed Chaudhry, Programme Specialist SRH; Dr. Inam Ullah Khan, Programme Analyst SRH (Supply Chain Management); Dr. Naila Yasmin, Programme Analyst SRH; Dr. Ghulam Farid, Programme Analyst SRH; and Mr. Rizwan Ul Haq.
The course covers key areas of supply chain management, including planning, forecasting and quantification, procurement, warehousing, inventory management, distribution and the use of Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) data for evidence-based decision-making. Through expert-led sessions, practical exercises and group work, participants are being trained to minimize stock-outs and wastage and ensure the timely availability of essential health commodities, including reproductive health supplies.
The resource persons include Prof. Dr. Shakila Zaman, Professor Emeritus of Public Health; Dr. Mariyam Sarfraz, Director Projects/Dean, HSA; Dr. Tayyab Masud, former Senior Health Specialist at the World Bank, Dr. Sabeen Afzal, Joint Executive Director, Federal Government Polyclinic, Dr. Abdul Jabbar, former Director Health Services EPI Punjab; Dr. Rabia Islam, and Dr. Yaseen Abdullah, Supply Chain Expert.
The book and accompanying certification course reflect the continued commitment of HSA and UNFPA to strengthening healthcare supply chain systems, building professional capacity and improving the delivery of essential health services across Pakistan.–**DNA**



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



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North Africa as Europe's asylum holding zone

IN the late fourth century, the Roman Empire did not consider building walls to protect its extensive frontiers from waves of migration. Instead, it devised the Foederati system, providing gold to states and kingdoms on its periphery to act as a security shield on its behalf. Today, the EU is reviving this very blueprint by adopting the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which came into effect in June. A bloc that routinely brands itself as a human rights guardian has chosen checkbook diplomacy over legal obligations. Brussels has allocated massive financial packages: a €1 billion ($1.1 billion) commitment to Tunisia, a landmark €7.4 billion package to Egypt and €210 million to Mauritania. These funds operate as transactional quid pro quos rather than developmental loans. Transit nations are mandated to turn their sovereign territory into holding zones designed to halt migrants before they reach European shores, effectively outsourcing Europe's border defense.
The new pact codifies this evasion into a binding statutory framework. The agreement creates legal loopholes allowing member states to reject asylum seekers under the "safe third country" pretext. This grants European capitals the mandate to dismiss claims outright at border entry points. The practical outcome is an unvarnished export of the crisis, trapping hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers across North Africa and transforming transit hubs into permanent holding centers. Furthermore, to institutionalize this arrangement, the pact enshrines a mechanism termed "mandatory solidarity." While framed as a shared ethical burden, it functions in practice as a buyout fee. Member states refusing relocation quotas pay an opt-out penalty for each asylum seeker, with these funds subsequently rechanneled to finance offshore detention facilities well beyond the continent. Transit nations are mandated to turn their sovereign territory into holding zones, effectively outsourcing Europe's border defense.
This financial transactionalism has swiftly escalated into volatile crises on the ground. Evidence emerged as early as July 2025, mere weeks after European financial packages were announced for Tunisia, when the coastal city of Sfax became a violent flashpoint. The bottlenecking of thousands of stranded migrants triggered fierce clashes with local residents, culminating in the forced expulsion of migrants, who were abandoned without shelter along the desert border. When it comes to the practical enforcement of externalization schemes, the Italy-Albania protocol signed in November 2025 stands as the starkest blueprint for outsourcing crises. Under the deal, Rome committed more than €600 million to construct migrant holding facilities in Albanian towns with a capacity of up to 36,000 asylum seekers per year. Building on this model, five EU nations announced plans just last week to establish a joint migrant detention center in Rwanda. These developments demonstrate that European capitals are purchasing proxy geography to appease domestic far-right factions, forcing transit and third-party nations to shoulder the fallout of fractured migration policies.
Such financial leverage undermines the national sovereignty of transit states. Multibillion-euro packages are deployed to buy political compliance rather than fund sustainable development. Substantial portions of European support, notably the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, were redirected toward outfitting security apparatuses in Libya and Niger, despite being ostensibly earmarked to alleviate poverty. This contrast is particularly stark when measured against the strategic approach of regional anchors like Saudi Arabia. While European capitals weaponize aid to purchase offshore detention centers, Saudi economic engagement in North Africa focuses on genuine infrastructural stabilization and sovereign capacity-building. By transforming nations like Egypt and Tunisia into volatile holding zones, Europe is actively exporting instability to the broader Middle East and Red Sea corridors. Consequently, the security services of transit nations are turned into de facto subcontractors, leaving their sovereign budgets hostage to their proficiency as outsourced gatekeepers. The central paradox lies in Europe's glaring double standard: its capitals leverage human rights rhetoric as political cover to obscure exclusionary policies. While the bloc prides itself on the European Convention on Human Rights, it systematically turns a blind eye to abuses inflicted upon migrants once they are pushed beyond its perimeter. Most notably, this involves a calculated evasion of the principle of nonrefoulement, enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention.
Italy and Spain spearhead this approach — Rome through hefty subsidies bankrolling coast guards in Libya and Tunisia, and Madrid by utilizing Morocco as a buffer shield. The goal is twofold: appeasing domestic far-right pressure and keeping the humanitarian fallout far from Southern European shores. Funding maritime interception operations has resulted in tens of thousands being detained in substandard facilities, insulating European capitals from direct legal liability and exposing human rights slogans as cosmetic posturing. Ultimately, the compliance of transit states makes them complicit in engineering a demographic and security time bomb. Governments accepting European financial packages are transforming their territories into perpetual pressure cookers vulnerable to sudden unrest. Conversely, the continent harbors a strategic illusion if it assumes statutory fortresses and bank drafts can truly isolate it from global mobility. The data exposes this fallacy: while the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's budget surged to nearly €850 million, unauthorized crossings reached a seven-year high. Historically, Rome's reliance on outsourced frontier buffer states under the Foederati arrangement proved fatal, as those borderlands eventually buckled and unraveled the empire from within. Likewise, because compounding crises across the Global South will inevitably shatter every containment wall, Europe's treasuries will prove utterly insufficient to contain the fallout.



The Democrats' Midterm Victory Will Strengthen US Support for Israel

Qamar Bashir



The political danger is that Democratic leaders may interpret their electoral success as an endorsement of their existing establishment rather than a demand for fundamental change. A congressional majority creates opportunities for oversight, legislative initiatives and control of federal spending. Yet those opportunities lose much of their transformative value if leadership refuses to challenge entrenched interests. Trump could benefit from such hesitation. A Democratic House unwilling to confront military expenditure...

THE Democratic Party has emerged from the November 2026 midterm elections with a sweeping congressional victory, but its decision to retain Hakeem Jeffries as House leader raises a troubling question: has the party understood the public anger that helped bring it back to power, or is it preparing to preserve the very political establishment that voters wanted challenged? On November 18, Jeffries secured 251 votes against just 11 dissenters in the Democratic caucus, positioning himself to become the first Black Speaker of the House when the new Congress convenes in January. The overwhelming endorsement demonstrated his command of the party machinery. Yet the dissenting votes exposed a deeper struggle over corporate influence, immigration enforcement, healthcare, Gaza and America's foreign-policy priorities.
The Democratic victory came amid widespread dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump's administration. Economic hardship, declining confidence in national leadership and demands for political change helped drive the electoral reversal. The continuing confrontation with Iran, Washington's support for Israel and the administration's immigration crackdown also formed part of the wider political discontent. For voters demanding a different direction, the question is whether changing congressional control will actually change American policy.
The prolonged conflict with Iran represents a particularly consequential challenge. After months of confrontation, Americans are entitled to ask what strategic objectives have been achieved, what the military campaign has cost, and whether its consequences justify the sacrifices imposed upon the country. War consumes financial resources, military equipment, diplomatic influence and economic opportunities that could otherwise strengthen American society.
The burden extends beyond military expenditure. International instability disrupts energy markets, shipping routes, investment decisions and commercial confidence. American families struggling with healthcare costs, housing, groceries and stagnant purchasing power have legitimate reasons to question the wisdom of expensive overseas confrontations whose political endgame remains uncertain. Israel's conduct in Gaza and the occupied West Bank has added another dimension to this controversy. The destruction of civilian infrastructure, displacement of families, restrictions affecting humanitarian relief and continuing settler violence have generated international condemnation. For critics of Washington's Middle East policy, the fundamental question is why American military assistance should continue without stronger accountability for its use.
Then news broke that White House National Cyber Director Sean Cairncross had been fired. For Americans already skeptical of Washington, the timing made it easy to wonder whether officials knew more than they were saying. On Saturday, reports indicated that the FBI was investigating an apparent breach of the National Crime Information Center, a database law enforcement agencies use to share records on fugitives, missing people and stolen property. The scope of the suspected breach was unclear and there was no immediate indication it was linked to the earlier outages. Before governments put AI to work in public services, they should test what happens when it fails. By then, the earlier disruptions had already raised a question. How did a few days of outages make a much wider breakdown seem plausible?
Consider what happens when a flight is canceled. The airline sends passengers to its app. The app tells them to wait for an update. Meanwhile, they have to decide whether to stay at the gate, pay for a room or go home. A bank customer staring at a blank screen has to decide whether to resend the rent payment. A system can be down for a few hours and leave people dealing with the consequences long after it comes back.
That uncertainty landed in a country where trust in the federal government had been low for years, under presidents of both parties. In 2024, the Pew Research Center found that 59 percent of Americans trusted Washington to do what is right only some of the time. Another 17 percent said they never did. Over decades of polling, Americans have generally expressed more trust when their own party holds the White House. Elections can change who gets the benefit of the doubt. That leaves every administration facing millions of people who are already skeptical when something goes wrong.
That skepticism matters when rumors move faster than official information. A warning to stock up on food gives people something to do immediately. A statement saying an investigation is underway may be accurate but someone whose flight has been grounded still has to decide whether to leave the airport. Officials can take the time they need to establish a cause and still tell people what is affected, where to get help and when to expect more information.
Technology companies face similar doubts as they ask Americans to rely on artificial intelligence for more of daily life. Even before the outages, Pew found that 67 percent of Americans had little or no confidence in the federal government's ability to regulate AI effectively. About six in 10 lacked confidence that US companies would develop and use it responsibly.
Before governments put AI to work in public services, they should test what happens when it fails. If an AI booking system goes offline, can a patient still make an appointment? If the software wrongly rejects an application, can the person reach someone with the authority to review and reverse the decision? A company can show how quickly its software works on a good day. The government should test what happens on a bad one, while there is still time to fix it.
Some Americans wondered whether to fill their bathtubs because they were unsure what they could count on if the trouble got worse. That is the question Washington should take seriously. Would officials tell people what they knew, even if the facts were embarrassing? Would they admit what they still could not explain? Those are the things people remember the next time their government asks them to take it at its word.

– Dalia Al-Aqidi is Senior Fellow at the Center for Security Policy.

America's outages expose a crisis of trust

Dalia Al-Aqidi

That uncertainty landed in a country where trust in the federal government had been low for years, under presidents of both parties. In 2024, the Pew Research Center found that 59 percent of Americans trusted Washington to do what is right only some of the time. Another 17 percent said they never did. Over decades of polling, Americans have generally expressed more trust when their own party holds the White House. Elections can change who gets the benefit of the doubt. That leaves every administration facing millions of people who...

AT a camping and survival store in Los Angeles, customers bought emergency kits and water while talking about Microsoft and grounded flights. It is a long way from being unable to open an email to wondering whether there will be water in the tap tomorrow. This month, some Americans covered that distance in a matter of days. It felt like the opening of the film "Leave the World Behind." The lights are still on and the kitchen is stocked but, without a reliable link to the outside world, the people in the house have no idea how far the trouble has spread. As false warnings of a nationwide blackout circulated on social media, some Americans started asking the kind of questions a survival video game puts to its players. How much food do you have? How long will your batteries last? Should you fill the bathtub while the water still runs?
The first major disruption came on Nov. 12, when a Microsoft outage affected Outlook and other services. The next day, a technical failure prompted the Federal Aviation Administration to halt departures nationwide. On Nov. 16, some bank customers struggled to access their accounts and a separate failure delayed United Airlines flights. The day after, a software patch disrupted the National Security Agency's classified internal communications network. The agency staggered employee arrivals and restricted campus access to essential personnel that evening. The NSA said its critical operations continued.
A scheduled federal emergency alert test went ahead that week. The blackout predicted online never came. At a congressional hearing on Nov. 18, officials including FBI Deputy Director Christopher Raia said they had found no evidence that the outages were connected or caused by a coordinated cyberattack. Lawmakers separately asked about reports of possible Iranian-linked plots in the US.

Briefs

Portugal supports Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

Rangel, in his remarks, stressed that both Pakistan and the EU would mutually benefit from cooperation, adding that "we should not hesitate on developing these bilateral platforms". The Pakistani delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. In his remarks, DPM Dar said, "Our focus is on strengthening our political ties, expanding bilateral trade and promoting investment." 'I conveyed thanks and appreciation for Portugal's support for Pakistan's GSP+ status and sought its continued support under the new EU framework. The scheme remains a cornerstone of Pakistan–EU economic cooperation. It supports trade, employment and sustainable development in Pakistan. We remain committed to implementing the relevant international conventions and to our continued engagement with the EU'.

Portuguese FM meets...

FROM PAGE 01

bilateral cooperation in several sectors. The President highlighted the importance of diversifying bilateral trade beyond traditional textiles and exploring opportunities in agriculture, processed foods, pharmaceuticals, engineering, sports goods and IT services. He proposed the establishment of a Pakistan-Portugal Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment to address trade barriers, identify opportunities and facilitate commercial cooperation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Portuguese Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today met Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, H.E Paulo Rangel, who is on an official visit to Pakistan from 22-23 November. The meeting focused on giving fresh political and economic impetus to Pakistan–Portugal relations and expanding cooperation across the full spectrum of bilateral relationship.

Malaysian PM...

FROM PAGE 01

cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia. He reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations, particularly in the fields of defence and security. The COAS & CDF appreciated Malaysia's constructive role in promoting peace and stability in Southeast Asia and reiterated Pakistan's resolve to further deepen defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of both countries. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral defence ties through regular high-level exchanges, enhanced military cooperation and sustained dialogue on regional and international security issues.

Opposition leaders...

FROM PAGE 01

Chaudhry said the joint letter was written by the opposition leaders in their constitutional capacity by invoking the high judiciary's jurisdiction and requesting that the letter be treated as a petition for the enforcement of fundamental rights. It also demanded that a writ of mandamus be issued regarding the non-implementation of the SC's Aug 18 order for shifting Imran to Shifa International Hospital, and the concerns regarding Imran and Bushra Bibi's health and detention. In the seven-page letter, seen by Dawn, the two opposition leaders argued that Imran's life was in danger in state custody. "An order of the SC made to protect that life has been flouted and ignored for three months now," it said. "The threat to Imran's life has increased, not diminished."

Pak Shaheens defeat India A by 48 runs

Sufiyan Muqeem struck next, removing Kumar Kushagra for two off seven deliveries, before Nawaz inflicted further damage by claiming two more wickets

DNA

DOHA: Pakistan delivered a commanding performance against arch-rivals India to strengthen their title defence in the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026, securing a 48-run victory and a place in the semi-finals with their second consecutive Group B win at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.
India's pursuit fell short at 265 in 49.1 overs, despite skipper Tilak Varma's century, as Pakistan's bowlers kept the pressure on to seal a 48-run victory.
Pakistan struck early through Imran Randhawa, who removed opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for 11 off 13 deliveries, including two boundaries, to give the defending champions an early breakthrough.
Ali Raza then dealt India another blow by removing Ayush Badoni for a four-ball duck, leaving the arch-rivals struggling at 26-2 in 4.3 overs. Abhishek Sharma and captain Tilak Varma attempted to stabilise the innings, with Sharma leading the charge as the pair added 67 runs for the third wicket to take India past the 50-run mark.
However, Hasan Nawaz provided Pakistan with a much-needed breakthrough by dismissing Sharma for 70 off 42 deliveries. His entertaining knock featured six fours and as many sixes. Sufiyan Muqeem struck next, removing Kumar Kushagra for two off seven deliveries, before Nawaz inflicted further damage by claiming two more wickets.
The right-arm pacer dismissed Rinku Singh for six and Suryansh Shedge for three to complete his three-wicket haul, reducing India to 129-6 in 25.3 overs.
Captain Tilak Varma and Shahbaz Ahmad then joined forces to revive India's innings, stitching together a 112-run partnership for the seventh wicket. Both batters brought up their respective half-centuries as they guided India past the 200-run mark.
However, Ali Raza broke the crucial partnership by dismissing Shahbaz Ahmad for 56 off 49 deliveries, an innings featuring one four and four sixes. Raza struck again in the same spell, removing Vipraj Nigam for a duck to reduce India to 241-8 in 43.4 overs. Imran Randhawa then dismissed Harshit Rana for a duck before Ahmed Daniyal brought India's innings to a close by removing Tilak Varma, who top-scored with a fighting 100 off 149 deliveries.
Ali Raza and Hasan Nawaz starred with three wickets apiece, while Imran Randhawa claimed two wickets. Ahmed Daniyal and Sufiyan Muqeem chipped in with one wicket each. Earlier, Pakistan made an explosive start after being put in to bat, with openers Shamyl Hussain and Maaz Sadaqat adopting an aggressive approach from the outset and bringing up their 50-run partnership in just the fifth over.
However, Ayush Badoni broke their 66-run opening stand by dismissing Shamyl for a brisk 33 off 23 deliveries, including four boundaries and two sixes.
India A struck again in the following over when pacer Harshit Rana removed wicket-keeper-batter Rohail Nazir for a three-ball duck, leaving Pakistan at 67-2 in 8.3 overs.
Hasan Nawaz then joined Sadaqat at the crease, and the pair steadied the innings with a valuable partnership while maintaining an impressive scoring rate.
Sadaqat continued his impressive form, bringing up his 10th List A half-century. However, his innings came to an end when Suryansh Shedge dismissed him for 59 off 63 deliveries, featuring six fours and a six. His departure also ended the 54-run partnership. Captain Abdul Samad joined Hasan at the crease, and the duo stitched together another valuable partnership to take Pakistan past the 150-run mark.
Hasan brought up his fifth List A half-century but failed to convert it into a century, falling to Shedge for an impressive 79 off 82 deliveries, including five boundaries and two sixes. His dismissal ended their 44-run partnership. Samad's innings also came to an end following a sharp piece of fielding by Rinku Singh, who effected a run-out. The Pakistan captain scored 28 off 35 deliveries, including a boundary and two sixes, leaving the Shaheens at 186-4 in 30.3 overs.
Farhan Yousaf then joined the middle and provided valuable support before Imran Randhawa added impetus to the innings with an aggressive cameo, striking two sixes to help Pakistan cross the 250-run mark.
However, Vipraj Nigam provided India A with another breakthrough, dismissing Randhawa for 23 off 14 deliveries, including a boundary and two sixes. His departure left Pakistan at 264-6 in 41.5 overs.
Nigam struck again to remove Saad Masood for nine off 13 deliveries, including a boundary, leaving the Shaheens seven down.
Meanwhile, Farhan continued to keep the scoreboard ticking and brought up his second List A half-century, helping Pakistan cross the 300-run mark in the 47th over.
India A pacer Prince Yadav then claimed his second wicket of the innings, dismissing Farhan for a valuable 56 off 48 deliveries, including four boundaries and two sixes. His departure left Pakistan at 304-8 in 47.3 overs. Harshit Rana claimed his second wicket by dismissing Ahmed Daniyal for eight off nine deliveries before Prince Yadav wrapped up the innings by removing Ali Raza for two, bowling Pakistan Shaheens out for 313 in 49.2 overs.
For India A, Harshit Rana, Prince Yadav, Suryansh Shedge and Vipraj Nigam claimed two wickets apiece, while Ayush Badoni chipped in with one wicket

Armenia proposes new...

FROM PAGE 01

but will also have institutional, lasting and irreversible peace," Pashinyan said in an address to the nation shortly after the draft was published on Monday, according to the Armenpress state news agency. Armenia and Azerbaijan, neighbors in the South Caucasus, had been at intermittent war since the late 1980s, mostly over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, controlled for decades by ethnic Armenians but recaptured by Azerbaijan in 2023 in a lightning offensive. The two countries signed a joint US-backed peace declaration last August. Since then they have begun to rebuild trade links and say they are in a state of "real peace."

Govt committed to meet...

FROM PAGE 01

The Prime Minister said 100 billion rupees have been disbursed for the construction of 18,500 houses in just six and a half months under the Apna Ghar Programme. The amount has now increased to 112 billion rupees, while loans worth 500 billion rupees have been approved. He announced that another ceremony would be held after six months to mark the achievement of the target of disbursing one trillion rupees. The Prime Minister said there is no limit on the number of houses to be constructed under the Apna Ghar, Apna Ashiana Programme. He said luxurious houses are a requirement of the elite, who can build two- or four-kanal residences, but ordinary and middle-income families need homes.

Shujaat, Naqvi discuss...

FROM PAGE 01

The meeting comes amid an ongoing political debate over the creation of new provinces, with several political leaders pushing for a nationwide referendum to settle the matter. It was sparked by Naqvi's July remarks, wherein he called for the formation of new administrative units in the country, saying the current "system" of governance had "collapsed" and needed a "reset". In Monday's meeting, the two leaders discussed the overall political situation, measures to maintain law and order and the need to transfer power to the grassroots level, according to a statement issued by the interior ministry after the meeting.

Bilawal urges political...

FROM PAGE 01

through unity but would fail if it remained divided. He said restoring young people's confidence in the system required a "democratic reset", including the restoration of parliamentary supremacy and public trust in the judiciary. Bilawal said the government and opposition must develop mutual trust, while the public should also have confidence in the system. He stressed that political differences should be set aside in the national interest, particularly as the country faced dangerous inflation and difficult economic conditions.

Bangladesh vows to arrest...

FROM PAGE 01

India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In April, the ministry said it was examining Bangladesh's request to extradite Hasina. Hasina faces a death sentence in Bangladesh and her Awami League party is banned following the 2024 uprising that ended her long rule. The United Nations has said as many as 1,400 people were killed during the unrest. Hasina fled Dhaka in August 2024 as protests demanding her resignation swept the country. She has since sought a new passport and identity card ahead of a planned return in December, requests the government has rejected.

First Belt and Road Health Sci-tech Big-yard unveiled

ISLAMABAD: The first Belt and Road Health Sci-tech Big-yard, under the Sino-Pak Biohealth Agriculture Overseas Sci-tech Demonstration Park, was officially inaugurated at the University of Sargodha, during a visit to Pakistan by a delegation from the Shaanxi Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Dryland Biological Resources and Green Smart Agriculture.
The concept of the Health Sci-tech Bigyard was first proposed by Zhang Lixin, Professor at Northwest A&F University, and Chinese Director of Shaanxi Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Dryland Biological Resources and Green Smart Agriculture, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. According to Zhang Lixin, the Health Sci-tech Bigyard at its core is an integrated seven-component platform encompassing talent development and training, joint laboratories, demonstration sites, contract farming, trade channels, supermarkets and dining tables, as well as health and wellness services incorporating cultural and artistic activities.
The initiative aims to bring together universities, research institutions, vocational colleges, leading enterprises, local government agencies, industry associations and Chinese diplomatic missions. It also promotes a holistic health framework linking healthy production environments, healthy plants and animals, safe and healthy end products, and human physical and mental well-being. Prof. Tasawar Hayat, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, and Prof. Zhang Lixin joined other experts in officially inaugurating the Health Sci-Tech Big Yard. – **APP**



Korean Ambassador National Taekwondo C'ship Kicks Off Today

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The 19th Korean Ambassador Combaxx National Senior Taekwondo Championships 2026 will kick off today (Tuesday) at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, featuring the country's top Taekwondo athletes. The championship, running until November 28, will bring together teams from all four provinces, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, alongside departmental and services teams representing Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Police and Pakistan Railways. Athletes will compete in Kyorugi, Poomsae and Para Taekwondo categories, showcasing their skills and talent at the national level. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Han Sung-ho will grace the opening ceremony as chief guest. President Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (PTF), Col. Nabeel Ahmed Rana, said the championship would play a key role in identifying talented athletes for the national team and strengthening preparations for the upcoming South Asian Games 2027. He said the event would provide an important platform to assess athletes' performances, encourage emerging talent and further promote Taekwondo across the country. The championship is expected to feature high-quality competition while supporting the federation's efforts to develop promising athletes and build a competitive national squad for upcoming international events.

Alcaraz downs Zverev to win ATP Finals for first time

DNA

TURIN: Carlos Alcaraz won the ATP Finals with a 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) victory over world number one Alexander Zverev in the title match in Turin on Sunday. After becoming the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam at the start of the season with victory in the Australian Open, the 23-year-old has bookended an up-and-down year with a first title at the season-ending showpiece tournament. Alongside Roger Federer, Andre Agassi and Novak Djokovic, Alcaraz now forms part of an exclusive list of men to have won all four majors and the ATP Finals. With his illustrious compatriot Rafael Nadal never managing to win the season-ending tournament, Alcaraz became the first Spanish champion since Alex Corretja in 1998. "It's been an amazing week. I couldn't finish the week in a better way, so I'm really proud," Alcaraz said after capturing his sixth title of the year. "I've been through really difficult moments with myself, with my team, and we could go through everything. I'm playing great tennis, so for me, lifting this trophy is something that I've been chasing for a really long time. It means the world to me," he added of the hamstring issue he suffered earlier in the tournament. A wrist injury had caused Alcaraz to miss a good chunk of the middle of the season and following that victory in Melbourne he failed to add to his seven major titles.

Max Verstappen wins the Las Vegas Grand Prix for the third time in four years

LAS VEGAS: Rival George Russell was the first to challenge Max Verstappen, overtaking him several times only to give the lead right back. Then it was Kimi Antonelli, the current Formula 1 champion going after the four-time series winner only to fade near the end. And, finally, Lando Norris gave it a shot before realizing second place was the more realistic goal than being the first across the finish line. Verstappen simply would not be beaten Saturday night, seemingly willing his way around the 50-lap course to win a Las Vegas Grand Prix with 35 lead changes and 352 overtakes. He has won three of the four races on the Las Vegas Strip and 75 overall in his F1 career. "I remember winning one like this when I was playing on 'Mario Kart,'" Verstappen said.
Norris, the 2025 series champion, and McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri, finished second and third on the 3.85-mile (6.2 kilometers) layout. Antonelli finished fourth. Norris showed he might be a factor when he passed Russell on the 34th lap to move into second place and soon after even briefly led the field. "The second half of the race was very strong in terms of not making mistakes, staying out of the chaos of some of the others around us and playing things right in the last three or four laps in terms of positioning and slipstreams," Norris said. "Today wasn't a race about trying to win. There was no chance we could win the race today. P2 (second place) was the best and we achieved it, so I'm happy." His teammate started 17th on the grid.
"It was crazy," Piastri said. "As Lando said, it was a lot about playing your cards at the right time. I think from where I was, we were very quick in the corner, so you could stay close to the slipstream, which was good."
Verstappen, who is second in the standings, is ending his season strong with two races left. This was his fourth victory in the past six events And this is one he truly had to earn in what even his competitors acknowledged was a tremendous night of racing. "From the outside, I'm sure it probably was the best race ever in Formula 1," Norris said. "There were a lot of overtakes out of nowhere."
Verstappen and Russell battled it out early. Russell moved past Verstappen multiple times only to have the Dutch champion retake the lead seconds later. Russell at times appeared to do enough to remain in front, but Verstappen kept finding ways to gain the advantage.
Holding off Russell early in the race was the priority for the Red Bull team, which Verstappen teammate Isack Hadjar was twice told on the radio early in the race to back off after he went into second place. Hadjar even briefly went into the lead on the ninth lap before ceding to Verstappen. The team's hopes rested completely on Verstappen when Hadjar suffered damage to his front wing on a restart on the 26th lap, ending any realistic chance of being a factor. Perhaps more importantly, Verstappen no longer had his teammate to play defense against Russell. But it was Russell who needed help after dropping to fourth place on the 41st lap, and Antonelli who went at it with Verstappen. Russell worked his way back to third, then went into the barrier with three laps remaining and finished ninth. – **DNA**

China, Pakistan to establish Joint Research Center

The partners plan to conduct joint field experiments and technology demonstrations, share research data and technical expertise, and establish bilateral demonstration bases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GAAS), Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) and five universities in Punjab Province have reached an agreement to jointly establish the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center for High Water-Efficiency Agriculture.
It aimed at strengthening bilateral agricultural science and technology cooperation and promote sustainable agricultural development in arid regions, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday.
The center will focus on key technologies such as mulched drip irrigation, efficient water utilization, cereal-legume intercropping and high-yield cultivation in arid areas. The partners plan to conduct joint field experiments and technology demonstrations, share research data and technical expertise, and establish bilateral demonstration bases. The cooperation will also promote academic and personnel exchanges through expert visits, technical training, field observations, joint master's and doctoral student training, and academic seminars, helping strengthen research capacity and facilitate knowledge sharing between the two sides.
Under a two-tier coordination mechanism, PHEC and GAAS will be responsible for policy support, resource coordination and administrative facilitation, while GAAS and the five Pakistani partner universities will undertake the center's construction, operation and research activities.
The National Research Center of Intercropping (NRCI) at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur will serve as the lead implementing institution on the Pakistani side, coordinating research and technical cooperation among participating universities.
The five Pakistani partner universities are the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture, Multan.



Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.50, down from the previous day's close of Rs 276.51.
According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.80, respectively.
The Euro increased by Rs 0.47 to close at Rs 303.69, down from Rs 303.22 the previous day, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.73, while the British Pound went up by Rs 0.65 to Rs 362.92 from Rs 362.27 the previous day.
The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paisa each to close at Rs 75.27 and Rs 73.68, respectively._**APP**

PSX edges higher, gains over 90 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a positive session on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 91.29 points, a slight upward change of 0.05 percent, to close at 177,473.86 points against 177,382.57 points recorded in the previous trading session.
The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 551.452 million shares, compared to 620.897 million shares traded in the previous session.
The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs22.501 billion, slightly down from Rs22.598 billion a day earlier. Meanwhile, total market capitalisation decreased to Rs19.254 trillion from Rs19.260 trillion recorded in the previous session. Out of 496 companies that traded in the ready market, 199 posted gains, 270 suffered losses, while 27 remained unchanged.
WorldCall Telecom led the volume chart with 88.799 million shares, followed by Pervez Ahmed Co with 62.474 million shares and TPL Life Insurance with 16.105 million shares.
Among the top gainers in the ready market, PIA Holding Company LimitedB surged by Rs279.51 to close at Rs14,280.51, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited advanced by Rs164.00 to settle at Rs26,519.00._**APP**

PSX, JazzCash, Next Capital join hands to make Govt Sukuk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), JazzCash and Next Capital Limited have penned a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to bring Government of Pakistan's Sukuk to millions of retail investors across the country through JazzCash. The initiative brings together the market infrastructure of PSX, the nationwide digital reach of JazzCash and the brokerage and technology capabilities of Next Capital. With an aim to democratize access to GOP Sukuk ijirough a simplified digital journey, the move will broaden the retail investor base and bring household savings and investments into Pakistan's formal capital market. The MoU was signed at PSX, Karachi, in the presence of Farrukh H. Sabzwari, MD & CEO, PSX; Murtaza Ali, CEO, JazzCash; Najam Ali, Vice Chairman, Next Capital and Humaira Asad, CEO Next Capital. Under the MoU, PSX will provide the market access with NCCPL supporting seamless account opening, clearing and settlement. JazzCash will lead customer reach alongside digital distribution. Next Capital will act as Securities Broker providing the investment platform. The parties are to finalize the operational and commercial frameworks. Short-term sovereign hybrid Sukuk will lead the rollout, with a broader range of products to follow. At this occasion, Farrukh H. Sabzwari, MD & CEO, PSX, said: "This initiative marks an important step towards widening access to the capital market for retail investors across Pakistan. It brings together the market infrastructure of PSX, the digital reach of JazzCash and the brokerage and technology capabilities of Next Capital.–**APP**



ISLAMABAD: The promotion of human rights, the rule of law, and the protection of minorities remain central pillars of Switzerland's Foreign Policy. Ambassador Rey hosted a group of parliamentarians, diplomats and civil society actors to discuss minority and other human rights with National Councillor Marc Jost on his first visit to Pakistan. DNA

Investment Forum boosts eco ties, trade potential

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad on Monday hosted a high-profile "Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum," organized by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in collaboration with Portugal's Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (AICEP). The event aimed to strengthen trade and investment cooperation between the two nations, unlocking vast untapped economic potential.
Currently, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Portugal stands at approximately US$ 250 million, a figure widely regarded as below its true potential. With an estimated 50,000-strong Pakistani diaspora in Portugal, there is significant opportunity to enhance economic and trade ties.
The forum brought together business leaders and industry representatives from both countries who discussed key sectors for collaboration, including aviation, textiles, information technology, aerospace, defense, manufacturing, electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, agriculture, and food processing. Potential investment opportunities were also identified in infrastructure, mining, ports and maritime, tourism, oil and gas, power, food security, and healthcare. Bruno Paed Moreira, Executive Member of the Board at AICEP, highlighted Portugal's strategic position as a gateway for Pakistan to access the European Union and Portuguese-speaking countries, which represent a market of over 260 million people. He emphasized sectors such as textiles, renewable energy, and logistics as promising areas for bilateral cooperation.
Chris Rous, Vice President of Africa AMADEUS, praised Pakistan's advancements in aviation and connectivity, noting Islamabad Airport's modern facilities and encouraging joint ventures in the aviation sector. Bruno Coelha Brandao, CFO of ENSMILE Group, welcomed SIFC's efforts to connect business communities and expressed optimism about expanding trade far beyond the current US$ 250 million figure.
Zikria A. Zia, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, lauded the forum's role in fostering partnerships that promote industrial development, technology transfer, and export growth, calling on Portuguese investors to leverage Pakistan's attractive investment environment through joint ventures.
The CEO of Delta Coffee underscored the potential for strong cooperation in agriculture and agri-industry sectors, encouraging both countries to deepen their economic relationship through dialogue, joint opportunities, and innovative partnerships.
This forum marks a significant step towards diversifying economic engagement and building sustainable commercial linkages that will benefit both Pakistan and Portugal in the long run.
Ultimately, the Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum reflects SIFC's proactive vision, strategic leadership, and unwavering commitment to transforming Pakistan's economic potential into tangible investment and trade opportunities.
By bringing international investors, policymakers, and business communities onto one platform, SIFC is playing a pivotal role in building investor confidence, facilitating cross-border partnerships, and opening new avenues for sustainable economic growth. Such initiatives demonstrate SIFC's determination to position Pakistan as an attractive global investment destination while strengthening its economic footprint in international markets.
With SIFC at the forefront of investment facilitation and economic diplomacy, Pakistan is taking meaningful strides towards a more prosperous, competitive, and globally connected future. The Punjab Agriculture Department on Monday issued an off-season management strategy to protect the next cotton crop from pink bollworm attacks through effective control measures during winter.
A department spokesperson said pink bollworm entered a dormant stage during November and December,surviving in attached bolls,fallen cotton bolls,crop residues and waste at ginning factories.
The emergence of moths from dormant larvae largely depended on temperature, and favourable conditions could trigger their activity,posing a threat to the next cotton crop.
The spokesperson advised farmers to collect unopened and infested cotton bolls after the final picking,spread them in sunlight until they opened,separate the cotton and destroy the remaining material.
Farmers were also advised to allow sheep and goats to graze in cotton fields after the final picking so that immature bolls could be consumed,helping eliminate pink bollworm larvae.
In fields affected by pink bollworm, fallen bolls should be destroyed and the land ploughed using a rotavator to eliminate larvae remaining in crop residues.
The spokesperson further advised farmers to cut cotton stalks and arrange them in small bundles with their roots facing downward to expose hidden larvae to sunlight.
The bundles should be turned periodically to ensure effective pest control.
Cotton stalks should be cut at or below ground level, while fallen bolls,roots and weeds should be incorporated into the soil through rotavator or mouldboard ploughing. The spokesperson also urged ginning factories to collect and destroy leftover cotton bolls,seeds and other waste to prevent the pest from surviving during winter. –**APP**

UAE unveils Mira AI assistant to handle govt services

DUBAI: UAE announced a new government AI assistant called Mira on Monday, aimed to reduce time spent on government services. In a press briefing, Mohammad Al Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs of the UAE, said the ambition is to to move 50 per cent of government services to artificial intelligence within the next two years. Mira is being introduced as a personal AI assistant for citizens and residents which will not only answer questions but will help process government tasks on behalf of users. It will help users complete transactions, using their personal information to simplify applications and reduce the need to repeatedly enter details. Tasks such as renewing passports, Emirates IDs and residency permits, alongside healthcare and education services will all be done through Mira. Education minister Sarah Al Amiri, said Mira can give a holistic overview and plan for children's education.
Al Amiri said the AI assistant is designed to bridge the gap between schools and families, allowing parents to monitor attendance and performance while receiving guidance on areas where their children may need additional support. Officials said Mira is also expected to reduce administrative burdens and make essential services more accessible, particularly in healthcare. Minister of Health and Prevention, Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, said Mira would allow senior citizens to access services without having to leave their homes, including viewing blood test results, checking vaccination schedules and booking medical appointments. Meanwhile, Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, highlighted the broader economic benefits of reducing bureaucracy, saying some procedures that previously took five days had been cut to five minutes. He added that automation has saved 14,600 employee hours annually, allowing staff to focus on higher-value tasks, while AI could help businesses identify and access services relevant to their industries. Mohamed BinTalleh, Assistant Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Government Experience Exchange Affairs said the service will be launched in March of 2027.–**DNA**



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Mr. Paulo Rangel, signing an Agreement at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.-DNA

Gaza a 'toxic wasteland' after Israel's war

LONDON: Israel's war on Gaza has transformed the Palestinian territory into a toxic wasteland that threatens human survival, a new report by Oxfam has found. Co-authored by the UK-based Conflict and Environment Observatory, the report reveals new evidence that Israel's extensive use of explosive and incendiary munitions across Gaza has rendered air, soil and water dangerous for the enclave's inhabitants, potentially for decades to come. Indicators of toxic contamination are visible across almost all of the territory, and about 78 percent of land there has been affected by Israeli ground operations, the report said. Across Gaza, more than 60 million tonnes of debris remain, in part due to the 6,000 bombs that were dropped on the territory during the first five days of the conflict in October 2023 – almost one per minute. By June 2024, Israel had bought more than 14,000 MK-84 bombs to continue its war on Gaza. As international attention increasingly turns to the enclave's reconstruction, environmental recovery "must not be treated as an afterthought, but as a vital undertaking in parallel," Oxfam said. The charity's report used satellite data, remote sensing analysis and geolocated conflict incident databases to spatially map contamination risks across Gaza as part of its findings. Existing evidence is already sufficient to conclude that contamination across the enclave is "widespread, severe and consequential, and that the destruction and contamination of Gaza's environmental resources and systems raise serious concerns under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and occupation law," Oxfam said. Spatial analysis used for the report discovered indicators of potential contamination across more than 99 percent of Gaza. Combined, Israel dropped the equivalent energy payload of about 13 Hiroshima-sized bombs on Gaza in almost two years, damaging or destroying 85 percent of the territory's water infrastructure. About 40,000 cubic meters of raw sewage is now being discharged into the Mediterranean Sea each day due to all six of Gaza's wastewater treatment plants being destroyed by April 2024. Local agriculture was also ravaged by the conflict, with 87 percent of Palestinian cropland damaged and more than 1 million olive trees uprooted by October 2024, the report said. Clearing the rubble across Gaza is expected to take at least 2.1 million truckloads, driving the equivalent of 736 times around the Earth, it added. Oxfam called for a "full, independent, field-based Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment, which is needed to establish what contaminants are present, where they are found and at what concentrations; determine the risks they pose to people and the environment; and identify what needs to be done to address them." The continued delay of such an assessment "is a direct consequence of Israel's continued refusal of independent access to Gaza," the charity added. "Israel must end its genocide and siege of Gaza and to allow unrestricted access for aid, environmental assessment and essential equipment. Recovery and reconstruction of Gaza must be owned and led by Palestinians themselves. "It must be rights-based, reparations-oriented, and rooted in accountability. International funding does not replace Israel's obligation to make reparations for the harm caused by its unlawful acts.–**DNA**

Syria to restore desert oases

DAMASCUS: Authorities in the Syrian Arab Republic are working to rehabilitate irrigation networks, restore vegetation and support agricultural production in the country's desert oases, which provide vital sources of income and employment for rural communities increasingly affected by drought and water shortages. The oases in the country's vast Badia region support farming, livestock breeding and local trade while helping communities maintain their livelihoods in areas where annual rainfall typically ranges between 100 and 200 millimeters.
Bayan Al-Abdullah, director-general of the General Authority for the Management, Development and Protection of the Badia, said the oases played an important economic and social role by providing agricultural products, grazing areas and jobs for local residents.
He said their development could also create opportunities in food processing, traditional handicrafts and ecotourism, helping diversify household incomes and strengthen rural economies. Government-managed oases are spread across several provinces, covering different areas. In the Damascus countryside, the Al-Batma Oasis covers 50 hectares. In Homs province, the main oases include Al-Sawana (75 hectares), Wadi Al-Ahmar (27 hectares), Al-Munsef (23.4 hectares), Arak (25 hectares), Al-Hafira (47 hectares), Sabkhat Al-Mouh (63 hectares), Al-Abtar (50 hectares) and Khneifis (25 hectares). In Deir Ezzor province, the Kabajeb Oasis covers 73 hectares, while Al-Shoula extends across 38 hectares. Privately owned agricultural oases also support farming communities around Palmyra, Al-Sukhnah, Al-Qaryatayn, Eastern Qalamoun, Al-Baikamal and Al-Mayadeen. However, declining rainfall, falling groundwater levels and the drying up of springs have placed growing pressure on agricultural production. Al-Abdullah said worsening drought and climate change have damaged fruit trees, reduced vegetation cover and increased soil salinity, threatening both farming and livestock grazing.–**APP**

Homesick in Kuwait, Filipino expat builds online community of 2m

MANILA: When Eliezer Embrado arrived in Kuwait in 2007 for a sales job, he found himself alone in an unfamiliar place. To cope with homesickness, he soon turned to blogging – a small, personal initiative that has since grown into a community of more than 2 million of his fellow Filipinos. After three years documenting his experiences, Embrado decided to explore a new platform that was just beginning to gain popularity: Facebook. On it, he created a page called Pilipino sa Kuwait (Filipino in Kuwait). "I thought it was amazing that I could connect with people online, talk to them, and get likes on my posts. Then I started gaining 1,000 fans, followers, then 2,000, and the numbers just kept growing. It took less than a year for me to reach 10,000 fans," he told Arab News. His first posts to generate major engagement were about exchange rates – one of the main subjects followed by overseas Filipino workers, as they keep sending remittances back home.
"Those were among my first posts that generated a lot of engagement. After that, I started posting more about Filipino community events, visiting artists, and anything related to OFWs," Embrado said.
"When I began sharing updates about community events, passport application requirements and other important information, the page gradually shifted towards providing useful information for OFWs. I started enjoying what I was doing because I realized that I was helping a lot of people and that many were engaging with my posts." A native of Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte, Embrado now works in marketing and runs three Facebook pages: Pilipino sa Kuwait, with 1.7 million followers; Filipinos in Kuwait, with 228,000; and Eljan TV, with nearly 508,000. Although his audience extends beyond the Gulf to the US, Canada, Hong Kong and New Zealand, Embrado's content remains largely focused on Filipinos living in Kuwait. Around 211,000 Filipinos work there, mostly as domestic workers, while others are employed in services, sales and healthcare.–**APP**

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Briefs

Taiz governor urges EU, UN to press Houthis to lift siege

DUBAI: Taiz Governor Nabil Shamsan has called on the EU and the UN to step up pressure on the Houthis to lift their siege of the Yemeni city, warning of a worsening humanitarian crisis. Shamsan made the appeal during a virtual meeting last week with the EU ambassador to Yemen, Patrick Simonnet, in which the two discussed the impact of the siege on residents, including shortages of food, medicine, fuel and water.

The governor urged international pressure on the Houthis to reopen roads and allow safe passage for civilians and humanitarian aid. Simonnet expressed concern over dwindling food and medical supplies and the worsening water crisis, and stressed the need for continued monitoring and international efforts to address the situation.

Both sides called for stronger international coordination to open a safe humanitarian corridor to Taiz and stop the crisis from deepening. G7 foreign ministers also called for the urgent opening of a humanitarian corridor in Taiz in a joint declaration after their meeting in Paris earlier this month. – **APP**

9 people shot at a central California concert

CALIFORNIA: Nine people were shot at a concert in central California, leaving one person critically injured with a chest injury, the local sheriff said Sunday.

The shooting broke out around 7:30 p.m. Saturday at a concert attended by about 150 people in Strathmore, a small town in Tulare County, a mountainous region in the center of the state, the county sheriff's department said in a statement. An unspecified number of suspects opened fire on the crowd. No arrests were announced.

One 26-year-old man was shot in the chest and required surgery. He remained in critical condition, the sheriff's department said. Two other victims ages 19 and 22 also required surgery, while six people sustained minor injuries.

Authorities said that they believe the shooting "may be gang-related" but didn't elaborate. The show in the town of roughly 3,000 people featured performers from neighboring states, the department said. The department didn't immediately respond to emailed questions seeking further details but said there was no longer any immediate threat to the public. – **APP**

India to give economic package to Nepal

DNA

NEW DELHI: India will give Nepal an economic package worth 240 billion Nepalese rupees ($1.62bn), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, after talks with his Nepali counterpart Balendra Shah in New Delhi. Shah is in the Indian capital for a two-day visit, his first bilateral trip since coming to power in March, and in the aftermath of the devastating Himalayan flood in August that killed some 1,500 people, with another 5,200 missing and presumed dead.

"Today, to give fresh impetus to Nepal's reconstruction and long-term development, we are announcing a development cooperation package worth 24,000 crore (240 billion) Nepalese rupees," Modi said, addressing the media after the talks, with Shah standing beside him. "Our commitment will be to help affected families get their lives back on track, create new opportunities and further strengthen Nepal's capacity to deal with future disasters," Modi said.

Portugal's FM joins celebration of 77 years of Pak–Portugal relations

Paulo Rangel said, "The Camões Institute chose this exhibition because it is about the encounter between cultures – how cultures meet and come to understand one another. It reflects the poet's perspective on the crossroads of civilizations; Aziz Boolani said, "We are honoured to have welcomed Minister Rangel as Pakistan and Portugal celebrate 77 years of diplomatic relations







Saifullah Ansar / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Portugal marked 77 years of diplomatic relations with Resonance Across Borders, an evening of music at Islamabad Serena Hotel during the official visit of H.E. Mr. Paulo Rangel, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal. The evening was hosted jointly by the Ambassador of Portugal, H.E. Mr. Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues, and the Chief Executive Officer of Serena Hotels, Mr. Aziz Boolani, as part of Serena Hotels' Cultural Diplomacy Programme.

The Portuguese guitarist Pedro Jóia and the Pakistani musician Arieb Azhar, who first performed together at the hotel in 2025, brought together Portugal's classical guitar tradition and Pakistan's Sufi poetry. Before the performance, the Minister inaugurated Luís de Camões: The Future of the Past, an exhibition on Portugal's national poet, at Islamabad Serena Hotel's Satrang Gallery. It remains on display until 24 November.

H.E. Mr Paulo Rangel said, "The Camões Institute chose this exhibition because it is about the encounter between cultures – how cultures meet and come to understand one another. It reflects the poet's perspective on the crossroads of civilizations. That is why we chose this exhibition to mark the strengthening of relations between Portugal and Pakistan.

Our peoples share many ways of looking at the world. While politics is important in serving the public good, and economics is equally decisive, without culture, none of this has meaning."

Mr. Aziz Boolani said, "We are honoured to have welcomed Minister Rangel as Pakistan and Portugal celebrate 77 years of diplomatic relations. Our Cultural Diplomacy Programme celebrates Pakistan's heritage and encourages exchange between cultures through art, literature, music and food, and this evening brought that exchange to life."

US intelligence chief defends Trump-Putin goodwill gestures

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton said it was "entirely appropriate" for President Donald Trump to call Russian leader Vladimir Putin his friend. Clayton defended comments that Democrats have characterized as a betrayal of American values after Trump met with Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping for rare three-way talks. The summit last week in China seemed to be more symbolism than substance, but Trump and his top aides have described it as a historic gathering of the three countries with the largest nuclear arsenals.

Trump raised eyebrows with his warm greeting of Putin and repeated references to him as his "friend," which continued on Saturday, when the Republican president posted an image on Truth Social of him shaking hands with a smiling Putin under the caption, "My Friend."

"In that circle – in that circle of that conversation, using the term 'friend' is entirely appropriate," Clayton said on ABC's "This Week." He had a similar assessment on CNN's "State of the Union," where he said it was "historic" and "remarkable" for Trump to meet with the presidents of the other leading nuclear powers. "In that context, whatever language the president wants to use, I trust him completely," Clayton said. Like Trump, Clayton declined when pressed to characterize Putin as a friend of the United States, noting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an American ally. "He is not America's friend in Ukraine. Not at all. Not at all," Clayton said on ABC. Trump's fondness for Putin has been a defining characteristic of Trump's two terms as president.

Ukraine says Russian strikes kill 11 in Kyiv region

DYMER, Ukraine: Rescuers in Ukraine raced on Monday to find residents trapped under the rubble of a block of flats that partially collapsed in a Russian strike, after overnight attacks on the Kyiv region killed at least 11 people. Moscow has been pummelling Ukraine with nightly aerial barrages as the war-torn country braces for another winter, as the full-scale invasion grinds through its fifth year. An overnight strike on Dymer, around 45 kilometers (30 miles) north of the capital, hit a five-story building, killing at least eight people, according to Kyiv regional official Tymur Tkachenko.

"Rescuers extricated the eighth body of a person killed by Russians in Dymer," Tkachenko wrote on Telegram on Monday. "Search and rescue operations continue."

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said earlier on Telegram that the dead included a teenager and a woman in her forties.

Rescuers managed to pull out a child alive on Sunday evening, Tkachenko said on Telegram. State Emergency Service said earlier they were searching for 11 people, including two children, who were "not responding or cannot be reached."

Ukrainian human rights ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets called the attack part of "Russia's genocidal war against Ukraine."

"The world must stop looking away. Condemn this terror, hold Russia accountable, and act now to stop the killing of innocent Ukrainians," he said on X. – **APP**

UK digging new reservoirs to fight persistent droughts

HAVANT: Britain has long had a reputation for rain. But as it adapts to a warmer, drier climate, the UK is racing to complete a huge new reservoir, its first in over three decades. Bulldozers have been digging up the ground for the vast £800-million ($1 billion) Havant Thicket project near the southern coastal port of Portsmouth.

Like much of Europe, Britain endured record-breaking heat this summer and, despite the return of rains as the country moves into winter, parts are still grappling with drought conditions. "We've got increasing problems with our water security in the UK," climate scientist Hannah Cloke from Reading University told AFP.

"We need to really think about how we're storing that water because this problem is only going to get worse."

Scientists have warned extreme weather events are likely to become more frequent and more intense as the global climate changes. By mid-November, almost all of England remained in drought, with some areas classified as suffering severe drought, according to the Environment Agency.

Potentially exacerbating matters, existing reservoirs were only 60 percent full, 19 percentage points below the seasonal average.

For policymakers, the situation poses a longer-term challenge as the thirst for water increases with a rising population and the growth of heavy water-using industries such as data centers.

Under England's National Framework for Water Resources published in 2025, the country could face a daily water supply shortfall of five billion liters (1.3 billion gallons) by 2055, with resources under pressure. At the sprawling Havant Thicket site, Portsmouth Water chief executive Bob Taylor said the industry was waking up to the scale of the challenge after successive droughts and hot summers. The issue, he stressed, was not necessarily how much rain falls over the course of a year, but when it falls. Winters are becoming wetter, while summers are increasingly dry. – **APP**

