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Prime Minister for making cyber laws more stringent
Detailed News On Page-08

Nvidia's Huang apologizes to staff mistake
Detailed News On Page-08



Pakistan, China agree to boost coop
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Military leadership felicitates nation on spaceflight mission

According to the ISPR, the military leadership said that the journey of Wing Commander Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, Pakistan's first astronaut and the first foreign astronaut to travel to China's Tiangong Space Station, marks a defining moment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Air Chief Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu and Commander National Strategic Command General Syed Aamer Raza have extended heartfelt felicitations to the nation, SUPARCO and the scientific community on the historic launch of Pakistan's first human spaceflight mission.

According to the ISPR, the military leadership said that the journey of Wing Commander Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, Pakistan's first astronaut and the first foreign astronaut to travel to China's Tiangong Space Station, marks a defining moment in the country's scientific and technological advancement and is a source of immense pride for the entire nation.

The military leadership commended SUPARCO's scientists, engineers and technical teams for their unwavering dedication, professionalism and sustained efforts in achieving this historic national milestone. It said Pakistan's entry into human spaceflight reflects the immense potential of its human capital, scientific ingenuity and technological capabilities.

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Pak enters space as Shenzhou docks with space station

Shenzhou-24 astronauts, including Pakistan's Zeeshan Ali, enter China's Tiangong space station

DNA

BEIJING: A proud new chapter in Pakistan's history unfolded on Wednesday as Shenzhou-24 spacecraft, carrying the country's first astronaut, docked with China's Tiangong space station after a three-and-half-hour-long journey from Earth, according to China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The spacecraft carrying Chinese astronauts Tang Hongbo and Wu Yi and Pakistani Muhammad Zeeshan Ali. Chinese state media reported that Shenzhou-24 astronauts entered China's Tiangong space station where they were welcomed by Shenzhou-23 crew.

The Shenzhou-24 space flight docked at Tiangong at 11:56am (8:56am Pakistan Standard Time) Wednesday, roughly 3-1/2 hours after it took off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China using a Long March-2F rocket. The Long March 2-F rocket took off in a cloud of flames and smoke at 8:18am (5:18am Pakistan Standard Time) from the Jiuquan launch centre in China's northwestern Gobi Desert under a pink sky, video from state broadcaster CCTV showed. The spacecraft successfully separated from the carrier rocket roughly 10 minutes after blast-off and entered into orbit, the CMSA said.

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EID AL ETIHAD DAY OF UAE



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Shaza Fatma Khwaja Federal Minister for Information Technology, Minister Tariq Fazal Ch, Hanif Abbasi, PPP leader Raja Pervez Ashraf, Ambassador of UAE Salem Mohammed Alzaabi and others cutting cake to celebrate the 55th Eid Al Etihad celebrated under the theme 'Nations Families'. – DNA

Pakistan, Qatar to diversify relations

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar have underscored the potential for transforming bilateral cooperation in agriculture and livestock into a long-term commercial partnership. The resolve was expressed during a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain and a delegation of Qatar's leading Baladna Group in Islamabad today. During the meeting, the two sides explored opportunities for expanding bilateral agricultural trade, attracting investment and establishing joint ventures in livestock development, dairy production, animal feed

Continued on Page 06

£190m corruption case

Imran, Bushra's counsel says transaction caused no loss to exchequer

Barrister Safdar pointed out that the trial had been conducted behind closed doors inside Adiala jail, arguing that open, live-streamed proceedings before the IHC would help address lack of public access during the trial

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In the £190 million corruption case, counsel for PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, argued that the transaction had caused no loss to the national exchequer but had instead proved financially beneficial.

The couple is serving prison sentences in the £190 million corruption case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case. On January 17, 2025, an accountability court in Islamabad sentenced Imran to 14 years in prison and Bushra to seven years in the case. Both subsequently challenged their convictions before the IHC. The development came as the Islamabad High Court (IHC) resumed hearing appeals filed by Imran and Bushra against their convictions on Wednesday. A division bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif heard the appeals.

At the outset, Barrister Salman Safdar, counsel for the appellants, sought live streaming of the proceedings, arguing that the facility was available in courts across Pakistan and in other countries.

He said the request was aimed at ensuring transparency in a case involving matters of public importance. The counsel clarified that he was not seeking a telecast of the proceedings on Pakistan Television but wanted them to be live-streamed for public access. Barrister Safdar pointed out that the trial had been conducted behind closed doors inside Adiala jail, arguing that open, live-streamed proceedings before the IHC would help address the lack of public access during the trial.

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Briefs

US imposes tariffs on partners

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday unveiled proposed tariffs on 14 economies, including the European Union and China, after a months-long probe into alleged excess production — the latest move by US President Donald Trump to remake Washington's trade relationships.

The duties, proposed at up to 20%, come over allegations that the economies "are promoting production and capacity divorced from the realities of demand and market principles," a senior US official said on condition of anonymity.

The new tariffs face a period of public comment before taking effect, with the official adding that the proposals take existing trade deals into account.

The new levies target some of the largest US trading partners, including China, the European Union, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

The US official said a 20% tariff is being proposed for China, the joint-highest for any economy. Vietnam also faces a proposed 20% tariff; Cambodia and Indonesia 18% and India 17%, according to the US Trade Representative's office (USTR).

Partners like the EU, Korea and Taiwan, which have signed earlier trade deals, will see tariffs broadly capped at 15%. In a separate announcement, USTR also proposed additional tariffs on goods from Brazil, including aircraft, over alleged inaction on addressing US trade concerns. Trump's tariffs have targeted Washington's friends and foes alike, and are part of a push in his second term to remake global trade by forcing countries to buy US products or produce their goods in his country.

Partners trust

Maldives national airline to start direct flights to Pakistan

Pakistan and the Maldives also agreed to enhance cooperation in tourism, sports, health, trade, manpower and other sectors

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Maldivian, the national airline of the Maldives, will soon start direct flights to Pakistan in a bid to boost tourism, trade and people-to-people contacts between the two countries, it emerged on Wednesday. The announcement was made during a meeting of the Maldives Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Mohamed Ameen with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State for Interior, Talal Chaudry, as per a statement issued by the ministry. An official launch date and flight schedule have not been announced yet.

"Direct flights will make travel to Maldives much easier for Pakistani citizens," Naqvi said at the meeting. He said Pakistani citizens have a "deep interest" in tourism and direct flights would facilitate Pakistani tourists in the Maldives. Well-known Pakistani cricketers, artists and other celebrities will travel to the Maldives on the first direct flight, the meeting was told.

"Pakistani celebrities are extremely popular in Maldives; their arrival will promote tourism," the Maldivian minister said.

Pakistan and the Maldives also agreed to enhance cooperation in tourism, sports, health, trade, manpower and other sectors, the statement said. The Maldives minister praised Islamabad's modern infrastructure and cleanliness system during the meeting. "I am extremely happy to see Islamabad's rapid development, beauty and natural scenery," he was quoted as saying during the meeting. "Islamabad truly holds great potential as a tourism capital city." Naqvi added that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was working on a proposed project to build a cricket stadium in the Maldives. A cricket academy will also be established along with the stadium, which will provide

Continued on Page 06

ADB okays $250m for Pakistan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday approved a $250 million policy-based loan to help Pakistan strengthen its public-private partnership (PPP) system and advance a pipeline of bankable and sustainable projects that can attract private capital and support the country's economic growth. In a statement, the Manila-based lending agency said the financing will support reforms to help the government prepare market-ready projects, particularly high-quality,

Continued on Page 06

Tarar urges social media firms to establish offices

He said that the government had been engaging with the social media platforms on various matters. However, the government could not push social media companies to adhere to the laws of the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday urged social media companies to establish their offices in Pakistan and expand their presence in the country. He made the remarks while addressing a seminar organised by the Sustainable Policy Development Institute in Islamabad. "Social media platforms are most welcome. We want their business to grow in Pakistan," he said.

The minister said that the country needed their presence as it had a vibrant youth population that created "positive content". "We have the potential to create good and positive content and these social media companies can benefit from that content. "They should open their offices in Pakistan," Tarar urged. At the same time, the minister said that social media was "financially incentivising terrorism, harassment against women and child abuse".

"Anything that goes viral is directly linked to financial incentives. Social media platforms are paying you according to your [number of] views," he said. "There is an algorithmic injustice," he declared. "Social media has failed to protect the dignity and privacy of citizens," the minister went on to say.

He said that the government had been engaging with the social media platforms on various matters. However, the government could not push social media companies to adhere to the laws of the country, Tarar said. He said that whenever the government spoke to these companies, they said that they were very eager to open their offices in Pakistan and enhance their presence. "We are ready to work with all social media platforms to help them formulate their policy according to local peculiarities," he maintained.

Tarar argued that it could not be a one-size-fits-all fix as every country had its own dynamics and issues.



Continued on Page 06



Virtual University students receive laptops

ISLAMABAD:In a major boost for digital learning, Virtual University of Pakistan (VU) students have started receiving laptops under Phase II of the Chief Minister Punjab Laptop Scheme, with 2,349 students verified across the province. As part of the distribution, 128 students holding Rawalpindi domicile received their laptops at a special ceremony held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi by the Chief Minister of Punjab. Later, a formal ceremony was held at VU Head Office, Islamabad, where Rector Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti distributed laptops among the selected students. Addressing the ceremony, Prof. Bhatti congratulated the recipients and said technology is now indispensable for higher education.–APP

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF MUHAMMED YAR GONDAL District and SESSION JUDGE ISLAMABAD Suit for recovery utility bills Title: SNGPL VERSUS zulfiqar Khan r/o kurri road chak shahzad islamabad (consumer I'd 5203780000) Whereas the above defendant has failed to appear in court despite service of summons, and the court is satisfied that the defendant cannot be served by ordinary means, therefore, by this proclamation, the defendant is hereby directed to appear in person or through counsel before this Court on 27 / 11 / 2026 at 08:30 AM to answer the suit filed against him. > In case of nonappearance, the case shall be proceeded ex-part against him.

.....

IN THE COURT OF MUHAMMED YAR GONDAL DISTRICT and SESSION JUDGE ISLAMABAD Suit for recovery utility bills Title: SNGPL VERSUS liaqat Ali r/o khasra no 128 near village Tamma post of tarlai Klan islamabad (consumer I'd 1724057625) Whereas the above defendant has failed to appear in court despite service of summons, and the court is satisfied that the defendant cannot be served by ordinary means, therefore, by this proclamation, the defendant is hereby directed to appear in person or through counsel before this Court on 27 / 11 / 2026 at 08:30 AM to answer the suit filed against him. > In case of nonappearance, the case shall be proceeded ex-part against him.

.....

IN THE COURT OF MUHAMMED YAR GONDAL DISTRICT and SESSION JUDGE ISLAMABAD Suit for recovery utility bills Title: SNGPL VERSUS Abdul Rauf r/o khasra no 1894 near tikka mehal hotel kahuta road Bagh sehala islamabad(consumer I'd 0316724814)Whereas the above defendant has failed to appear in court despite service of summons, and the court is satisfied that the defendant cannot be served by ordinary means, therefore, by this proclamation, the defendant is hereby directed to appear in person or through counsel before this Court on 27 / 11 / 2026 at 08:30 AM to answer the suit filed against him. > In case of nonappearance, the case shall be proceeded ex-part against him.

President for boosting Pak, BD ties in various fields

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasised the need to strengthen Pakistan-Bangladesh relations through expanded parliamentary exchanges, trade and economic cooperation, educational links and people-to-people contacts, calling for a forward-looking approach based on sovereign equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

The President expressed confidence that the visit of Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Hafiz Uddin Ahmad Bir Bikram, would help advance bilateral relations and pave the way for more high-level exchanges between the two countries. President Zardari said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Bangladesh, which are rooted in shared history, common faith and deep cultural and familial affinities.

The President noted the renewed momentum in bilateral relations, particularly in high-level exchanges, education, trade, culture and people-to-people contacts. He highlighted the considerable potential for cooperation in agriculture, industry, food security, disaster management, digital governance, space research and defence. He also expressed hope for the early finalisation of around 26 MoUs under consideration, which would provide an institutional framework for expanding bilateral cooperation. President Zardari congratulated Bangladesh on the election of Barrister Adib Chowdhury, Chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, to the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). He expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen parliamentary cooperation, including at international parliamentary fora, and welcomed efforts to establish a Pakistan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group. The President offered Pakistan's assistance in facilitating training for Bangladeshi parliamentary officials at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) and sharing its institutional expertise in operating a bicameral legislature.

President Zardari highlighted Pakistan's educational initiatives, including the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor launched last year, which offers 500 fully funded scholarships to Bangladeshi students at leading Pakistani universities. He noted that 170 Bangladeshi students have already joined Pakistani universities, while another 20 are expected to join shortly.



He also welcomed the positive response to the Executive Leadership Training Programme for senior Bangladeshi civil servants at the National School of Public Policy, Lahore. The President welcomed growing cooperation in the media domain and the ongoing visit of a delegation of diplomatic correspondents from leading Bangladeshi newspapers to Pakistan. He observed that frequent media exchanges could promote greater mutual understanding among the peoples and opinion-makers of both countries. On connectivity, President Zardari welcomed the commencement of direct flights by Biman Bangladesh Airlines and emphasised the need to increase flight frequency and destinations in view of growing demand. He also called for exploring direct maritime links to facilitate trade and economic cooperation. Discussing trade and economic relations, the President noted that bilateral trade remains below its potential. He called for effectively utilising existing mechanisms, including the Joint Economic Commission and the Joint Working Group on Trade, to explore preferential trade arrangements and advance the priority areas identified during the Joint Economic Commission session held in October last year. He noted that the ongoing export of Pakistani rice under the Government-to-Government agreement could serve as a basis for broader cooperation in food security and the supply of essential commodities. Pakistan, in line with Bangladesh's request, is also ready to provide technical expertise for the refurbishment of sugar plants in Bangladesh. The President encouraged greater private-sector engagement across a range of sectors, including textiles, pharmaceuticals, leather, automobiles, construction materials, minerals, chemicals, ceramics and jute .

NCCIA arrests woman in Faisalabad

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Islamabad has arrested a woman in Faisalabad for allegedly impersonating a male Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officer and extorting Rs 500,000 from a citizen through WhatsApp blackmailing.

According to NCCIA on Wednesday, the suspect was allegedly involved in WhatsApp hacking, impersonation, online fraud, harassment and blackmailing. Preliminary investigations revealed that the woman allegedly lured the citizen into a relationship through WhatsApp and persuaded him to transfer money on various false pretexts.

She subsequently impersonated a male FIA officer and threatened the victim through WhatsApp, warning him that his private photographs and videos would be circulated on social media. Through intimidation and blackmailing, the suspect allegedly extorted Rs 500,000 from the citizen.

Acting on the complaint, an NCCIA Islamabad team conducted an operation in the Painsra area of Faisalabad and arrested the woman. Further investigation into the case is underway.–APP

Pak polio programme bids farewell to UNICEF team lead

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme has bid farewell to Ms. Melissa Corkum, Team Lead Polio at UNICEF, acknowledging her contributions and commitment to the country's efforts to eradicate the crippling disease. A farewell meeting was held at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), chaired by the Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication, Ayesha Raza Farooq. During the meeting, Ayesha Raza Farooq appreciated Melissa Corkum's invaluable contributions, dedication and commitment to polio eradication in Pakistan and globally, particularly her efforts to protect every child against the disease. National Coordinator NEOC Muhammad Anwar ul Haq, members of the National Core Team and NEOC staff also attended the meeting and extended their appreciation and best wishes to her for her future endeavours.

The Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme expressed gratitude to Melissa Corkum for her dedicated service and continued commitment to the global goal of a polio-free world.–APP

Gilani for zero tolerance against gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eliminating violence against women, urging all segments of society to work together to ensure the protection, dignity and equal rights of women and girls.

In his message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the commencement of the 16 Days of Activism, he said no society could claim to be truly progressive, democratic or just while its women and girls continued to live in fear of violence, discrimination and exploitation.

"The protection of women is not a matter of choice or concession; it is a constitutional obligation, a moral imperative and a collective national responsibility," he said. The Chairman Senate reaffirmed his commitment to building a Pakistan where every woman and girl could live with dignity, exercise her rights without fear and pursue her aspirations without barriers. He said the Constitution of Pakistan, particularly Articles 14, 25 and 34, provided a strong foundation for human dignity, equality before the law and the full participation of women in national life. The collective responsibility was to translate these constitutional commitments into reality through effective legislation, institutional accountability, equal opportunities and accessible justice. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani paid tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for laying the constitutional foundation for women's equality and empowerment through the 1973 Constitution, while Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had transformed that vision into a powerful movement for women's political, social and economic emancipation. He said their enduring legacy underscored that women's empowerment was not merely a development objective but an essential pillar of democracy and national progress. Despite significant legislative and institutional advances, domestic violence, harassment, honour-related crimes, human trafficking and emerging forms of technology-facilitated abuse remained serious challenges, he said, stressing that there must be zero tolerance for violence against women, whether at home, in workplaces, public spaces or the digital sphere.

The Chairman Senate emphasized that laws must not remain mere declarations of intent, adding that their effectiveness should be measured by the protection they provided, the justice they delivered and the accountability they ensured.

He said timely justice, survivor-centred institutional responses and effective enforcement must remain at the heart of national efforts to eliminate violence against women. As Chairman Senate, he believed Parliament had a pivotal role in advancing women's rights through progressive legislation, effective oversight and institutional accountability.

"Women are not merely beneficiaries of development; they are equal partners in shaping Pakistan's future," he said, adding that investing in their safety.–APP

University of Swat, Islamic Uni Chittagong sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: The University of Swat has achieved a significant milestone in its journey toward internationalization by signing its International Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Bangladesh.

The MoU was formally signed by Prof. Dr. Husnul Amin, Vice Chancellor, University of Swat, and Prof. Muhammad Ali Azadi, Vice Chancellor, International Islamic University Chittagong.

Prof. Amin extended special thanks to Prof. Towheed for his valuable facilitation in making this partnership possible and to Prof. Muhammad Ali Azadi, Vice Chancellor IIUC, for his encouragement, cooperation, and vision for inter-university collaboration, said a press release issued here.

Prof. Dr. Husnul Amin termed the agreement a historic step toward expanding the University of Swat's international academic linkages and creating new opportunities for global educational cooperation.

He further expressed confidence that this partnership will create new opportunities for students and faculty of both universities in 2027 and beyond.–APP

Merit-based recruitment top health priorities

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister(CM),Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced immediate measures to improve facilities and incentives for doctors,saying the provincial government was expanding healthcare infrastructure and creating a professional environment to attract and retain competent medical practitioners. Addressing the 8th convocation of Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU),here on Wednesday,she said doctors,nurses and paramedical staff were rendering invaluable services and deserved recognition,respect and better professional facilities. The CM said that the Punjab government was establishing new hospitals and medical centers across Punjab, creating an increasing demand for specialist and super-specialist doctors,particularly cardiac surgeons, neurologists and other medical professionals. She urged graduating doctors to pursue specialization and super-specialization,saying the provincial healthcare system needed highly qualified professionals to operate its expanding network of specialized medical institutions. Maryam Nawaz said that overseas Pakistani doctors were also returning to serve their country,citing the examples of the dean of Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital,who had returned from the United States(US) and dean of Jinnah Institute of Cardiology,Dr.Hasnat,who had come back from the United Kingdom(UK). She said that the Jinnah Institute of Cardiology had been established in Lahore within two years and possessed highly qualified doctors and advanced medical equipment. She also referred to the establishment of a major cardiology institute in Sargodha and the ongoing construction of a cancer hospital in Lahore. The CM said the government was establishing cardiac catheterisation laboratories in every district to ensure that patients could access quality treatment without travelling to major cities. She added that cancer treatment facilities would be expanded to every district within 18 months,while a cancer hospital had also been established in Multan.–DNA

KP vaccinate over 2.28m girls against HPV in campaign

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health department has successfully concluded its Cervical Cancer Prevention (Human Papillomavirus HPV) Vaccination Campaign, conducted from 11 to 24 November 2026 across all districts of the province, marking a significant milestone in protecting adolescent girls and preventing cervical cancer.

According to a press release issued here on Wednesday, the campaign targeted girls aged 9–14 years, with a provincial vaccination target of 2,843,182. By the conclusion of the campaign, 2,281,603 girls had been vaccinated, achieving 80.2% of the provincial target. This represents approximately 73% of the estimated eligible population of 3,127,500 girls, according to campaign monitoring data. In designated districts, 501,182 girls were vaccinated against a target of 743,745, achieving 67.4% coverage. The remaining districts collectively achieved 84.8% coverage, with 1,780,421 girls vaccinated. Vaccination services were delivered through schools, health facilities and community outreach. Official data recorded 833,741 girls vaccinated through schools and 1,451,064 through community-based vaccination activities, highlighting the vital role of outreach services in reaching girls beyond the school system. District-level performance reflected encouraging progress across the province. Upper Chitral recorded the highest coverage at 115%, followed by Buner at 108%, Lower Dir at 99%, Lower Chitral at 98%, and Swat and Malakand at 96% each. Among designated districts, Bajaur achieved 87%, Mohmand 81% and Lakki Marwat 80%. The campaign was supported by provincial and district health authorities, with 4,040 teams operating across the province, including 1,610 teams in designated districts. Vaccination was delivered through fixed, outreach and mobile teams, ensuring access to eligible girls in schools, health facilities and communities. Launched on 11 November at Moulvi Ameer Shah Memorial Hospital (Moulvi Jee Hospital), Peshawar, through the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), the campaign marked the introduction of the 13th vaccine in the provincial immunization programme.–APP

Pakistan reports 10th polio case from Karak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported its 10th polio case of 2026 from Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, prompting health authorities to ensure vaccination of children under five during the upcoming nationwide campaign beginning December 12. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication, the affected child is a 14-month-old girl from Shnawa Gudi Khel Union Council of Karak. It is the first polio case reported from the district in six years and the eighth case from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year. The case is genetically linked to poliovirus detected in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where virus circulation has remained intense despite an overall decline in transmission across the country. Neighbouring Bannu district has reported wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in sewage samples for the past eight months, indicating continued circulation of the virus and a persistent risk to children in the region. Polio is a highly contagious disease that has no cure and can cause lifelong paralysis. However, it is preventable through safe and effective vaccination, which has been used in 195 countries, including all Muslim-majority countries.–APP

CDA chief chairs 22nd board meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 22nd meeting of the CDA Board was held on Wednesday at CDA Headquarters under the chairmanship of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf. The meeting was attended by Member Admin Esfandyar Baloch, Member Estate Muhammad Zaman Wakoo, Member Implementation and Planning & Development Muhammad Umair and Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi, while Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice Chancellor of the University of Punjab and Member CDA Board, participated in the meeting via Zoom link. Various agenda items were considered in the 22nd meeting of the CDA Board. According to details, the 22nd meeting of the CDA Board approved the establishment of the CDA Health Foundation for revival of Capital Hospital on modern lines. CDA Health Foundation will be managed by a Board of Governors and a CEO. While the supervision and management of institution based private practice affairs will be under the Health Foundation. Similarly, approval was also granted for the formal launch of Institution-Based Private Practice (IBPP) at Capital Hospital. It is noteworthy that the purpose of this initiative is to further increase the revenue of Capital Hospital and make it financially self-sustainable. The income generated from private practice will be spent on further improving the operations and services of Capital Hospital. During a briefing to the meeting, it was apprised that the emergency and fire safety and fire hydrant systems at the CDA Hospital have been further upgraded. Furthermore, CDA Board meeting approved the formation of a committee to formulate bylaws for the under-construction Islamabad Avenue in Zone Four of Islamabad. The committee will prepare recommendations regarding the bylaws of the under-construction Islamabad Avenue. Moreover, the meeting approved ensuring the early completion of development works in Sector E-12/4. Similarly, the meeting also approved development works in various pockets, including the main road and service road of Sector E-12/4. Later, the meeting directed that pending cases of subdivision of plots in residential sectors of Islamabad be resolved soon in accordance with the prevailing policy.

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The Islamabad POST
METROLITE
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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

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Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day



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Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pakistan, China agree to work on investments

The two sides explored transformative investment opportunities and agreed on concrete steps to deepen bilateral cooperation across Pakistan's energy and mining sectors

MAHNOOR ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China agreed on Wednesday to pursue government-to-government (G2G) arrangements for Chinese investment in Pakistan's petrol and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage and terminal facilities, according to a Petroleum Division statement.

Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik and Pakistan State Oil (PSO) Chief Executive Officer Jawwad Ahmed Cheema met Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, and his commercial team, said the statement. The two sides explored transformative investment opportunities and agreed on concrete steps to deepen bilateral cooperation across Pakistan's energy and mining sectors.

Both sides identified two G2G priorities for early action: an LPG plant with associated storage and terminal facilities to expand domestic supply, improve access to cleaner fuel and ease peak-season shortages; and the import of motor gasoline (MoGas), including sourcing, storage and logistics, to strengthen fuel security and ensure a reliable supply at competitive prices. Both initiatives are expected to deliver early results, with tangible benefits for consumers and the wider economy, the statement said. To ensure tangible progress, both sides also agreed to constitute a joint commercial team comprising representatives from Pakistan and China. The team will evaluate identified opportunities, engage prospective companies, assess investment and partnership models, and develop a structured roadmap for mutually beneficial projects across upstream, offshore and downstream operations, including the G2G LPG plant and MoGas import arrangements, as well as minerals and mining. The minister also encouraged the Chinese side to advance investment across upstream, offshore, minerals, mining and downstream energy infrastructure, building on President Xi's priorities announced at Apec 2026 in Shenzhen. Moreover, Malik congratulated Pakistan Air Force Wing Commander Muhammad Zeeshan Ali on his historic participation in China's Shenzhou-24 space mission from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.

Zeeshan's achievement reflects talent of Pakistani youth

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has congratulated the nation on the successful journey of Pakistan's first astronaut, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, into space, terming the achievement as a historic milestone for the country.

In his message, the Speaker expressed his best wishes for Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and his Chinese counterparts, praying for the successful completion of their mission and their safe return to earth.

Ayaz Sadiq said that Zeeshan Ali had raised the nation's pride by representing Pakistan in space. He described the achievement as a shining testament to the capabilities, determination and hard work of Pakistani youth. He said that Pakistani young people possessed immense potential to demonstrate their abilities and excel at the international level. The Speaker said that cooperation between Pakistan and China in the field of space research reflected the enduring friendship and close ties between the two countries. He said that Pakistan's progress in space exploration was an encouraging development for the country's scientific future and would open new avenues for research, innovation and technological advancement.–APP

Call for partnerships to bridge academia-industry divide

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a roundtable dialogue titled "Bridging the Academia-Industry Divide in Pakistan: Challenges and the Way Forward," bringing together academics, policy practitioners and media professionals to examine why university education and research remain disconnected from the needs of industry and the wider economy. The dialogue comes as Pakistan's graduate unemployment has risen to 10.9 percent according to the Labour Force Survey 2024-25.

The session began with opening remarks by Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Senior Research Fellow, IRS, setting the context for the discussion and moderating the proceedings. The speakers included Prof. Dr. Adil Sultan, Dean, Air University; Prof. Dr. Manzoor Khan Afridi, Dean, International Islamic University Islamabad; Prof. Dr. Mujtaba Isani, DAAD Professor, Quaid-i-Azam University; Prof. Dr. Syed Sami Raza, National Defence University; Prof. Dr. M. Naveed, Bahria University; Dr. Bilal Zubair, Director, Center for International Strategic Studies; Dr. Saira Nawaz Abbasi, Head of Department, Bahria University; Dr. Tatheer Zahra, Assistant Professor, National University of Modern Languages; Mr. Muhammad Abbas Hassan, Policy Expert, National Security Division; Dr. Ahmad Ali, Research Analyst, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA); and Mr. Omar Khalid Butt, television host, Pakistan Television. The discussion was held under the Chatham House Rule.

Speakers traced the divide to structural causes, including misplaced national priorities, low share of GDP allocated to education, and governance challenges, which have weakened the credibility of the education sector. A limited industrial base has compounded the problem, while the Higher Education Commission (HEC) was described as a largely bureaucratic institution with weak linkages to academia and insufficient support for universities. The financial model of universities was also identified as a constraint, since most institutions have no endowment funds and research funding remains scarce.

These structural weaknesses, participants observed, are most visible in the labour market. Rising graduate unemployment was attributed to a widening skills gap, as graduates are not job-ready and lack analytical thinking along with soft and digital skills. Outdated curricula that have failed to evolve, poor coordination between universities and employers, and the near absence of career counselling have left many students without genuine interest in their chosen fields or a clear path from the classroom to the workplace. Industry and academia, it was noted, continue to work in isolation, with no incentives on either side to collaborate.

Participants also noted that motivation to undertake research is low, while problem-solving and evidence-based research remain scarce, and that the quality of the social sciences in Pakistan has declined, a trend the misuse of AI is deepening, with wider consequences for society. Speakers called for greater investment in quality research, particular attention to the social sciences, and a better balance between the natural and social sciences.

Turning to the way forward, speakers proposed a triple helix partnership linking universities, industry and government, supported by greater autonomy for universities and curricula tailored to societal needs. Recommended measures included bringing design thinking into higher education; curricula redesigned around practical modules and reviewed regularly with employers; supervised internships and fieldwork; training in analysis, communication and digital literacy; and joint supervision with industry. Institutional proposals included professors of practice drawn from policy and industry, research memoranda of agreement between HEC and industry, industry demonstrations, greater diversity in HEC's boardroom, and regular industry advisory mechanisms built around shared research priorities, result-oriented collaboration and innovation-based performance measures. Existing practices such as capstone projects, modular learning, memoranda of understanding with industry, policy-driven initiatives and collaboration between think tanks and universities were shared as models that could be scaled up.–DNA

Chairman senate felicitates Pakistan's first astronaut

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday extended heartfelt congratulations to Pakistan's first astronaut, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, on his departure for the historic space mission, describing it as a landmark moment in the country's history and a source of immense pride for the entire nation. The Chairman Senate said witnessing Muhammad Zeeshan Ali embark on his historic journey into space was a moment of extraordinary national significance. He said the achievement was not merely an individual honour but a matter of pride for all 250 million Pakistanis. As Pakistan's first astronaut, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali was carrying the nation's dreams and aspirations to new heights, with the national flag and hopes of the entire nation resting on his shoulders. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani paid tribute to the engineers, scientists, experts and members of the teams whose dedication and professional contributions made the historic mission possible. He also appreciated the efforts of the experts involved in the training and preparation of the backup astronaut, acknowledging their valuable contribution to the mission. The Chairman Senate said the space mission reflected the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, which was scaling new heights through cooperation extending from Earth to space. He observed that the time-tested friendship between the two countries, deeper than the oceans and higher than the Himalayas, was entering a new historic phase through collaboration in space exploration.–DNA

Filmmaker A.J. Kardar remembered

ISLAMABAD: Renowned filmmaker and director A.J. Kardar was remembered on his birth anniversary on Wednesday for his contributions to the country's film industry. Born on November 25, 1926, he was the brother of filmmaker Abdur Rashid Kardar and a cousin of international cricketer Abdul Hafeez Kardar. He began his filmmaking career in 1959 and wrote, produced and directed three feature films and 59 documentaries. He collaborated with renowned poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz on several films and documentaries. Kardar is best known for directing 'Jago Hua Savera', which received international recognition and several awards. The film was Pakistan's first submission to the Oscars in the Best Foreign Language Film category. –APP

Women's empowerment govt's top priority: Shaza

The minister said the historic achievement was a matter of pride for the nation and a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards scientific and technological progress

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said providing women with a safe, enabling and supportive environment was the government's top priority. In her special message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the minister said the government was taking every practical step to protect and empower women, ensuring their safety and economic independence. She said the government was providing women with safe spaces on digital networks to help them achieve economic stability and financial empowerment. Through digital platforms, women could operate online businesses while remaining safe in their homes, she added. Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the government was committed to making digital spaces safer for women and girls, particularly on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. She stressed that online harassment and cyber violence were unacceptable under any circumstances. The minister said access to safe internet and modern technology was a fundamental right of women, adding that ensuring their digital security was essential for their meaningful participation in the digital economy. She emphasized that protecting women from violence required a change in societal attitudes and effective implementation of laws. The minister said empowering women and ensuring their safety were essential for building a strong, prosperous and developed Pakistan. She reiterated the government's commitment to creating a secure and inclusive digital environment where women could pursue economic opportunities and contribute to national development without fear of harassment or violence. Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday congratulated the nation on a historic day for Pakistan, saying the country was achieving remarkable success in various fields under its political and military leadership. In a special message, the minister extended her congratulations to the entire nation and hailed the achievement of Pakistani pilot Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, who became the first Pakistani to participate in a space mission in collaboration with China. She said the landmark mission would take Pakistani research into space and expand the country's role in the design and manufacturing of space technology. Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the achievement reflected Pakistan's growing capabilities in science and technology and demonstrated the potential of international cooperation in advancing the country's space programme. She expressed confidence that the mission would open new avenues for scientific research, technological advancement and future space exploration, while strengthening Pakistan's cooperation with China in the field of space technology. The minister said the historic achievement was a matter of pride for the nation and a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards scientific and technological progress. –DNA

IIOJK doctors' protest enters 6th day

ISLAMABAD: Postgraduate and Senior Resident doctors across Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir have intensified their agitation against discrimination, with the protest entering its 6th day on Wednesday. According to Kashmir Media Service, protests have spread to several Government Medical Colleges and district hospitals as doctors demand a uniform salary structure and parity with doctors working inside India. The doctors are pressing for implementation of 7th Pay Commission recommendations and enhanced remuneration for PG and Senior Resident doctors.

At GMC Jammu, doctors' leaders Dr Sanah and Dr Abhishek Mittal said the immediate enhancement of stipends remains the central demand of the agitation. Dr Abhimanyu Manhas also extended support. As part of the peaceful agitation, resident doctors in Jammu observed a silent protest on Tuesday, wearing white aprons, black bands and face masks to symbolise solidarity and express disappointment over the delay in addressing their demands. Resident doctors at Sub-District Hospital Sopore also staged a protest, seeking equal pay and recognition.–DNA



Briefs

FIA recovers elderly woman's life savings

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has recovered the entire life savings of an elderly woman amounting to Rs 500,000 and returned the money to her, besides arresting the prime suspect in a visa fraud case during an operation in Hassan Abdal.
An FIA official told on Wednesday that the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Rawalpindi conducted the operation following a complaint lodged by the elderly woman, identified as Chand Bibi.
The suspect had allegedly deprived the woman of her life savings by making false promises of sending her son abroad. Acting on the directions of the Director FIA Islamabad Zone, the FIA team took immediate action on the woman's complaint, arrested the prime suspect and recovered the entire amount of Rs 500,000, which was subsequently handed over to her. The official said a case had been registered against the suspect and further investigation was underway.–**APP**

Governor attends Inter-BFC Sports Gala 2026

ATTOCK :Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan attended the Inter-BFC Sports Gala 2026 at Bahria Foundation College, Pindi Gheb, as chief guest here on Wednesday. The event featured sports competitions, a march-past and physical performances by students, which were appreciated by the audience. Addressing the gathering, the governor lauded the college's academic and co-curricular activities, saying sports alongside education were essential for the physical and mental development of youth and the promotion of a healthy society.
He congratulated Principal Asmat Sarfraz and the college administration on organising the event.
The ceremony was attended by political and social figures, teachers, parents and local residents. It concluded with the distribution of prizes and trophies among outstanding players and winning teams.

99th Learning Festival Inspires Young Minds

ISLAMABAD: The 99th Pakistan Learning Festival continued with colour, culture and creativity on its second day at Islamabad College for Girls (ICG), F-6/2, turning the campus into a celebration of learning beyond textbooks. The day opened with a welcome song by students of IMCB G-10/4, followed by a series of powerful cultural performances. Students presented Tu Kuja Man Kuja, Shehad Ki Makkhi, a Kashmiri cultural dance, Ay Roshe-Qaid, and soulful renditions of Kalame-Iqbal. A national song and poetry recitations added patriotic spirit to the morning. A major highlight was the launch of two children's books, My Tree and Colours of Our Culture, by renowned cartoonist Nigar Nazar, drawing applause from students and teachers alike. Students also showcased innovative projects, including Eco-Roots by IMSG I-14/3, while a representative of the Malala Fund from Shangla College presented a project on coal mine safety and water preservation, linking learning to real-life challenges. Officials including Deputy Director Training Faiz Nadeem, Director Academics Riffat Jabeen, and Deputy Director Schools Gul-e-Zehra shared insights on Inner Space projects and the 12 Steps to Benefit the Environment. An arts competition for Kahani Kunj 2027 was also announced. The ceremony honoured teachers, organisers and contributors with mementos and certificates. Dr. Ibtasham Anwar, Company Lead, and other distinguished guests were also acknowledged. The day concluded with a group photograph, marking another successful chapter of a festival that continues to inspire young minds to learn, create and lead. – **APP**

Zikria for tech- driven eco growth, digital innovation

DNA



ISLAMABAD : President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, has underscored the need to accelerate digital transformation, embrace emerging technologies and strengthen innovation-driven entrepreneurship to unlock Pakistan's economic potential, saying that technological advancement has become a key determinant of competitiveness, productivity and sustainable economic growth.
Addressing DevOps Days Islamabad, he appreciated Cloud Native Islamabad and Cloud Native Security Pakistan for bringing together technology experts, industry professionals, developers and young innovators on a common platform to exchange knowledge and explore emerging technological trends. He observed that DevOps, Cloud-Native Technologies, Platform Engineering, Cybersecurity and Site Reliability Engineering had evolved beyond specialised technical disciplines to become essential pillars of the modern business ecosystem. Similarly, emerging fields such as MLOps and Agentic AI were creating new possibilities for businesses, industry, education and governance.
The ICCI President said Pakistan, particularly Islamabad, had tremendous potential to emerge as a competitive technology and innovation hub, given its talented youth, expanding IT workforce and growing startup ecosystem. However, he stressed that this potential could only be realised through investment in modern technological education, practical training, skills development and internationally recognised professional competencies. He emphasised that digital transformation was no longer a choice but a business necessity, urging enterprises to adopt cloud computing, cybersecurity, automation and artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency, productivity and global competitiveness.
Reaffirming ICCI's commitment to supporting the country's digital economy, Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia said the Chamber was keen to strengthen engagement with technology companies, start-ups, educational institutions and relevant professional associations. He expressed the resolve to facilitate an environment in which innovative ideas, technological expertise and entrepreneurial talent could be transformed into viable businesses, investment opportunities and sustainable economic ventures.
Senior Vice President ICCI, Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha, shared his personal success story with the participants, highlighting that hard work, consistency, determination and perseverance had been the defining factors behind his professional journey. Encouraging young professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs, he advised them to remain focused on their ambitions, approach challenges with confidence and recognise that lasting success requires continuous learning, dedication and sustained effort.
Vice President ICCI, Mohammad Waqas Khan Swati, urged students and young professionals to take advantage of the expanding opportunities in technology, software development, coding and entrepreneurship. Drawing on his professional experience, he highlighted the importance of practical skills, teamwork and translating innovative ideas into marketable solutions, including technology-based startups and mobile applications. He encouraged participants to collaborate, share knowledge and pursue entrepreneurial initiatives, assuring them of the business community's willingness to support promising young innovators.
The well-attended session also featured addresses by Dr. Ammara Aftab, Hamza Qureshi, Zubaira Shafaq, Mansoor Amjad, Abdullah Haroon and other technology professionals, who shared their insights and experiences on emerging technologies, digital innovation and the evolving IT landscape. The ICCI President particularly appreciated the contributions of ICCI Executive Member Abrar ul Haque, Vice President Computer Hardware Association of Pakistan Aizaz Mohammad, and former ICCI Executive Member Dr. Muhammad Usman for their efforts in organising the event and bringing together the technology community on a meaningful platform.

Musadik luded for effectively representing Pakistan at SCO moot

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday appreciated Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Masood Malik for effectively representing Pakistan at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Civilizational Dialogue held in New Delhi.
The prime minister, in a meeting with Dr. Musadik Malik, who called on him here, said that while vigorously representing Pakistan at the civilizational dialogue, he presented history and ground realities in an excellent manner. He also praised Dr. Malik's style of expression and his use of the Urdu language at the forum.
"You have introduced a commendable new standard of diplomacy based on restraint and intellectual clarity to highlight Pakistan's positive image and identity in the region," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked. Dr. Musadik Malik briefed the prime minister in detail regarding his visit to India.

Pakistan polio programme bids farewell to UNICEF team lead

ISLAMABAD, Nov 25 (APP):The Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme has bid farewell to Ms. Melissa Corkum, Team Lead Polio at UNICEF, acknowledging her contributions and commitment to the country's efforts to eradicate the crippling disease. A farewell meeting was held at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), chaired by the Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication, Ayesha Raza Farooq. During the meeting, Ayesha Raza Farooq appreciated Melissa Corkum's invaluable contributions, dedication and commitment to polio eradication in Pakistan and globally, particularly her efforts to protect every child against the disease. National Coordinator NEOC Muhammad Anwar ul Haq, members of the National Core Team and NEOC staff also attended the meeting and extended their appreciation and best wishes to her for her future endeavours. The Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme expressed gratitude to Melissa Corkum for her dedicated service and continued commitment to the global goal of a polio-free world.–**APP**

Railways to add 36 locomotives to operational fleet by 2027

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is planning to bring up to 36 non-operational locomotives back into service by June 2027 in a bid to improve train operations, facilitate passengers and enhance the department's revenue.
"Pakistan Railways currently has a fleet of 439 locomotives, of which 267 are operational while 172 remain non-operational," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the department was taking several measures to restore out-of-service locomotives to operational condition to strengthen its capacity and generate additional revenue. Giving details, the official said that 16 non-operational locomotives were expected to become operational by February 2027, while another 20 locomotives would be available for service after major overhauls by the end of 2026. The official said that one accidental locomotive, bearing No. 9021, was also expected to be restored after necessary repairs and fitment by June 2027. Regarding the modernization of the existing fleet, he said that a PC-I for the modernization of 35 locomotives had been submitted to the M/PD&SI and the Ministry of Planning; however, it had not yet been considered. Meanwhile, he said Pakistan Railways has also contacted the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to explore the restoration of 69 locomotives, with efforts underway to bring them back into operation. He said the restoration of these locomotives is expected to improve the availability of engines, strengthen train operations and help Pakistan Railways increase its passenger and freight earnings. To a question, he said to enhance on-board passenger facilitation, state-of-the-art dining cars and modern coaches have been introduced on Shalimar Express, Pak Business Express, and Islamabad Express. LED screens with preloaded programs and water dispensers have been installed, while comprehensive janitorial services are now provided on all trains, he added. He said the enhanced services are also available on outsourced trains, including Green Line, Pak Business, Shah Hussain, Subak Raftar, Subak Kharam, Rawal Express, and Islamabad Express. The premium dining cars are operational on Khyber Mail, Allama Iqbal Express, and Rehman Baba, while complimentary services such as high tea, bedding, newspapers, hygiene kits, and mineral water are being offered on seven premium trains. Train hostesses have also been introduced on Islamabad Express, he added. The official said the significant improvements have also been made in off-board passenger facilitation. Escalators have been installed at Karachi and Lahore railway stations, while information desks and free Wi-Fi facilities now cover stations accounting for nearly 80 percent of total passenger footfall. He said the cleanliness agreements have been signed with provincial waste management companies in major cities to ensure hygienic platforms, washrooms, and surrounding areas. The official said the waiting halls have been upgraded at major stations, including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi, while a new multi-story Train Dispatching Building has been completed at Lahore station, where a modern Computer-Based Interlocking system will soon be installed. He said the modern CIP lounges are operational at Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi stations, and extensive renovation work has been completed at Peshawar Cantt Station. Additional initiatives include the construction of aesthetically designed tuck shops, outsourcing of train rake washing services, installation of ticket vending machines and electronic information boards, provision of wheelchairs and ramps for elderly and disabled passengers, and concessional fares for students, senior citizens, journalists, and persons with disabilities, he said.–**DNA**

APIGA trains 22 young fellows in AI policy

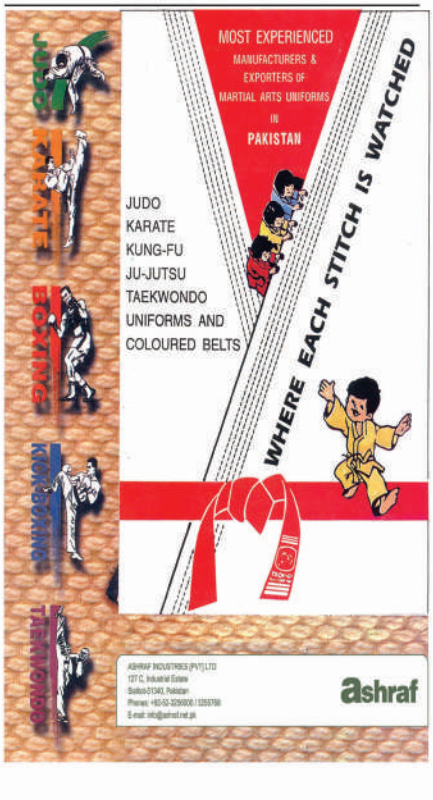
ISLAMABAD: The second edition of the Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy (APIGA) Pakistan concluded at the U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCAS-E), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, after training 22 young fellows from across Pakistan in Internet governance, artificial intelligence (AI) policy, cybersecurity and digital inclusion. The two-day academy brought together 12 female and 10 male participants selected from more than 900 applicants, providing young people with an opportunity to understand the evolving digital landscape and prepare for participation in regional and international Internet governance forums.
Addressing the closing ceremony, APIGA Pakistan Program and Team Lead Nawal Munir emphasized the importance of continued youth engagement in digital policy and Internet governance. Encouraging the fellows, she said, "Your journey in Internet Governance does not end here. In fact, it begins here." The academy commenced with opening remarks by Dr. Mustafa Anwar, Acting Principal and Head of the Department of Electrical Systems Engineering at USPCAS-E, NUST.The sessions covered key areas including Internet governance frameworks, AI policy, cybersecurity, cybercrime, digital inclusion, Internet identifier systems, the APNIC Policy Development Process, Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names. Farhan Khan, Assistant Director (Strategy and Development) at the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), introduced participants to the three layers of digital governance, highlighting that the Internet is not controlled by any single institution but operates through a collaborative, multistakeholder ecosystem. The academy also featured international experts. Seher Sagiroglu, Stakeholder Engagement Manager for the Middle East at the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), joined virtually from Türkiye and discussed ICANN, Regional Internet Registries and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).She also introduced participants to ICANN's multistakeholder model and its Fellowship, NextGen and Newcomer programmes.–**DNA**

Equitable energy transition requires holistic reforms



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's energy transition must address not only the expansion of renewable energy but also the structural challenges of affordability, financial sustainability, industrial competitiveness, and equitable access to its benefits. Powersector challenges are interconnected and require a comprehensive approach. This calls for coordinated reforms that address immediate concerns while establishing a long-term roadmap for an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable energy future.These were the key observations at a roundtable organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, titled "Towards an Equitable Energy Transition in Pakistan: Immediate Priorities and Long-Term Measures." The discussion brought together policymakers, energy experts, industry representatives, and researchers. The speakers comprised Rehan Javed, member, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Muhammad Umer Khan, joint director, Private Power and Infrastructure Board; Dr. Rubina Ilyas, research economist, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics; Ameena Sohail, member, Board of Governors of CPPA; and Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS. The discussants included Shahid M. Sattar, former member, Energy Planning Commission; Shahid Iqbal, former CEO, IESCO; Asad Mehmood, senior energy expert; Waqas Haroon Moosa, former chairman, Pakistan Solar Association; Khawaja Hassan Umer, director, financial planning, Power Generation Company (Pvt) Ltd; Tauseef ur Rehman, National Grid Company; Dr. Shakir Alig and Zulfiqar Younas, senior advisor, Climate Finance. Linking industrial competitiveness with consumer affordability, Rehan Javed pointed to high electricity costs, capacity payments, and underutilized generation capacity as persistent challenges. He called for cost-reflective industrial tariffs, better utilization of existing capacity and improved transmission planning to encourage industries to remain connected to the grid. Turning to procurement, Umer Khan underscored least-cost planning, competitive procurement, transparent contracting and appropriate risk allocation for energy generation. He noted that market reforms, including the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market, could improve procurement discipline, encourage investment and reduce inefficiencies in the power sector. Shifting focus to households, Dr. Rubina Ilyas drew attention to disparities in households' ability to participate in the energy transition.



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Washington's New Economic Blockade of Iran

THE Iraqi Prime Minister, Ali Al-Zaidi, has ordered the takeover of oilfields in the Kurdish-administered regions to block the alleged smuggling of oil through Afghanistan and Pakistan. What appears to be a simple economic measure is actually a catalyst for determining the regional quid pro quo between East Asia and the Middle East. The American withdrawal from Kurdish territories after reconciliation with central governments is not merely a theory. It is a sequence of dates.

In April 2026, the US handed over its remaining bases in Syria to Damascus, ending its decade-long presence in Kurdish areas. On 25 August, SDF commander Mazloum Abdi announced the dissolution of the Syrian Democratic Forces and their integration into the Syrian army. US envoy Tom Barrack declared that the SDF's role had "expired", while the Kurds called it a betrayal. On 30 September, the last US troops left Erbil Air Base in Iraqi Kurdistan, ending a 12-year deployment. On the same day, the Pentagon's memorandum of understanding with the Peshmerga expired, stopping the annual $61 million support for 180,000 Kurdish fighters. Zaidi framed the withdrawal as a declaration that Iraq would be free of foreign military presence from 1 October.

The result is clear: the Kurds in both countries have lost their American shield. Baghdad can now order the takeover of Khormala, while Damascus can extend its authority over northeastern Syria. Washington has not exiled the Kurds; it has traded them for agreements with central governments. The old American formula was to protect the Kurds to fight ISIS. The new formula is to protect Damascus and Baghdad to contain Iran. "America First" remains the slogan, while everything else is merely noise.

The naval and economic blockade of Iran appears to be the ultimate target, using regional proxies as its front end. If Iran is accused of supporting militias such as Kataib Hezbollah, why is the Iraqi government, backed by Washington, using force to regain control of oilfields? Is this not another example of the hypocrisy of the Muslim GCC alliance, which appears to have invited external powers to control regional waterways?

The answer lies in Task Force Iron Gate. At sea, the US blockade has reportedly reduced Iranian seaborne crude exports to zero in September and October, blocking more than $25 billion in oil revenue. On 7 November, CENTCOM established Iron Gate, involving 20 personnel in Florida to disrupt weapons, sanctioned goods and illicit money moving across Iran's land borders and the Caspian Sea.



Washington has asked Iraq to close all but two crossings with Iran, Turkey to close Gürbulak-Bazargan, and Pakistan to shut Taftan, Gabd-Rimdan, Mand and Chagai. The Iraqi intelligence document reportedly tracing routes from Kirkuk through Sulaymaniyah and Bashmakh-Parwez Khan towards Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey is being used to justify the operation.

Zaidi's 24 November order, therefore, is not just about the Kurds. It is about closing Iran's back door. Iran may suffer, but it has already secured a diplomatic shield through the Caspian region and the SCO summit.

Both countries are close allies of Washington, and the Trump administration relies on them. Yet, they have resisted a complete blockade through diplomatic channels.

The New York Times, citing Iraqi and American officials on 11 November, reported that Turkey largely declined to change its border policy, with trucks waiting at Bazargan for three weeks. Iraq refused to close all but two crossings, while Pakistan temporarily opened and closed some crossings, citing security and electronic procedures. Official trade with Iran, worth $3 billion annually, continues.

The reasons are economic. Iraq receives more than a third of its gas from Iran. Pakistan depends on Iranian LPG and fuel, while Balochistan's economy is deeply connected to border trade. Turkey also relies on energy and trade, and fears retaliation before winter. A complete closure could trigger blackouts, protests and economic instability.

Former MIT chief and current Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan knows the regional security networks and smuggling routes. His transition from intelligence to diplomacy places him at the centre of negotiations with Baghdad and Washington over oil, water, the PKK and defence cooperation.

Turkey and Pakistan are seeking a bargain, but neither wants to pay the full price. Turkey wants American concessions on the F-16s, F-35s, S-400 sanctions and Kurdish militias. Pakistan, meanwhile, needs Saudi financial support and American goodwill, but cannot afford to destroy its border economy.

The conclusion is that Washington has abandoned the Kurds to buy Baghdad and Damascus, while both governments are now positioned to close Iran's smuggling routes. Turkey and Pakistan are willing to cooperate selectively, but neither can fully close its border without risking economic and political instability.

Putin's reported offer of Russian gas pipelines to Iran on 5 November could provide another alternative if Iranian energy supplies through Iraq and Pakistan are disrupted.

The real question is not whether Iran will suffer, but whether Washington can convert regional economic dependence into a permanent strategic victory. Iran's land routes may be narrowed, but its diplomatic and economic alternatives are not yet exhausted.

Is Trump Fueling the Ukraine War to Escape the Iran War?

Qamar Bashir



Their inability thus far to secure durable settlements in either conflict reflects the inadequacy of an approach that treats complex geopolitical disputes as commercial transactions. Instead of narrowing differences, American diplomacy appears increasingly incapable of reconciling competing positions. The parties remain deeply divided, while military escalation threatens to render diplomatic initiatives increasingly irrelevant. Trump returned to power promising to end the Ukraine war rapidly. Nearly two years into his presidency, however...

AS if he were the king of the entire world, President Donald Trump has now suggested that the time has come for Ukraine to replace President Volodymyr Zelensky. This extraordinary assertion exposes the hubris of a president whose country has historically championed democracy, constitutional governance, national sovereignty and the fundamental right of people to choose their leaders. Zelensky was elected by the Ukrainian people, and it is exclusively their prerogative to decide whether their country requires a change of leadership, not that of the American president.

Trump's frustration apparently stems from Zelensky's refusal to bow to Washington's dictates and accept a settlement that Kyiv considers incompatible with its national interests. Instead of respecting Ukraine's sovereign right to determine its future, Trump appears to regard resistance to American demands as sufficient justification for advocating a leadership change. Such an attitude undermines the very democratic principles upon which America has traditionally based its international standing.

Equally disturbing is Trump's reliance on Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to navigate some of the most consequential geopolitical crises confronting humanity. Both come primarily from business backgrounds rather than the traditional diplomatic establishment. Their involvement in negotiations concerning Ukraine and Iran raises serious questions about the administration's diplomatic judgment, institutional capacity and selection of negotiators.

Their inability thus far to secure durable settlements in either conflict reflects the inadequacy of an approach that treats complex geopolitical disputes as commercial transactions. Instead of narrowing differences, American diplomacy appears increasingly incapable of reconciling competing positions. The parties remain deeply divided, while military escalation threatens to render diplomatic initiatives increasingly irrelevant. Trump returned to power promising to end the Ukraine war rapidly. Nearly two years into his presidency, however, peace remains elusive. His suggestion that Ukraine requires a new president appears to be an attempt to transfer responsibility for his diplomatic failures onto Zelensky, rather than acknowledge the inadequacies of his own negotiating strategy.

Nothing exposes Trump's narrow strategic outlook more clearly than his public objection to Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries. Trump repeatedly emphasized that he had instructed Zelensky not to attack refineries because of the potential consequences for American farmers, ranchers and the broader economy. While European leaders regard Russian military expansion as an existential security challenge, the American president appears preoccupied with maintaining affordable fuel supplies for domestic consumers. The contrast is extraordinary. An international crisis involving territorial sovereignty, European security, nuclear powers and the future of NATO is being viewed through the prism of American diesel prices.

Protecting domestic economic interests is a legitimate responsibility of any president. However, reducing a geopolitical crisis of this magnitude to immediate commercial considerations exposes the poverty of strategic thinking within the administration. American diplomacy should be addressing the legitimate security concerns of Ukraine, Russia and Europe through a comprehensive negotiating framework. Instead, the conflict is expanding geographically and intensifying militarily. The Black Sea has become an increasingly contested theatre, while attacks on Russian energy infrastructure and the Crimean Bridge have further aggravated tensions. Reports of attacks against Russian maritime interests beyond the immediate conflict zone suggest that the geographical boundaries of the confrontation could expand further.

The Institute for the Study of War's November 20 assessment reported that Russia launched 515 missiles and drones against Ukraine, targeting energy, transportation and industrial infrastructure. Russian projectiles also reportedly entered Polish airspace, prompting NATO military responses and Polish requests for additional air defence capabilities. Meanwhile, the British- and French-led multinational component of the 37-nation Coalition of the Willing conducted military exercises in Poland involving approximately 5,000 to 6,000 personnel. These developments demonstrate how dangerously close the conflict is moving towards a broader confrontation between Russia and Europe. The diplomatic contradictions are equally alarming. American negotiators have reportedly explored Ukrainian territorial concessions in exchange for NATO membership or alternative international security guarantees. Moscow, however, continues to reject Ukrainian NATO membership and demands neutrality, restrictions on Western military assistance and a broader restructuring of European security.

Zelensky has described Russia's proposed European security architecture as dangerous, warning against a second Yalta agreement that could divide Europe into spheres of influence. European leaders, meanwhile, have reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine, insisting that no settlement concerning Europe can be negotiated without European participation. One European leader went so far as to compare Zelensky's contribution to European freedom and dignity with that of Winston Churchill, promising continued support for as long as necessary. The contrast with Trump's demand for Zelensky's replacement could hardly be more striking.

There is also a potentially more calculated dimension to Washington's conduct. The escalating Ukraine confrontation could divert international attention from America's unresolved conflict with Iran. As European security increasingly dominates international headlines, Trump may find an opportunity to disengage from the Iranian theatre without having to confront the full political consequences of his administration's failure to achieve its objectives.

Whether deliberate or incidental, such a diversion would offer Washington a face-saving opportunity. However, attempting to escape one geopolitical crisis while another escalates would hardly constitute a diplomatic achievement. It would merely substitute one strategic failure for another, potentially exposing the world to even greater instability.

The most consequential outcome of Trump's presidency may ultimately be the fragmentation of America's traditional alliances. Washington and Europe, which maintained a remarkably durable strategic partnership throughout the postwar era, increasingly find themselves pursuing divergent geopolitical objectives, operating under different strategic assumptions and moving in different directions.

This deterioration is not confined to Europe. America's relations with Canada and Mexico have also experienced considerable strain. Even its historically close relationship with Israel has encountered differences over regional military objectives and American national interests. Washington's diplomatic approach increasingly appears transactional, unpredictable and incapable of sustaining the confidence of longstanding partners. The principal beneficiary of this fragmentation is likely to be China. Russia remains a formidable military and nuclear power, but China possesses the economic strength, technological capabilities, commercial reach and diplomatic resources necessary to challenge American global leadership comprehensively.

China's diplomatic outreach, economic partnerships and cultivation of relationships across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East stand in sharp contrast to Washington's increasingly confrontational engagement with both adversaries and traditional allies.

The widening division between America and Europe could provide Beijing with an unprecedented opportunity to elevate its diplomatic stature, expand its geopolitical influence and emerge as the principal beneficiary of Western disunity. American supremacy cannot be sustained indefinitely through military expenditure, economic coercion and presidential rhetoric while the diplomatic foundations of its global leadership are systematically eroded.

This should be an eye-opening moment for the American political establishment. With Democrats gaining renewed political leverage following the midterm elections, there is an urgent need for bipartisan understanding to arrest America's growing isolation, restore confidence among its traditional allies and reestablish diplomacy as an instrument of strategic leadership.

America's greatness was built not merely upon military and economic superiority but upon its ability to mobilize international partnerships, cultivate trust and provide leadership during global crises. Trump risks squandering that invaluable inheritance within a remarkably short period.

Time is of the essence. Unless America's political leadership acts decisively to reverse the damage, Washington may discover that while its president behaves as though he rules the entire world, the world itself is increasingly learning to move forward without American leadership.

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

How much longer must Gaza wait for a change of fortune?

Yossi Mekelberg

The attitude of the Israeli government to the humanitarian situation in Gaza illustrates its political ineptitude and moral decay. The moral case is clear: Israel keeps punishing the people of Gaza for Hamas' crimes, for which they cannot and should not be held responsible. From a policy perspective, it only leaves the people who are caught between the rock of living under Hamas' rule and the hard place of Israeli occupation and constant attacks at the mercy of the former, which controls most of population

RAIN is mostly a welcome guest across the Middle East but, when it comes in a short space of time and in large quantities in a place where the infrastructure is not equipped for that, then it turns into a nightmare of flooding and overflowing sewage. In Gaza, not much of the Strip's already crippled infrastructure has been left intact after three years of war and constant Israeli bombardment. When the rain began hammering down earlier this month on this stricken, tiny strip of land, which is the home of more than 2 million people, most of them displaced, it had dire consequences for tens of thousands of Gazans. Their makeshift shelters were damaged or destroyed, a collapsed sandbank killed at least five people, and floodwater and sewage destroyed food stocks stored in tents.

More than a year after a so-called ceasefire deal was reached between Israel and Hamas, these are the living conditions in the Gaza Strip: camps of what are referred to as tents, when many are no more than plastic sheets or some other improvised shelter, exposed to the elements and with limited access to clean water, sanitation, food or health services. When a ceasefire, based on US President Donald Trump's 20-point peace plan, was agreed in October of last year, there was some hope for progress in ending this horrific tragedy that has befallen Gaza. However, of the entire plan, only the return of the Israeli hostages in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees has been implemented in full. Between improving the lives of Gazan people and moving toward advancing the cause of peace based on a two-state solution, almost nothing has progressed.

All momentum has been lost and all sides seem almost resigned to settle for a reality that is unsustainable

From the outset, the fear was that when a ceasefire came into effect, regardless of whether the guns were ever completely silenced, Gaza would be, if not forgotten, then at least pushed down the international list of priorities. And with the war in Iran breaking out a few months later, the consequences of which are still reverberating around the world, along with the ongoing Ukraine war and a heavily congested international and domestic agenda, the focus on Gaza has shifted elsewhere and left the people there to pay the price. Agreements are only ever the very beginning of resolving a conflict. If they cannot immediately create a momentum that will carry them to full implementation, they become hardly worth the paper they were signed on. When it comes to Gaza, all momentum has been lost and all sides seem almost resigned to settle for a reality that is unsustainable and in which another round of hostilities becomes inevitable.

To begin with, what is called a ceasefire is no more than a reduction – a welcome one but far from satisfactory – in the intensity of Israel's military operations. The lack of progress on the political-diplomatic level also means that Hamas is rebuilding its military capabilities, about which Israel has legitimate concerns, although it is repeating the same pattern of showing very little consideration for civilian lives in fighting the organization. It is estimated that more than 1,600 people have been killed in daily strikes by Israeli forces in Gaza, most of them civilians. Many others are being injured, while not a single hospital is fully functioning.

It was known by the time the ceasefire deal was agreed that, beyond the first phase of the agreement, there were severe if not insurmountable challenges that would require the full attention of the international community, first and foremost Washington, and swift and decisive action. The time that has elapsed since then without, for instance, Israel allowing the transitional government of technocrats, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, to enter the Strip has allowed Hamas to reassert itself. Meanwhile, the Israeli military has extended its control beyond the yellow line that was originally demarcated by the two sides. The attitude of the Israeli government to the humanitarian situation in Gaza illustrates its political ineptitude and moral decay The International Stabilization Force, which was supposed to form a peace mission, still has not been formed to separate the two sides and Hamas disarmament and Israeli withdrawal do not appear to be happening anytime soon. The result is that the people of Gaza are stuck in the midst of this political-military stalemate.

The toll of the humanitarian crisis is unbearable. Although Israel agreed in the ceasefire deal to allow 600 lorries of humanitarian aid, including food, fuel, medical equipment and medicines, or reconstruction material to enter Gaza every day, for most of this year only half of this number has been allowed in. There is no evidence – so far – of a chronic shortage of food but with many nongovernmental organizations prohibited by Israel from operating in Gaza for some obscure reasons, distribution is negatively affected. Even more badly affected has been the rebuilding of the health and education systems.

According to the Israeli human rights organization Gisha, the near-collapse of the education system is likely to put in jeopardy the education of an entire generation. Over the last three years, it has suffered from unbearable trauma and now its future is badly compromised. The implication of a lost generation missing out on schooling, as many schools have been destroyed and students displaced, could be devastating for their future and is likely to eventually lead to radicalization, which benefits neither Palestinian society nor Israel.

In the absence of an adequate health system in Gaza, especially for those with acute and chronic illnesses, part of the remedy to their predicament would be allowing them to leave for treatment in the West Bank or elsewhere. But with Israel's blanket refusal to allow Gazan people to leave, for each legal case to have any chance of success it needs to go through the courts. This is despite Israel, as the occupying force, having responsibility for the population's health and well-being. Consequently, sick people are dying and the long-term implications for public health are dire.

The attitude of the Israeli government to the humanitarian situation in Gaza illustrates its political ineptitude and moral decay. The moral case is clear: Israel keeps punishing the people of Gaza for Hamas' crimes, for which they cannot and should not be held responsible. From a policy perspective, it only leaves the people who are caught between the rock of living under Hamas' rule and the hard place of Israeli occupation and constant attacks at the mercy of the former, which controls most of the population. In the hope that a new Israeli government emerges, and very soon, improving the humanitarian situation in Gaza must be high on its agenda.

– **Yossi Mekelberg is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House.**

The Islamabad POST
Thursday, November 26, 2026

Briefs

Military leadership felicitates nation on...

FROM PAGE 01

The landmark achievement will inspire future generations of Pakistanis to pursue excellence in science, technology and innovation, contributing to national progress and prosperity. The Armed Forces of Pakistan also expressed profound appreciation to the leadership, government and people of the People's Republic of China for their invaluable support and cooperation in enabling Pakistan to achieve this significant milestone. The military leadership said the ironclad friendship between Pakistan and China, higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the seas and sweeter than honey, had reached new heights, extending beyond the frontiers of Earth into outer space. Meanwhile, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Fu Cong has described the Shenzhou-24 mission as yet another milestone in Pakistan-China bilateral relations. In his message on the launch of the spacecraft carrying Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, he said it literally carries our friendship to new heights.

Maldives national airline to...

FROM PAGE 01

training opportunities to youth, the statement quoted the interior minister as saying. The Maldives would also welcome manpower from Pakistan, Ameen said, adding that there were vast opportunities for imports of construction material, medicines and other goods from Pakistan, as per the statement. Naqvi was quoted as saying that he was looking forward to the Maldivian interior minister's visit to Pakistan. Pakistan and the Maldives celebrated the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, established in 1966, in October. To mark the anniversary, Maldivian President Dr Mohamed Muizzu travelled to Islamabad on a three-day visit last month, marking the first by a Maldivian president to Pakistan in 11 years. During President Muizzu's visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he had issued instructions for direct flights between Pakistan and the Maldives.

Tarar urges social media firms to...

FROM PAGE 01

The remarks come a day after Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi asserted that freedom of speech should not become a shield for those who cross "red lines", adding that terrorism, hate speech, incitement to violence and sexual exploitation of children were the four non-negotiable red lines for the state. "This is not about technology; this is about people. We are not saying that free speech must be curtailed. Journalists must report, citizens must question and dissent must be heard, including criticism of the government. But freedom of speech can never become a shield for those who cross these red lines," the interior minister said.

Imran, Bushra's counsel...

FROM PAGE 01

Justice Dogar observed that arguments concerning the May 9 incident and other general matters were irrelevant to the proceedings. He advised the counsel to focus on the pending application and the legal issues involved in the appeals. Justice Dogar also pointed out that the IHC proceedings were already open to the public and that the courtroom was crowded. When Barrister Safdar mentioned that Imran was 74 years old and incarcerated, the chief justice advised him to advance legal arguments rather than refer to general information about the appellant.

Alibaba provides AI training for Pakistani SMEs

The results were presented at the Pakistan AI Export Voice 2026 competition finale in Lahore on November 19, which featured six finalists from Pakistan's export industries

ISLAMABAD: Alibaba said its DigiSME Pakistan programme had provided artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation training to more than 2,000 Pakistani small and medium-sized enterprises in its first 100 days, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. The Chinese business-to-business e-commerce platform runs DigiSME Pakistan with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority. It said 12 Pakistani businesses had also joined the platform through the initiative to conduct digital cross-border trade.

The results were presented at the Pakistan AI Export Voice 2026 competition finale in Lahore on November 19, which featured six finalists from Pakistan's export industries. Their products included sportswear, equestrian equipment and surgical instruments from Sialkot, as well as Himalayan pink salt and onyx crafts. At the competition, sellers demonstrated how they used Alibaba's Smart Assistant Agent and Accio Work in export operations. The presentations covered managing product listings, responding to requests for quotations and summarising and handling international buyer enquiries. Separate interactive sessions allowed prospective exporters to meet Alibaba's local team and learn about using digital platforms to enter international markets. Experienced sellers were also encouraged to share practical knowledge of AI-enabled exports with other Pakistani entrepreneurs.



Pakistan Football Achieves Decade-High Wins in 2026: Mohsen Gilani

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani has described 2026 as a landmark year for Pakistan football, revealing that the national team has won more matches this year than it managed in the previous ten years. He also announced that FIFA President Gianni Infantino is expected to visit Pakistan soon.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday alongside national team head coach Nolberto Solano, PFF CEO Shahid Khokhar and Technical Director Adeel Rizki, Gilani highlighted the national team's improved performances and the federation's commitment to taking Pakistan football to new heights.

"Pakistan has won more matches this year than it managed to win in the last ten years. Our objective is to raise Pakistan's flag high on the international stage, and we are working towards that goal," he said.

Gilani said the federation was focusing not only on international competitions but also on strengthening domestic football, improving governance, upgrading infrastructure and creating greater opportunities for emerging talent.

He expressed optimism about launching the Pakistan Football League next year and announced plans to further expand the talent hunt programme in 2027. Special attention would also be given to developing domestic football and enhancing the professional skills of coaches.

Highlighting women's football as another key priority, the PFF president said the federation would work closely with FIFA to create more opportunities for female players, while the country's participation in next year's FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup is also anticipated. Gilani further said the government is extending full support to the federation and described Pakistan's relationship with FIFA as excellent. He expressed confidence that the expected visit of FIFA President Gianni Infantino would further strengthen international cooperation and support for football development in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, national team head coach Nolberto Solano stressed that strengthening the domestic football structure, identifying young talent and improving coaching standards were essential for the sustainable development of the game.

Solano said the expanded talent hunt programme, proposed national football league and improved infrastructure would provide a stronger foundation for Pakistan football's future. He also underlined the importance of developing women's football in collaboration with FIFA, reiterating that performance and merit must remain the key criteria for national team selection.

GDA plans paving work in Gwadar's Jannat Bazaar

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) is preparing upgrades to Shahi Bazaar and Jannat Bazaar under its Old Town Rehabilitation Project, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The work aims to improve infrastructure, refurbish the markets and provide basic facilities.

Project director Mir Doda Khan Marri, Tehsil Municipal Committee chairman Majid Jehar and contractor Haji Sharif Zimi visited Jannat Bazaar to review the proposed work. The team met shopkeepers and business representatives. Following consultations, it was decided that the installation of tuff tiles in Jannat Bazaar would begin later this week. Payment has been made to the relevant department to relocate electricity poles and overhead wires in the market. GDA has also completed development and rehabilitation work at Mulla Fazil Chowk, Gulk, Shaheen Chowk and other markets, commercial areas and streets. – APP

Man United strong, not fragile: coach Pochettino

DNA

LISBON: New Manchester United coach Mauricio Pochettino insisted Tuesday his team are not fragile and boast a strong mentality, despite their dismal start to the season. The Red Devils were beaten 4-0 by Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday in Pochettino's first match at the helm since replacing Michael Carrick. Man United are 19th in the English top flight and visit Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League on Wednesday. "I don't say we are fragile, I say that we are strong, we have a great mentality and a great mindset," Pochettino told reporters.

"Of course, there are many things that we need to improve, but I think it's normal, when you're in the position that we are in the Premier League." Pochettino said Man United's performances last season and qualifying for European football proved that. "We are not fragile, we are a strong team," continued the Argentine coach. "They showed last season they were capable of finishing third and now we are playing in the Champions League because of their performance.

"Things sometimes happen in football, for different reasons... now we need to identify why, we are already working on it." United's derby defeat against Liverpool was conditioned by a controversial early red card for defender Leny Yoro, which was revoked earlier Wednesday.

Pochettino was upset with the decision to dismiss Yoro and said that the red card being rectified would not return them the chance to play the match again on an even footing. "If we have VAR, what were they doing? What were they doing? Are we going to repeat the game?" questioned the coach. "Are we going to have the possibility to play with similar tools? (To replay) the game 11 against 11? "(In VAR) we have an unbelievable car, but we need to be at the level to drive, we need to drive in the best way. We love the technology, we accept the technology is there... what were they doing?

US to host 2028 Copa America soccer tournament

DNA

MIAMI: The Copa America soccer tournament is returning to the US in 2028, with Argentina and Brazil joining the eight other national teams from South America with six more included from North America. The North American soccer federation, known as CONCACAF, and South America's CONMEBOL announced in a joint statement that the event will take place between June 9 and July 9 in 2028. It is the third time in five renditions of the event that the US are hosting, after more than 1.5 million fans attended matches in 2024. "Our strategic partnership with CONMEBOL reflects our confederation's commitment to the growth of football," CONCACAF President Victor Montagliani said in a statement. "This agreement will bring six Concacaf national teams a new opportunity to compete against some of the best in the world, while further reinforcing the competitive significance of our Concacaf Gold Cup." The Gold Cup, the North American championship for national teams, takes place next summer. The Copa America final in 2028 is set to be played just before the opening of the Los Angeles Olympics. "The CONMEBOL Copa America is much more than a tournament: It is part of our identity, our history and the greatness of South American football," CONMEBOL President Alejandro Domínguez said.

Pakistan Shaheens crush Nepal to maintain unbeaten run in Rising Stars Asia Cup

ROHAIL Nazir's fighting half-century and a collective bowling effort powered Pakistan Shaheens to a 96-run victory over Nepal in the 11th match of the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars Championship 2026 at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

The defending champions, already guaranteed a semi-final spot, opted to bat first in their last league-stage fixture, but the decision initially appeared to have backfired as they were bowled out for a below-par 168 in 42 overs despite wicketkeeper batter Rohail's unbeaten half-century.

Rohail, who walked out to bat at No.8 with the scoreboard reading 66/6 in 16.5 overs following the dismissal of all-rounder Mohammad Imran (zero), soon took the reins of the holders' batting charge and ultimately bolstered their total past the 160-run mark with a valiant knock.

The wicketkeeper batter remained the top-scorer for Pakistan Shaheens with an unbeaten 64 off 83 deliveries, studded with four fours and three sixes. He also shared a one-sided 70-run partnership for the eighth wicket with Ahmed Daniyal, who contributed with a 35-ball 16.

Besides them, middle-order batter Hasan Nawaz made a handy contribution to the Green Shirts' total, making a cautious 28 off 59 deliveries, while Haider Ali (15), Maaz Sadaqat and captain Abdul Samad, both 13, could amass double figures. Rashid Khan was the pick of the bowlers for Nepal as he registered a five-wicket haul, for which he conceded 39 runs in eight overs, followed by Abhishesh Gautam with two, while Sandeep Lamichhane and Kushal Bhurtel made one scalp apiece.

Set to chase a 169-run target, Nepal's batting unit faltered and could only muster 72 runs before being bowled out in 17.3 overs and thus bowed out of the Asia Cup Rising Stars Championship 2026 with just one victory, which came against the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Opener Mayan Yadav waged a lone battle for the associate nation and remained their top-scorer with 41 off 50 deliveries, featuring four fours and two sixes, while Basir Ahamad, who made a 19-ball 11, was the only other Nepal batter to amass double figures.Mohammad Hasnain and Sufiyan Muqeem jointly led Pakistan Shaheens bowling charge with three wickets, followed by Mohammad Imran with two, while Sadaqat chipped in with one scalp.

The 96-run victory meant defending champions Pakistan Shaheens finished at the summit of the Group B standings with six points in three matches, pushing down traditional rivals India A, who earlier advanced into the knockout stage with a resounding victory over UAE

Pakistan Shaheens will now lock horns with Bangladesh A in the second semi-final of the Asia Cup Rising Stars Championship 2026 on Friday, while India A and Group A toppers Sri Lanka will face each other in the first knockout fixture the preceding day. – DNA

Bellingham wondergoal helps Real thump PSV, Arsenal and Man City held

Marc Cucurella walked away with his head in his hands in wonder while the other Real players rushed to congratulate the scorer

DNA

JUDE Bellingham came off the bench to score a spectacular goal as Real Madrid maintained their perfect Champions League start with a 5-1 comeback victory over PSV Eindhoven on Tuesday, while Arsenal were held 1-1 at home by Borussia Dortmund and Manchester City drew 2-2 with Napoli

Real Madrid looked in real trouble at home to PSV, going in at the break behind to Ivan Perisic's penalty, before they roared back through a goal from Federico Valverde and Bellingham's stunning strike. Having seen an acrobatic volley blocked minutes earlier, the England midfielder controlled Kylian Mbappe's pass with two touches in the air and curled a superb shot into far corner from well outside the area. Mbappe netted twice to put Real out of sight before Vinicius Jr got in on the act with a late goal having struck the post twice earlier in the game.

Real moved top of the standings on 15 points, three ahead of Paris St. Germain who host AS Roma on Wednesday. Como, 1-0 winners over AEK Athens, and Real Betis, who beat Slovan Bratislava 2-0, also have 12 points, one more than Arsenal.

The Premier League leaders' clash with their Bundesliga counterparts ended all square after a second-half goal from Dortmund's Maximilian Beier canceled out Viktor Gyokeres' strike in the 10th minute.

Manchester City had to come from behind twice after a scoreless opening half. Ayyoub Bouaddi equalized following Rasmus Hojlund's opener for Napoli and Rayan Cherki scored four minutes from time to rescue a point for City after Noa Lang put Napoli back in front.

Jose Mourinho won the Champions League with Porto and Inter Milan, but fell at the semifinal stage in each of his three seasons during his previous spell in charge at Real. He opted to leave Bellingham on the bench for the visit of PSV, and it almost went horribly wrong. PSV took a deserved lead in the 32nd minute, with 37-year-old captain Perisic showing all his experience, ignoring the whistles ringing out around the Bernabeu before sending Thibaut Courtois the wrong way from the spot.

They almost doubled their lead before the break as the unmarked Kodai Sano glanced a header off target as the visitors continued to cause Real serious problems. Mourinho responded with three changes at the interval, including the introduction of Bellingham. "We were struggling to keep possession but, when Jude came on, he gave us that peace of mind and we could play much better," Valverde told Movistar.

Real equalized five minutes after the break, thanks to Arda Guler's quick-thinking, with the Turkish midfielder flicking a back-heeled pass to Valverde in the area, who steered his first-time shot into the bottom corner. Real's fans were on their feet 10 minutes later, scarcely believing what they had seen, while Bellingham's teammates looked similarly shell-shocked

Marc Cucurella walked away with his head in his hands in wonder while the other Real players rushed to congratulate the scorer.

Real took command after Bellingham's goal and punished a loose pass in the PSV defense, Guler finding the unmarked Mbappe to extend the France forward's scoring run to seven successive Champions League appearances. Mbappe added his second before Vinicius rounded off a resounding victory from Bellingham's pass, underlining the Spanish side's credentials as serious contenders to take PSG's crown. Elsewhere, Porto claimed a 1-0 win at Feyenoord, RB Leipzig defeated Lens 3-1, Galatasaray beat Aston Villa 1-0 and Bodo/Glimt beat LASK by the same scoreline.

Pak enters space as Shenzhou docks...

FROM PAGE 01

The launch was a "complete success", the agency said, adding that the crew was in good condition. Ali is first Pakistani to travel beyond Earth and the first foreign astronaut to visit China's Tiangong space station, placing Pakistan among the countries taking part in human spaceflight and opening fresh avenues for scientific collaboration with Beijing. He is travelling as a payload specialist in a three-member crew alongside Chinese astronauts Tang Hongbo, who is commanding the mission, and Wu Yi, the flight engineer.

Pakistan, Qatar to diversify relations

FROM PAGE 01

and agricultural value addition. Highlighting the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Qatar, Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasized the need to translate these ties into stronger economic and commercial partnerships. Rana Tanveer Hussain proposed engaging the private sector to develop commercially viable partnerships, positioning Pakistan as a potential animal feed supply hub for the entire Middle East. He also proposed expanding cooperation beyond animal feed exports through joint ventures in integrated dairy and livestock farming, modern slaughterhouses, meat processing, milk processing and packaging, and the production of cheese, milk powder and other value-added dairy products. The Minister further emphasized the need to increase Pakistani rice exports to Qatar, highlighting the country's high-quality rice, surplus production and competitive pricing. During the meeting, the Baladna group delegation identified Pakistan as a potential strategic supplier of animal feed for its expanding international operations. The group expressed interest in sourcing maize, soybean, alfalfa, Rhodes grass and other forage crops from Pakistan to diversify its global supply chains. The discussion also focused on emerging opportunities arising from climate change, water scarcity and growing environmental pressures on traditional agricultural and dairy-exporting countries. The delegation highlighted Pakistan's potential to produce competitively priced animal feed and dairy products to meet rising demand across Asian and Middle Eastern markets.

ADB okays $250m for Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01

cost-efficient infrastructure, and improve fiscal risk management. "Rigorous project appraisal, transparent disclosure, and sound management of fiscal risks are essential to translate Pakistan's PPP pipeline into sustainable infrastructure investment," ADB Country Director for Pakistan Emma Fan was quoted as saying. Fan added that the programme demonstrated ADB's commitment to supporting the Pakistani government in strengthening public investment and financial management, improving infrastructure development, and mobilising greater private sector investment through PPPs. The 'Promoting Sustainable Public-Private Partnerships Programme' builds on the first phase approved in 2024, which strengthened the legal and policy frameworks for PPPs, the statement said. It added that under the second phase, the government had taken steps to bring federal PPP and privatisation functions together under a unified platform. It said that the programme also supported dedicated PPP units in four line ministries and agencies and a national framework for monitoring and disclosing PPP-related fiscal liabilities. With support from ADB, the government approved a medium-term PPP pipeline for 2026-2030, the statement said. The 'National PPP and Investment Knowledge Hub' will provide training and tools to federal institutions.



MESSAGES ON PAKISTAN'S HISTORIC PARTICIPATION IN SHENZHOU-24 SPACE MISSION



ASIF ALI ZARDARI

President of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

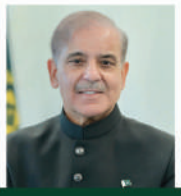
I felicitate the nation on Pakistan's historic participation in China's Shenzhou-24 mission to the Tiangong Space Station. It is a landmark achievement in our country's scientific journey and a moment of immense national pride.

I believe this mission reflects Pakistan's growing commitment to science, research and technological advancement. I appreciate SUPARCO, Pakistani scientists and engineers, and China's cooperation in making this historic opportunity possible. I am confident that this mission will strengthen Pakistan-China scientific cooperation and open new horizons for Pakistan's space programme.

I am hopeful that the scientific experiments to be undertaken during the mission will contribute to advancing research and knowledge in areas of scientific interest. Pakistan's participation in human spaceflight is not only about reaching space but also about harnessing its opportunities for research, learning and innovation to address challenges on Earth.

Recalling Allama Iqbal's vision, **"Sitaron se aagay jahan aur bhi hain"**, I believe this milestone should inspire Pakistan's young generation to pursue knowledge, innovation and scientific discovery with confidence and ambition. I wish the astronauts a successful mission and safe return.

PAKISTAN ZINDABAD!



M. SHEHBAZ SHARIF

Prime Minister of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the entire nation on the participation of Pakistani astronaut Zeeshan Ali aboard China's Shenzhou-24 mission to the Tiangong Space Station.

Today, Pakistan has embarked on a journey beyond the stars. This is not merely the journey of one astronaut; it is the journey of 240 million Pakistanis, our youth, our scientists and our dreams. Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Dawood have both completed their training in China through extraordinary hard work, discipline and dedication.

Pakistan has become the first country after China to send an astronaut to the Tiangong Space Station. This is a living testament to the ironclad friendship between Pakistan and China. I am grateful to our brotherly country, China, especially President Xi Jinping, for making Pakistan a part of this historic mission. Pakistan and China are not only united in their commitment to peace and shared development on Earth, but are now also partners in the journey into space. This reflects the depth and closeness of our enduring friendship.

I also pay tribute to SUPARCO, the universities and the scientists whose scientific experiments are being carried out aboard this mission into space. Through the collective efforts of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, national institutions, scientists and our youth, Pakistan is moving towards new heights in space research and advanced scientific fields.

If a Pakistani can reach a space station today, a Pakistani will reach the Moon tomorrow. I urge our youth: never stop dreaming, keep working hard and continue believing in Pakistan. Our destination lies beyond the stars.

Our national poet, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, urged the youth decades ago to venture beyond the stars and explore the hidden secrets of the universe. I thank Allah Almighty that this dream is becoming a reality today. My government considers science, technology and space research among its foremost priorities. This mission is a major step towards a new Pakistan, where our youth will not merely compete with the world but will lead it.

PAKISTAN ZINDABAD!



FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR

NISHAN-E-IMTIAZ (MILITARY)
HILAL-E-JUR'AT

Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces

The departure of Pakistan's first astronaut aboard the Shenzhou-24 spacecraft on a historic mission to China's space station is a moment of immense pride and joy for the entire nation. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistani astronaut, SUPARCO, and all the technical teams from Pakistan and China on this historic achievement. This extraordinary accomplishment reflects national determination, professional excellence and scientific advancement, marking an important milestone in our national history.

The participation of a Pakistani astronaut in this historic mission reflects Pakistan's scientific and technological capabilities, the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China and the unwavering trust between the two countries. The representation of Pakistan's national flag in space is a matter of great honour and pride for the entire nation.

Alhamdulillah, Pakistan is steadily achieving new milestones in various fields of science and technology. Its growing expertise in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Information Technology, and Cybersecurity, Biotechnology, research in medical sciences, engineering and industrial development are all evidence of our technological prowess. Similarly, progress in communication satellites, defence and aerospace technologies, alternative energy resources and environmental technologies is laying the foundation for a bright and self-reliant future for Pakistan.

Pakistan's greatest strength lies in its talented youth, academics, scientists, engineers and professionally skilled institutions. Harnessing their potential for advanced research, innovation, and technological advancement is essential for national development and achieving self-reliance. This space mission conveys a powerful message to future generations that through sustained determination, professional excellence, and national unity, Pakistan can reach new heights in every field. This new chapter of Pakistan-China cooperation will create further opportunities in space exploration, advanced scientific knowledge and international technological collaboration.

The friendship between Pakistan and China is higher than the heights of the Himalayas, deeper than the depths of the oceans, sweeter than the sweetness of honey and as boundless as the vastness of the universe. It transcends geographical boundaries. This everlasting friendship is a shining example of mutual trust, brotherhood, and shared determination and will continue to serve as a guiding light for generations to come.

I am confident that through its capabilities, national resolve and institutional harmony, Pakistan will secure an increasingly prominent position in the global landscape of science and technology.

PAKISTAN HAMESHA ZINDABAD!

Beyond the First Pakistani Astronaut: Space Cooperation and the Next Phase of CPEC 2.0



PROF AHSAN IQBAL
Federal Minister for Planning Development, and Special Initiatives

The participation of a Pakistani astronaut in China's Shenzhou-24 mission to the Tiangong Space Station marks a significant moment in the 75-year relationship between Pakistan and China. Yet, its importance extends beyond the distinction of becoming the first foreign national to visit the station. It points to a broader shift in bilateral cooperation: from infrastructure, connectivity and technology transfer towards scientific participation and the development of advanced capabilities.

The strategic question is whether Pakistan can turn this opening into a durable role in space research and technology. That will require more than access to Chinese facilities. It will depend on the ability of Pakistani institutions to contribute experiments, develop technologies and translate research into applications. This is also where space cooperation intersects with CPEC 2.0, whose emphasis on innovation and industrial development creates a wider context for moving the partnership towards knowledge-based growth.

Shenzhou-24 Mission and Pakistan-China Scientific Cooperation

Under an agreement between Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) and the China Manned Space Agency, two Pakistani astronaut candidates had been selected for training in China. One is participating in Shenzhou-24 as a payload specialist, with the second serving as backup. The mission makes a Pakistani the first foreign astronaut to enter China's space station.

Its scientific significance lies in the experiments that will accompany the astronaut. Pakistani universities and research institutions submitted more than 300 proposals, of which four experiments were selected. Preparing these payloads requires research design, testing and coordination with Chinese technical teams. It gives Pakistani scientists experience in the standards and procedures of crewed space research, while creating opportunities to build longer-term institutional partnerships. The mission does not, by itself, establish a human spaceflight capability in Pakistan. Its greater value is as a platform for sustained scientific participation. Continued access to experiments, research exchanges and future missions could help Pakistani institutions develop expertise that cannot be acquired through observation alone. For China, the collaboration also broadens the international dimension of its space program and builds scientific links with a long-standing partner.

Satellite Development, Lunar Exploration and Technology Transfer

The astronaut mission is one part of a wider relationship that increasingly includes satellite technology and lunar research. Pakistan's PRSC-S1, launched in 2025, and PRSC-EO3, launched in 2026, have expanded its remote-sensing capabilities. EO-3 also carries an experimental AI-based processing unit, reflecting the growing importance of onboard data analysis in satellite systems.

University collaboration has opened another route into international missions. ICUBE-Q, developed by Pakistan's Institute of Space Technology and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, travelled aboard China's Chang'e-6 mission in 2024 and conducted lunar observations. The planned Pakistani lunar rover for Chang'e-8, expected in 2028, would take this involvement further. Developed indigenously by SUPARCO, the approximately 35-kilogram rover is intended to operate near the lunar south pole.

These projects matter because they represent different stages of technological engagement. Satellite launches expand access to space-based services; university-led missions create experience in collaborative research; and, the rover offers an opportunity to contribute locally developed hardware to a major international program. The strategic priority now is to extend Pakistani participation into system design, scientific instruments, software, robotics and manufacturing.

This is where technology transfer must become capability-building. The objective should not simply be to acquire equipment or benefit from another country's infrastructure, but to develop the engineering skills, research partnerships and industrial expertise needed to adapt and eventually produce technologies. China's established space sector can provide a valuable partner in that process, while Pakistani universities and companies can contribute specialized research and applications.



Shenzhou-24 crew members: Tang Hongbo (C), Wu Yi (R), and Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali. /Xinhua

Space Technology and the Economic Priorities of CPEC 2.0

The economic value of space programs is increasingly realized through their applications on Earth. Satellite data can support crop monitoring, irrigation planning, flood assessment, environmental observation and disaster response.

Telecommunications can improve connectivity, while maritime monitoring can contribute to coastal planning and fisheries management. For Pakistan, these are not peripheral benefits. They relate directly to food security, climate resilience, infrastructure planning and public services.

But data alone does not create economic value. The larger opportunity lies in building the capacity to process information and turn it into usable products. Universities can develop analytical methods. Pakistani technology firms can provide geospatial services and remote sensing applications; and, public agencies can incorporate these tools into planning and decision-making. Collaboration with Chinese companies could help connect research with commercial markets, support specialized engineering and create opportunities for technology startups.

This offers a practical innovation dimension to CPEC 2.0. The first phase strengthened physical connectivity through energy, transport and infrastructure. The next phase can build on that foundation by linking research institutions, technology companies and industrial users. Space cooperation is not an established CPEC project in itself, but its applications align with the broader priorities of innovation, industrial development and high-value economic activity.

The strategic opportunity is to connect the stages of an innovation economy: research generates knowledge, firms develop it into services and products and public and private users create demand. If Pakistan-China cooperation can strengthen these links, space technology can contribute, not only to scientific prestige, but also to productivity, skilled employment and the growth of domestic technology businesses.

Long-Term Prospects for Pakistan-China Space Cooperation

The next phase should aim to make cooperation continuous rather than dependent on individual missions. Five complementary areas can help guide that effort: joint research involving SUPARCO, Chinese institutions and universities; human-capital development through specialist training, fellowships and academic exchanges; technology development in satellite systems, AI, robotics and scientific instruments; commercial partnerships in geospatial services and satellite applications; and knowledge-sharing through joint publications and regular institutional exchanges. These priorities are mutually reinforcing. Research creates the basis for new technologies. Skilled people enable institutions and companies to develop them and commercial applications give innovation an economic purpose. A Pakistan-China Space Science and Innovation Forum could bring scientists, policymakers, universities and businesses together to identify research priorities and partnership opportunities. It would be a possible platform for strengthening existing cooperation, not a substitute for the institutions and projects already under way.

Both countries also have an interest in the peaceful and responsible use of outer space. Scientific collaboration can widen international participation and contribute to shared knowledge, while giving developing countries greater opportunities to engage in exploration and research. The long-term measure of success will be the extent to which Pakistan's role expands from participating in missions to contributing technologies, research and services. China brings an established space infrastructure and extensive technical experience; Pakistan's opportunity is to use this partnership to strengthen its own scientific institutions and domestic capabilities. The Shenzhou-24 mission is a historic milestone, but its deeper significance will be determined by what Pakistan can build from it: a sustained place in international research and a stronger innovation base at home.

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PM Shehbaz approves NCCIA restructuring

The premier directed the appointment of information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI) experts at the NCCIA and all its subordinate offices. "The NCCIA should recruit the best available workforce strictly on merit," he said



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday ordered the modernisation of the system to prevent cybercrime in the country and approved the restructuring of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA). A meeting, presided over by the premier, was held to review the NCCIA's performance, administrative structure and future strategy. Speaking at the meeting, the prime minister said efforts to prevent and investigate cybercrime should be modernised in line with contemporary requirements. "Protecting the public from cybercrime is among the government's top priorities," the prime minister said. "Restructuring of the NCCIA should be expedited to transform it into an effective, proactive and modern institution."

The premier directed the appointment of information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI) experts at the NCCIA and all its subordinate offices. "The NCCIA should recruit the best available workforce strictly on merit," he said.

The prime minister said the agency's restructuring should focus on the use of AI and modern technologies. He added that all available resources should be utilised to resolve pending cybercrime cases.

He also ordered the formation of a committee comprising Federal Ministers Mohsin Naqvi, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Muhammad Aurangzeb and Shaza Fatima Khawaja to review the reform proposals submitted by the NCCIA. The committee will submit its recommendations to the prime minister by the end of this week.

The meeting was informed that a proposal had been made to transform the NCCIA into a national-level Pakistan Cyber Police, with recruitment based strictly on merit. A dedicated system for national security in relation to cybercrime has also become operational. The meeting was further told that all possible measures were being taken under the existing system to resolve cybercrime cases. The NCCIA's performance, administrative structure and future strategy were also reviewed. Federal Ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Musadik Malik, Ahsan Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb and Mohsin Naqvi attended the meeting.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiani and senior officials of relevant institutions were also present.

On Friday, NCCIA claimed to have uncovered an extensive alleged financial network involved in illegal online gambling, fraudulent business operations and suspected money laundering, with an estimated transaction exposure of up to Rs1 trillion.

Earlier this month, the agency called for stricter regulations governing company registration and bank account verification, warning that loopholes in the existing system are being exploited by illegal call centres, online betting operators and international fraud networks to launder money and defraud victims.

Briefs

Iran says it is prepared to withstand US blockade

DUBAI: Iran's first vice president said on Wednesday Tehran was not concerned about a US naval blockade as there had been a significant increase in cargo through other borders, and that the government was seeking to rein in price rises. Tehran is facing one of its worst inflation surges in decades, driven by the nearly nine-month-old Iran war, with a particularly sharp rise in food prices.

The US reimposed its naval blockade on Iranian ports in July, and earlier this month announced Task Force Iron Gate to restrict the movement of weapons and sanctioned materials across Iran's land borders and the Caspian Sea. "The increase in the unloading and clearance of goods through non-southern borders sends the message that we are not concerned about the enemy's naval blockade," Mohammad Reza Aref said. Strategic goods reserves were strong and supplies plentiful, he added, without giving any figures.

Aref said the government was seeking to prevent increases in basic goods prices for at least three months.

In a separate meeting, President Masoud Pezeshkian said the government was seeking to direct more budget resources and energy savings toward improving living standards in poorer communities. – APP

Over 2,000 migrants arrived in Spain's Canary Islands

MADRID: A record 2,100-plus migrants arrived in Spain's Canary Islands over 24 hours in overcrowded boats, maritime rescue service data showed on Wednesday, exacerbating a situation the regional government described as unsustainable earlier this month.

One migrant was found dead in a boat and another gave birth during the perilous crossing from West Africa, the rescue service said.

The daily arrivals surpassed the previous record of about 1,500 set two weeks ago.

Most of the boats arrived at El Hierro island, home to about 11,400 residents and one of Europe's key entry points for migrants arriving from West Africa. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who has faced tough criticism of his open stance on migration during the campaign ahead of Sunday's parliamentary election. – APP

French foreign minister defends Ukraine attacks in Libya

PARIS: France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Wednesday that Ukraine had been exercising its "absolute right to self-defense" by attacking two Russian ships in Libyan waters. One Russian warship sank in the double drone strike over the weekend, and Libya said Wednesday that two Libyan soldiers had died from wounds sustained in the attack.

Ukraine has acknowledged that it was behind the stunning operation that surprised even some of its allies. Italy has expressed concern over the attack to Ukraine. But Barrot told the broadcaster TF1: "Let's put ourselves in their place. What would we do if we were being bombarded day and night by an enemy – an invader?" "Well, we would defend ourselves – we would defend ourselves and, in a sense, exercise our absolute right to self-defense. That is what the Ukrainians are doing," he said.

Barrot said Russia had also been the cause of the spread of the conflict since it invaded Ukraine in 2022. "For nearly five years now, (Russian President) Vladimir Putin has not only been bombing Ukraine, but has also been constantly engaging in acts of aggression and harassing Europeans in an attempt to undermine our unity," he said. – APP

Zardari, Xi exchange letters on landmark Pakistan-China space cooperation milestone



Saifullah Ansar / DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Chinese President Xi Jinping have exchanged letters congratulating each other on the historic milestone in Pakistan-China space cooperation, marked by the first spaceflight of a Pakistani astronaut to China's Space Station aboard the Shenzhou spacecraft. The achievement also makes him the first foreign astronaut to enter the Chinese Space Station. In his letter to President Xi Jinping, President Asif Ali Zardari extended felicitations to the government and people of China on the landmark achievement and expressed profound appreciation for selecting Pakistan as the first foreign partner in China's manned space programme. He acknowledged the invaluable support, professionalism and dedication of China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) and the Astronaut Centre of China in making the collaboration possible.

The President said the initiative embodies the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, based on mutual progress, shared opportunities and collective advancement.

Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan takes immense pride in this historic achievement, which stands as another testament to the enduring friendship, mutual trust and close cooperation between the two countries. He noted that collaboration between CMSA and Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) has opened new avenues for bilateral cooperation in science, technology and space exploration.

The President expressed confidence that the achievement would inspire generations of young Pakistanis to pursue excellence in scientific research, innovation and technological advancement. He said that as Pakistan and China commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the milestone assumes even greater significance, providing fresh impetus to cooperation in space science, research, technological innovation and capacity building.

In his letter to President Asif Ali Zardari, President Xi Jinping congratulated the governments and people of Pakistan, the astronauts of both countries and their teams in the space industry on the successful entry of the Pakistani astronaut into space aboard China's Shenzhou spacecraft, making him the first foreign astronaut to enter China's Space Station.

At UNSC, Pakistan seeks AI guardrails to curb arms race

Decision to use nuclear weapons must rest with human beings alone, says UN chief

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council to establish strict global guardrails and regulatory frameworks to prevent artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies from fueling a destabilising arms race – warning that nuclear launch decisions must strictly remain under human control. "We must ensure that rapid emergence of technologies does not supercharge the ongoing arms race impacting global peace and security," Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told a high-level meeting of the 15-member Council, held under Latvian presidency.

Speaking in a debate on emerging technologies and conflict resolution, he stressed the urgent need for military restraint and confidence-building measures to mitigate the dangers of miscalculation and compressed decision-making timelines. "In the military domain, we need measures of restraint and confidence-building to address the risks of miscalculation and compressed decision-making," the Pakistani envoy said.

On human control over nuclear weapons, Ambassador Haider Shah said, "This is most critical in the nuclear domain, where decisions on the use of nuclear weapons must remain under human control, and AI systems must never be used to target nuclear command, control and communications systems." In this regard, he highlighted that integrating AI into military operations compresses the window for human judgment during crisis, significantly raising the risk of unintended escalation. Alongside keeping human beings at the center of nuclear launch authority, the Pakistani envoy called for an absolute prohibition against deploying AI capabilities to target nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems.

Nvidia's Huang apologizes to staff



Huang also denied reports that he was an abusive boss and pushed back at accusations that he held too central a role at the company he founded three decades ago. Nvidia shares were down more than seven percent in afternoon trading. The company did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment

WASHINGTON: Nvidia Chief Executive Jensen Huang apologized to employees on Tuesday for violating the company's code of conduct and told them he was in therapy, a day after he was reinstated as CEO, according to US media reports.

"I made some terrible mistakes," Huang told an hourlong all-hands meeting at the company's Santa Clara, California, headquarters, The New York Times reported after reviewing a livestream of the event. "I was unfaithful to Lori, and I hurt my kids and of course, I hurt all of you," he said, referring to his wife of more than 40 years. Huang, who cofounded Nvidia, resigned on November 11 after revelations of extramarital affairs – one with an employee and another with Alice Huang, an executive at an Nvidia customer whom US officials suspect of being a Chinese intelligence asset.

A day after the board reinstated him on Monday, Huang told staff it was "not acceptable" that he had broken a code of conduct he had helped write, the Times reported.

He also dismissed suggestions that he was back because Trump had pressured the board, saying directors had looked into the facts and been assured by the administration that he posed no national security threat.

But Trump told CNBC on Monday that he had been in contact with the board about Huang's return. "I spoke to them, let me put it that way," Trump said. "And I convinced them."

The Wall Street Journal, citing people familiar with the matter, reported that Huang thanked the administration for giving Nvidia quick access to intelligence that helped the board vote for his return. According to the Journal, Huang told the meeting that his direct reports would now send reviews of his behavior to the board. Nvidia shares were down more than seven percent in afternoon trading. The company did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment. – APP



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