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Pak becomes chair of G-24 bloc of the developing nations

Detailed News On Page-01

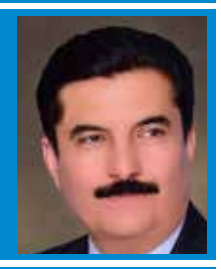
US State Secy supports Pak Afgan actions

Detailed News On Page-01



KP governor assures better health facilities

Detailed News On Page-02



DG ISPR SAYS

Taliban cannot absorb 'punishment' Pakistan can inflict

Military spokesperson says Pakistan has capability, strategy to impose cost over terrorism

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Afghan Taliban do not have the capability to absorb the "punishment" Pakistan can inflict in response to threats emanating from Afghanistan, the military's spokesperson has warned. Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry told Reuters Pakistan possessed the capability to counter threats from the Afghan Taliban, including those involving drones, and was prepared for attempts to test its operational readiness.

"Whatever they want to send, they can; they may try. We have the capability to take them on," the ISPR DG said in an interview. "They don't have, I think, the capability to then absorb the punishment that we can put on them," he added. The military spokesperson was responding to a question about the potential threat posed by drones in the hands of the Afghan Taliban and whether Pakistan could face a situation similar to drone threats elsewhere in the region.

Lt Gen Chaudhry said that whatever drone capability the Afghan Taliban possessed was not indigenous, saying that such technology was being supplied by their sponsors. The ISPR DG said that India is the "biggest terror sponsor" in the context of threats facing Pakistan and added that the Afghan Taliban and

Continued on Page 06

'Terrorist attacks drop by 37pc in October'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan witnessed a significant improvement in several key security indicators during October, with terrorist attacks declining by 37 per cent compared with September, it emerged on Sunday. The improvement was particularly pronounced in Balochistan and mainland Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while suicide attacks also declined substantially. However, an increase in kidnappings, particularly in Balochistan, remained a major area of concern.

According to statistics released by the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), the country experienced 143 terrorist attacks during October, compared with 226 in September. The decline reversed two consecutive months of increasing terrorist violence and marked a notable improvement in the security situation following September's heightened level of attacks. Data showed that terrorist attacks claimed 111 lives in October, compared with 260 in September, representing a reduction of 57pc. The number of people injured in these attacks dropped even more sharply, from 242 to just 69, a decline of 71pc.

The improvement was also reflected in the overall human cost of violence. According to PICSS, terrorist attacks and security forces' counterterrorism operations collectively resulted in 272 deaths and 71 injuries during October. Those killed included 53 security forces personnel, five peace committee members, 45 civilians, and 169 terrorists. The injured included 29 security forces personnel, 11 peace committee members, and 31 civilians.

A rolling 12-month comparison conducted by PICSS revealed several encouraging developments. Injuries resulting from terrorist attacks fell to their lowest monthly level in the past year. The combined number of injuries from terrorist attacks and security operations also reached a 12-month low, as did injuries among security forces personnel.

'KP will to have first righty to resources'

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi asserted that the people of the province had the first right to its resources. "No one should think that foreigners will come and loot this province. Till I am here, the people of the province will have the first right to its resources," he said while addressing a ceremony in Peshawar.

Kundi added that a third party from outside KP, whether a foreigner or from Pakistan, may enter into a joint venture with the people of the province if willing. The governor, who has assumed the administrative control of KP following the imposition of governor's rule and emergency in the province, assured that his priority was the protection of the people of KP, then of

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LAHORE: Malik Sultan Mahmood Hanjra, Senior Politician of PML(N) calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Russia wants trilateral talks on Ukraine

DNA

MOSCOW: The next round of talks to find a settlement for the conflict in Ukraine should initially be held in a trilateral format with Russia, Ukraine and the United States, Interfax news agency quoted a Kremlin aide as saying on Sunday.

Asked if Russia believed any European countries should be involved in negotiations, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said: "We have working contacts with the Americans. Therefore, it is logical, of course, that at least the first rounds of negotiations should be held in a trilateral format."

Marco Rubio speech

US acknowledges Pak concerns over cross-border terrorism

Rubio says Pakistan has taken action in response, adding that Washington does not want it targeted by terrorism

NEWS DESK

WASHINSTONG: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has acknowledged Pakistan's concerns over terrorist attacks originating from Afghan territory, saying Washington does not want Pakistan to become a target of terrorism. Speaking in Atlanta on Saturday at the conclusion of the G20 foreign ministers' meeting, Rubio said Pakistan was concerned about attacks being carried out from Afghanistan and believed the Afghan Taliban had failed to take sufficient action to prevent them.

"Pakistan is concerned about terrorist attacks that are being sponsored from the territory of Afghanistan. They feel that the Taliban is not doing enough to constrain those attacks, and they've taken action against it," Rubio said.

Continued on Page 06

Ishaq Dar talks to Uzbek FM

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, H.E. Bakhtiyor Saidov.

The DPM/FM congratulated Uzbekistan on assuming the Chairpersonship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) for 2026-2027 and assured Uzbekistan of Pakistan's full support and assistance. Foreign Minister Saidov, in turn, expressed Uzbekistan's support for Pakistan as it

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Briefs

Chinese CPC minister arrives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, H.E. Liu Haixing, arrives in Islamabad today on his first official visit to Pakistan. Explore History According to a statement issued here, during his visit, the Chinese minister will call on Pakistan's leadership and co-chair a high-level event with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on November 2, 2026. The visit forms part of the ongoing high-level and party-to-party exchanges between Pakistan and China, reflecting the two countries' shared commitment to further strengthening their All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

North Korea tests cluster-bomb warheads

SEOUL: North Korea test-fired cluster-bomb warheads, its state media reported on Sunday, the latest in a slew of weapons drills aimed at training its military units on using them. The test, conducted on Saturday, came after the nuclear-armed North recently trialled a range of weaponry including attack drones, a new precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile. It also came against the backdrop of growing tensions over a landmine explosion along the heavily fortified border between the two Koreas that saw three South Korean soldiers wounded. The North has denied responsibility and vowed to further fortify its border areas and resume its loudspeaker campaign. – **APP**

Middle East tensions

Iran warns new war could last longer after Trump threatens strikes

Iran has designated Britain's spying service, MI6, as a "hostile group" and declared the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force "terrorist organizations

NEWS DESK

IRAN warned on Sunday that any renewed war with the United States could last longer than the previous round of fighting, after President Donald Trump said he still had to "take care" of more targets. Diplomatic efforts to end the Middle East war have been punctuated by repeated threats from the United States and Israel to resume bombardments as they hold crucial elections. "A potential future war could last longer than previous conflict, and the American president would not be in a position to dictate the timing or the conditions of its conclusion," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia, according to Iranian state television. Meanwhile, Yamaha said on Sunday it won't participate in next weekend's Qatar MotoGP, citing "the situation in the Middle East". Iran has designated

Continued on Page 06

Trump says US can strike remaining Iranian nuclear sites within 10 minutes

WEB DESK

US President Donald Trump has said Washington is in no hurry to reach an agreement with Iran, questioning Tehran's reliability while warning that the United States could strike one or two remaining nuclear facilities within minutes. Speaking to reporters at a Halloween event at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida on Saturday, Trump said negotiations with Tehran were progressing but

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Pak becomes chair of G-24 bloc of developing nations

Aurangzeb described the chairmanship as a "profound responsibility", a handout issued by the Ministry of Finance stated, adding that he also called for "renewed international cooperation, stronger multilateral institutions and reinforced global commitments to address climate shocks, development financing gaps and global economic fragmentation

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan assumed the chairmanship of the Group of 24 (G-24) on Sunday, with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb expressing the country's resolve to strengthen the collective voice of developing economies and "advancing a more responsive, fair and development-oriented international financial system". The intergovernmental group is a coalition of developing countries established in 1971 to coordinate their positions on international monetary and financial issues, according to its website.

Aurangzeb described the chairmanship as a "profound responsibility", a handout issued by the Ministry of Finance stated, adding that he also called for "renewed international cooperation, stronger multilateral institutions and reinforced global commitments to address climate shocks, development financing gaps and global economic fragmentation". "The future of developing economies is not peripheral to the future of the global economy. It is central to it," the statement quoted the finance minister as saying.

He further highlighted the "immense potential of emerging and developing nations as drivers of investment, innovation, entrepreneurship and global growth".

Aurangzeb outlined three strategic priorities for Pakistan under the chairmanship: placing development at the centre of global economic policymaking, strengthening multilateral frameworks, and advancing a development-oriented international financial architecture. For the first priority, the finance minister stressed the significance of macroeconomic stability, saying that it must be a foundation of investment, productivity, employment and shared prosperity.

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Islamabad POST
Monday November 02 , 2026

PPP efforts afoot to protect rights of GB people

KARACHI :Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Women's Wing Central President Faryal Talpur has extended her heartiest congratulations to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan on the region's 79th Independence Day, saying November 1 is a memorable day in our history when the brave people of Gilgit-Baltistan raised the banner of revolt against the oppressive rule of the Dogra regime and lit the flame of freedom.

Their courage, sacrifices and resolve, she said, are an unforgettable treasure of our national history. In her message, Faryal Talpur said that Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto laid the foundation for freeing the people of Gilgit-Baltistan from an exploitative system through historic reforms, including the abolition of the FCR and the feudal order.

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto carried forward the journey of political representation and empowerment in the region in 1994 by establishing the Legislative Council President Asif Ali Zardari, during his first term, gave Gilgit-Baltistan a new political identity, an elected assembly and an empowered, province-style administrative structure through the 2009 reforms package. She added that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, carrying forward the same pro-people vision, is continuously raising his voice for the democratic, constitutional and fundamental rights of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, their political autonomy, and equal development opportunities.—**APP**

SDPI's sustainable development conference from tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: "Rethinking Development in an Age of Disruption" is the overarching theme of the 29th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) being organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) from November 02 to November 05 at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). Running alongside the conference is the 4th Sustainability Investment Expo that carries the theme — "Connecting Ideas, Investment and Impact for Resilient Development", said a press release issued on Sunday.

The event has been built around three 'Es', i.e. Economy, Environment and Equity, with development finance running through all the three, with various panels and plenaries on debt, domestic resource mobilization, blended finance and the inequities of the global financial architecture. Other themes are transboundary air and water security in South Asia, emerging "heat economy," Individual Development Goals (IDGs), reconstruction in conflict-hit regions, and multilateralism as a model of cooperation for the Global South. Technology, including AI, digital trade and data governance, cuts across the event. The conference will also launch the Global South Solutions Without Borders (GS-SWB) Platform, intended to turn dialogue into pilot projects, policy toolkits and financing partnerships. The conference starts on 2 November (Monday) at 9:30am with the opening plenary "Rethinking Development in an Age of Disruption.—**APP**



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE awarding trophy of Polo in Pink Cup to the winning team at Islamabad Club Polo Ground.

Over 39,000 non-filing companies marked inactive

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has marked 39,704 companies "Inactive by Registrar" after they failed to file annual returns and/or financial statements for four years.

Marking non-filing companies as inactive will make the corporate register more reliable and help prevent dormant companies from being misused, said a press release issued by the SECP on Saturday.

The inactive status will appear in the SECP's system and be visible to banks and other stakeholders. These companies will not be able to open new bank accounts until they file their overdue documents with the SECP and regain active status. They will also be unable to access financial services or register changes in their directors.

The inactive companies include 13,927 in Lahore, 13,859 in Islamabad, 4,868 in Karachi, 2,031 in Peshawar, 1,861 in Multan, 1,384 in Faisalabad, 1,102 in Gilgit, 436 in Quetta and 236 in Sukkur.—**APP**

Kundi for modern healthcare facilities in KP

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that medical conferences provide an important platform for promotion of knowledge, research, exchange of experiences and awareness about modern treatment methods. Addressing the concluding ceremony of the annual conference of Pakistan Association of Urological Surgeons, the Governor said that medical institutions and experts must align themselves with international standards so that patients in Pakistan could benefit from advanced healthcare facilities.

He stressed the need to ensure quality and specialised healthcare services in merged districts, southern districts and far-flung areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that modern treatment facilities should not remain limited to big cities and every citizen must have equal access to healthcare.

Governor Kundi said improvement of health infrastructure, provision of modern medical equipment, doctors' training and promotion of medical research were essential for strengthening the healthcare system.

He added that professional organisations like Pakistan Association of Urological Surgeons could play a vital role in enhancing doctors' capacity, training young medical experts and developing collaboration with public sector hospitals.

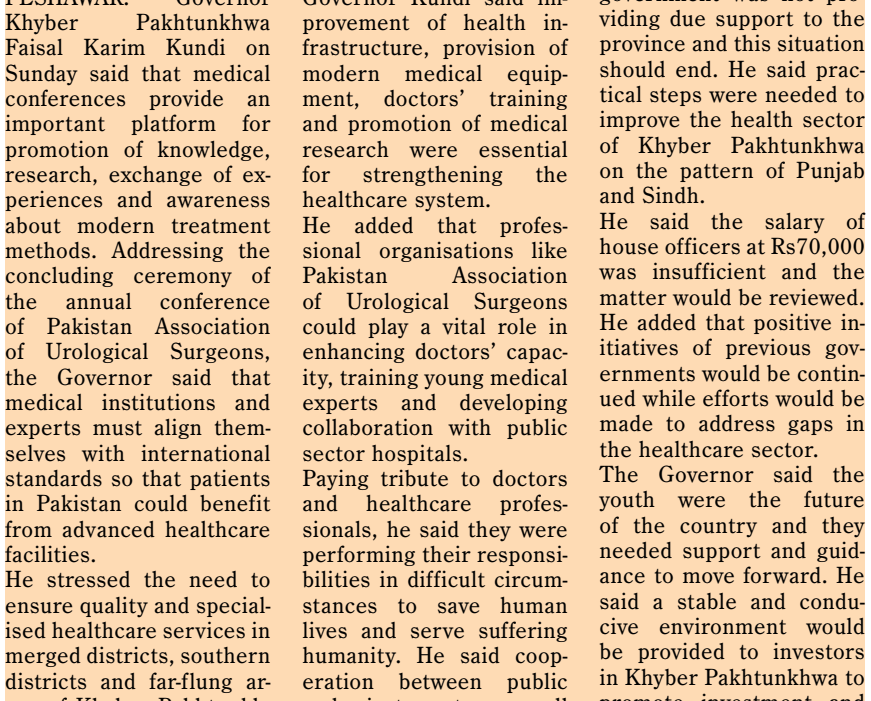
Paying tribute to doctors and healthcare professionals, he said they were performing their responsibilities in difficult circumstances to save human lives and serve suffering humanity. He said cooperation between public and private sectors as well as international medical and educational linkages should be promoted to benefit from global experiences. The Governor congratulated Professor Dr Liaqat and the organising committee for successfully holding the conference and said that academic discussions and exchange of experiences during the event would help bring practical improvements in the health sector.

Talking to media persons, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the federal government was not providing due support to the province and this situation should end. He said practical steps were needed to improve the health sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the pattern of Punjab and Sindh.

He said the salary of house officers at Rs70,000 was insufficient and the matter would be reviewed. He added that positive initiatives of previous governments would be continued while efforts would be made to address gaps in the healthcare sector.

The Governor said the youth were the future of the country and they needed support and guidance to move forward. He said a stable and conducive environment would be provided to investors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote investment and development.

He said collective efforts were required to build a changing, progressive and stronger Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.—**DNA**



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan Ladislav Steinhübel take keen interest in handmade clothes at a stall in a Craft Market, at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan water week to kick off today

ISLAMABAD: Preparations have been completed for the 6th Pakistan Water Week 2026, which will kick off in Islamabad on November 2 to bring national and international stakeholders together to advance water security and climate-resilient food systems.

The five-day international conference, themed "Commitments to Action: Advancing Water Security and Achieving Climate-Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan," will continue until November 6.

The event is being organised by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and the Ministry of Water Resources.

The conference will bring together policymakers, parliamentarians, researchers, development partners, youth leaders, civil society representatives and media professionals, with participation available both in person and online.

It will feature two parallel thematic tracks, each comprising 13 sessions, focusing on strengthening water, agriculture and food systems through effective policy implementation and scaling up inclusive innovations for climate resilience.

Key topics to be discussed include groundwater management, irrigation reforms, drought and health, climate financing, Pakistan's preparations for COP31, the water-energy-food-environment nexus, artificial intelligence, digital twins, cryosphere risks in the Upper Indus Basin, and women's and youth leadership in water security.—**APP**

Strict security arrangements at Churches

RAWALPINDI: Strict security arrangements have been put in place at churches and other important locations in Rawalpindi on the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Hassan Mushtaq Sukhaira.

Senior police officers, including SP Potohar, Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs) and Station House Officers (SHOs), visited various locations and remained present in the field to supervise security arrangements.

Entry into churches is being allowed only after thorough body searches to ensure foolproof security. Rawalpindi Police is taking all necessary measures to maintain security at all times.

According to a police spokesperson, the protection of citizens' lives and property was the top priority of the police. He added that Rawalpindi Police remained committed to preventing crime and ensuring the safety of citizens.—**APP**

Balochistan female students unlock pathway for edu uplift

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) has emerged as a cornerstone for regional youth development and women empowerment, providing a transformative platform for female students from Balochistan to elevate the educational landscape and academic culture of their home province.

Under a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) executed under the auspices of World Bank-funded educational uplift programs between FJWU and the School Education Department, Government of Balochistan, a fully funded batch of 58 Balochistan students is currently pursuing the four-year B.Ed. degree programme at the university. The programme is scheduled to run until 2030 for completion of the degree.

"The institutional initiative serves as a major developmental catalyst formulated to bridge regional educational disparities, equip young women with modern pedagogical training and build a cadre of qualified female educators capable of overhauling primary and secondary education across Balochistan", said Prof Dr Bushra Mirz, FJWU Vice Chancellor

Hosting female students from Balochistan reflects varsity's broader mission toward national cohesion.

"This pride depicts FJWU' objectives of national integration, youth development, and institutional capacity building", the vice chancellor said, adding that the four-year degree program is structured not merely as an academic pursuit for personal advancement, but as a strategic national responsibility.

The enrolled students expressed deep admiration for the university's academic atmosphere."We are lucky to have the opportunity for our education in a professional academic environment with interactive learning methodologies, state-of-the-art facilities and inclusive culture", a group of students expressed their thoughts in an interaction with APP.

They observed that the academic exposure at FJWU has broadened their intellectual horizons and provided them with a comfortable, supportive environment conducive to both personal and professional growth.

"We feel a strong sense of belonging and ownership at this university; the students and faculty have fostered such a welcoming environment that it never feels as though we are studying in another province", they said.

Associate Prof Dr Ishrat Lodhi, Head of Education Department the university observed the students as dedicated and intelligent.

"They are devoted and diligent students showing outstanding interest in orientation and learning", Dr Ishrat noted.

She highlighted that the department has established a special mechanism for their acclimation at the university.

Prof Dr Bushra Mirza emphasized that the university is committed to nurturing high moral standards, critical thinking and advanced teaching methodologies among these scholars so they can return to their native towns as agents of social change, dedicated to expanding literacy and bolstering female education across Balochistan. The vice chancellor informed that during a recently organized 'Meet and Greet' session for the Balochistan students at the campus, the students showcased the rich cultural tapestry of Balochistan through vibrant student performances. "We extend profound gratitude to the Chief Ministers of Balochistan and Punjab, the Provincial Minister for Education.—**APP**

Saleem assures support to addressing business community issues

ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has assured the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) of his full support in addressing key issues of the business community, particularly with regard to the allocation of suitable land for a new industrial estate for Islamabad and the establishment of a facilitation desk of the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan at the Chamber.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony at the Chamber House, on Saturday, said a press release.

He congratulated ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan Swati on their election and expressed confidence that the new leadership would effectively represent the business community and contribute to national economic development. The Governor said that a modern industrial estate in Islamabad could attract fresh investment, expand industrial production and generate employment opportunities.

He assured the Chamber that he would take up the proposal with the relevant authorities and make every possible effort to facilitate the identification and allocation of suitable land. Regarding the proposed Banking Mohtasib Pakistan facilitation desk, he observed that the initiative would provide businesspeople with convenient access to guidance and assistance in resolving banking-related complaints.

He also expressed his willingness to facilitate coordination with the concerned authorities to take the proposal forward.

He said the doors of the Governor House were open to the business community and expressed his desire to maintain regular engagement with ICCI leadership so that its concerns and investment proposals could be effectively taken up at relevant forums. He also underscored the importance of overseas Pakistanis in promoting investment, exports, joint ventures and technology transfer. ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia said that stronger collaboration between the government and private sector was indispensable for accelerating industrialization, expanding exports and creating employment opportunities.

He urged the Governor to support the establishment of a modern industrial estate equipped with essential infrastructure and utilities, emphasizing that the availability of suitable land was crucial for attracting investment and expanding industrial activities. The ICCI President further proposed establishing a permanent coordination mechanism between the Governor House and Islamabad's business community through the appointment of a focal person or regular consultative meetings.

Highlighting the potential of overseas Pakistanis, he said their international experience, investment resources and business networks could help Pakistan secure new export markets.—**APP**



Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Monday November 02 , 2026

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day



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Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Footpaths and roads held hostage by encroachments

Many residents believe corruption is a major factor behind the persistence of the problem. They argue that some businesses are allowed to continue illegal parking practices because of unofficial arrangements and selective enforcement. Whether these allegations are true or not, the authorities must recognize that public perception matters

DNA



Islamabad was once known for its orderly planning, wide roads, green belts, and pedestrian-friendly environment. Unfortunately, in many commercial areas today, particularly G-8 Markaz, illegal encroachments have transformed public spaces into chaotic parking lots, making life increasingly difficult for residents, pedestrians, and legitimate businesses.

One of the most visible examples of this problem is the unchecked expansion of car showrooms. Many showroom owners purchase or rent a single office or shop but proceed to occupy the surrounding public space for dozens of vehicles. Roadsides, service lanes, green belts, and even pedestrian footpaths are filled with cars on display. As a result, citizens who wish to walk safely are forced onto busy roads because the footpaths intended for them no longer exist in practical terms. The impact on residents is severe. Residential plazas located near commercial areas often face parking crises because the spaces around them are occupied by showroom vehicles and roadside businesses. Families returning home frequently find no place to park their own cars. Ironically, when traffic police conduct operations, they often target residents' vehicles rather than removing the illegally parked showroom cars that are causing the problem in the first place. Residents repeatedly ask a simple question: if their designated parking has been occupied by commercial encroachers, where should they park their vehicles? Unfortunately, there is rarely a satisfactory answer. Many citizens complain that when they request action against illegal parking, officials acknowledge the violation but claim the offenders are too influential to confront. Such responses only deepen public frustration and weaken confidence in law enforcement. The continued existence of these encroachments raises serious questions about the performance of both the Traffic Police and the Capital Development Authority (CDA). Illegal parking on such a large scale cannot continue without a failure of enforcement. If regulations prohibit the occupation of public roads and footpaths, then those regulations must be implemented fairly and consistently, regardless of the influence or connections of the violators.

Many residents believe corruption is a major factor behind the persistence of the problem. They argue that some businesses are allowed to continue illegal parking practices because of unofficial arrangements and selective enforcement. Whether these allegations are true or not, the authorities must recognize that public perception matters. The absence of visible action against repeat offenders creates the impression that rules apply only to ordinary citizens.

The solution is neither complicated nor impossible. First, CDA and Traffic Police should launch a comprehensive operation against illegal occupation of roads, footpaths, and public parking spaces. Second, car dealerships should be restricted to displaying vehicles within their legally leased premises. Third, dedicated parking areas should be allocated and clearly marked for residents in front of their respective residential plazas. These spaces should be protected from commercial use through strict monitoring and enforcement.

Furthermore, repeat violators should face substantial fines, vehicle confiscation, and possible suspension of business licenses. Technology, including surveillance cameras and digital parking enforcement, can also help ensure transparency and reduce opportunities for selective action.

IDCPC Minister to arrive in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM) Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), will arrive here on Sunday on his first official visit to Pakistan.

During his visit, Liu Haixing will call on Pakistan's leadership and co-chair a high-level event with the DPM/FM on Monday, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

"The visit forms part of the ongoing high-level and party-to-party exchanges between Pakistan and China, reflecting the two countries' shared commitment to further strengthening their All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership," it was added.—**APP**

KPT carriers carrying 101,000 tonnes of fertiliser, wheat

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, on Sunday, said that Karachi Port Trust (KPT) has simultaneously handled two foreign bulk carriers carrying a combined 101,000 tonnes of diammonium phosphate (DAP) fertiliser and wheat.

The minister commended KPT engineers, port operators, pilots, terminal operators, dockworkers and transporters for managing the two vessels and maintaining cargo discharge operations. He said the timely handling of essential imports was important for supporting agricultural production and ensuring food security. The two vessels, MV ZHONG CHANG 538 and MV GOKOVA M, carrying 50,000 tonnes of DAP fertiliser and 51,000 tonnes of wheat, respectively, were berthed at Karachi Gateway Terminal Multipurpose (KGML). According to KPT operational data, MV ZHONG CHANG 538 was berthed at Berth 10/11 with its 50,000-tonne DAP consignment. Of the total cargo, 48,525 tonnes had been discharged, bringing unloading operations close to completion. The vessel recorded a discharge rate of 5,481 tonnes during the preceding 24 hours. Meanwhile, MV GOKOVA M, carrying 51,000 tonnes of wheat, was berthed at Berth 16/17. More than 7,200 tonnes had been discharged, while unloading operations were continuing. Junaid Chaudhry said the simultaneous handling of the two vessels reflected KPT's operational capacity and efforts to improve berth utilisation, cargo-handling efficiency and supply chain performance. He said the Ministry of Maritime Affairs was pursuing reforms to reduce vessel turnaround times, improve port management.—**APP**

Police, FIA, NCCIA join hands to raise awareness against cybercrime

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, traffic police, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) jointly organised a flag march to raise public awareness about cybercrime and educate citizens on protecting themselves from online financial fraud, harassment and other digital threats. According to details shared by NCCIA, the joint initiative aimed to promote safe internet use and encourage citizens to take necessary precautions against growing cyber threats.

During the awareness activity, citizens were informed about online financial scams, fake social media accounts, identity theft, cyber harassment and other methods used by criminals to deceive internet users.

Participants were advised not to share their passwords, one-time passwords (OTPs), banking details, or personal information with anyone, as such information could be misused for financial fraud and other illegal activities. They were also urged to avoid suspicious links, verify online information before sharing it and remain careful while dealing with unknown persons on social media. The awareness campaign particularly stressed the importance of reporting cybercrime without delay. Citizens were advised to preserve messages, screenshots, transaction records and other relevant evidence in case of online fraud, blackmailing or harassment.

They were encouraged to approach NCCIA through its official complaint channels so that appropriate legal action could be taken against those involved in cybercrime. Meanwhile,The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested over 20 suspects in a nationwide crackdown on cybercrime reported during the past 24 hours, with financial fraud and extortion cases involving around Rs 66 million, while recovering Rs 5.99 million in Rawalpindi and returning the money to an affected citizen. According to details compiled by APP, NCCIA teams in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Multan, Abbottabad and Dera Ismail Khan took action against suspects allegedly involved in online financial fraud, fake investment schemes, social media harassment, blackmailing and other cybercrimes. In Islamabad, NCCIA arrested four suspects allegedly running a fake travel agency through WhatsApp groups. The suspects offered visa and air ticket services, collected money from citizens and provided fake visas and tickets. Two cases were registered under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 and the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). In separate operations, the Islamabad team arrested several suspects allegedly involved in harassing and blackmailing women through social media. The suspects allegedly threatened to share private photographs and videos online and demanded money from the victims.—**DNA**

Free hepatitis C screening launched

ISLAMABAD: Free hepatitis C screening, diagnostic testing and treatment facilities have been launched in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C, expanding access to free healthcare services in the two regions.

According to official sources, under the initiative, three screening centres have been established in Gilgit-Baltistan and six in Azad Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate residents in accessing free testing and treatment. The Ministry of National Health Services has advised the residents to visit their nearest designated screening centres to benefit from the facilities. The ministry has also urged people to share the information with their families and communities to encourage wider participation. The programme provides free initial screening, PCR diagnostic testing worth approximately Rs 8,000 and treatment costing between Rs 34,000 and Rs 68,000, without any charge to eligible patients.—**APP**

Non-academic burden weighs heavy on private school teachers

ISLAMABAD: The teachers of leading private schools in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad are under severe stress as their workload of non-academic and extracurricular activities has increased manifold, relegating their primary task of teaching to the background.

From daily themed activities like Colour Day, Mango Day, Welcome Parties, to week-long preparations for annual functions, sports galas and social media content creation, teachers say they are forced to work beyond their job descriptions without any extra compensation.

Many teachers believe these activities are now being used as a marketing strategy to attract admissions, while the entire burden is placed on the teaching staff.

A female teacher Noshaba at a prominent private school said "we were appointed to teach, but most of our time is now consumed by classroom decoration, event management, dance rehearsals and making videos for school pages". She stated that they have to stay after school hours for preparations. If parents complain about a single picture, the management holds them responsible.

She remarked that earlier, competition among schools was based on academic results. Now it is based on who organizes more colourful functions. In this race, real education is suffering Another teacher Tehreem from a private school in F-8 sector said, "Our official timing is till 1:30 p.m., but during event season we stay till 4 p.m. There is no overtime. Those who refuse to stay face consequences in their evaluation." Teachers performing duties as hosts, photographers and crowd managers during Parent-Teacher Meetings and Fun Fairs also complained of exhaustion,she complained. She told that "On PTM and Fun Gala days, we have to stand for seven to eight hours to manage the rush. The very next day, we are expected to deliver lectures with the same energy in class. It is extremely tiring," a teacher from I-8 shared.—**DNA**

Overseas key contributors to Pak's eco stability

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar, while meeting delegations of overseas Pakistanis from the United States and Japan, tribal elders, lawyers, intellectuals, representatives of social organizations and people from various walks of life, underscored the vital role of overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan's economic development and national progress.

The meeting discussed issues faced by overseas Pakistanis, their welfare and protection, as well as the country's economic and political stability, national security and the prevailing regional and international situation.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that overseas Pakistanis are a valuable national asset and an important pillar of the country's economy. Through their hard work, expertise and substantial remittances, they are making a significant contribution to Pakistan's economic stability, development and prosperity.—**APP**



Briefs

HPV vaccine safe, effective against cervical cancer

ISLAMABAD: Health officials have urged parents to ensure HPV vaccination for girls aged 9–14, describing the vaccine as a safe and effective preventive measure against cervical cancer.
According to them, timely immunization can protect future generations from the potentially life-threatening disease. They emphasized that vaccination before exposure to the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) offers the strongest protection and called for greater public awareness to counter misconceptions and encourage acceptance of the vaccine among families. Pakistan has launched a national HPV vaccination campaign through the Federal Directorate for Immunization (FDI), in collaboration with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect adolescent girls against cervical cancer.
The vaccine is being provided free of cost to eligible girls through designated vaccination centres, schools and outreach and mobile vaccination teams to ensure wider access, particularly for those who may otherwise face difficulties reaching health are facilities. Health officials have clarified that the HPV vaccine has undergone extensive scientific evaluation and is safe, effective and necessary to protect girls against HPV infections that can lead to cervical cancer later in life. They stressed that vaccination is an important investment in women's health and can significantly reduce the future burden of the disease. Alongside vaccination, officials have highlighted the importance of regular screening, timely medical consultation and public awareness as essential components of cervical cancer prevention. They have emphasized that vaccination and screening complement each other in reducing the risk of the disease.–**APP**

HSA invites applications for health certificate

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA) has invited applications for its Certificate in Health Professionals Education (CHPE), a Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) recognized programme aimed at enhancing the teaching and educational skills of health professionals. The programme is open to candidates holding MBBS, BDS, Allied Health Sciences, BS Nursing and relevant qualifications in social sciences and other fields. According to the academy, the programme will be offered through a hybrid mode, with a fee of Rs90,000. The last date for registration and fee submission is November 22, 2026, while classes are scheduled to commence on November 25. The programme will be conducted at the Health Services Academy, Prime Minister Health Complex, Park Road, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad.–**APP**

School van owners hike fares after petrol price surge

ISLAMABAD: Following the recent surge in petrol prices linked to Middle East tensions, school van and private transport owners in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad have unilaterally increased monthly fares by up to 40 percent, putting an extra financial burden on parents. Parents alleged that van owners are demanding Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 extra per month without any regulatory check, despite most schools being located within a 3 to 5 kilometre radius.
A mother of two Sidra said "My children go to a school in F-7, just 10 minutes away from our home in G-10, but the van driver has increased the fee from Rs 6000 to Rs 8,000, citing petrol hike".
She said that even though the government is giving a petrol subsidy for 800cc vehicles, there is no justification for them to charge so much.
The are already paying heavy school fees. This additional transport cost is unbearable for a middle-class family,she added.–**APP**

CDA chief for Kashmir Chowk underpass timely completion

During the visit, the Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf was briefed that 85% of the project work had been successfully completed in just 22 days, as of October 31, 2026. Construction activities could not be carried out for two days due to heavy rainfall and adverse weather conditions

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Sohail Ashraf, visited the Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project to review the latest construction progress and assess the pace of ongoing development activities at the project site.
During the visit, the Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf was briefed that 85% of the project work had been successfully completed in just 22 days, as of October 31, 2026. Construction activities could not be carried out for two days due to heavy rainfall and adverse weather conditions. However, despite this temporary interruption, the project is progressing at an accelerated pace and will be completed within the committed 30-day timeframe. The remarkable progress reflects the dedication, commitment and continuous efforts of the concerned teams towards completing this important infrastructure project.
The project is being executed in line with the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for modern infrastructure and improved civic facilities in the federal capital, as well as the vision of Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Federal Minister for Interior, under the "Mohsin Speed" initiative, aimed at accelerating development projects and ensuring their timely completion to improve Islamabad's overall infrastructure.
It is pertinent to mention that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project, while Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi announced the commitment to complete the project within 30 days. In line with the vision of the Federal Minister for Interior and under the leadership and direct supervision of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, the project is progressing at an accelerated pace to fulfil this commitment.
During his visit, Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf directed the concerned officers, engineers and construction teams to maintain the current pace of work, ensure the effective utilization of available resources and complete the remaining work within the stipulated 30-day timeframe. He also emphasized maintaining the highest standards of construction quality, safety and timely execution.
Citizens have widely appreciated CDA's fast-paced development efforts and the rapid progress on the Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project. They expressed satisfaction over the accelerated construction activities and acknowledged the Authority's commitment to completing important infrastructure projects within the shortest possible time for the convenience and facilitation of the general public.
The Kashmir Chowk Underpass is an important infrastructure initiative of CDA aimed at improving traffic flow, reducing congestion and providing smoother commuting facilities to motorists. Upon completion, the project is expected to significantly facilitate daily commuters and contribute towards a more efficient road network in Islamabad.
With 85% of the project completed in just 22 working days, despite a two-day interruption caused by heavy rainfall, CDA remains firmly committed to completing the Kashmir Chowk Underpass within the announced 30-day timeline.
Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf stated that CDA is committed to transforming Islamabad into a more developed, beautiful, clean, green, environmentally sustainable and tourist-friendly modern capital city. He reaffirmed that the Authority will continue to undertake development initiatives focused on improving infrastructure, enhancing civic amenities and providing better facilities to the citizens.

Pak explores carbon markets to finance clean-air transition

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is exploring carbon-market mechanisms to mobilise financing for air pollution control, with a conference presentation identifying potential for generating 984,050 carbon credits and 35.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent over 10 years across transport, agriculture and other sectors.
The proposed approach could open new financing avenues for cleaner transport, agricultural practices and industrial improvements, while linking Pakistan's air quality agenda with international climate finance mechanisms.
The potential was outlined during the two-day Pakistan National Clean Air Conference, where participants discussed opportunities to attract investment through carbon markets and strengthen the financial foundations of the country's clean-air transition. Dr Waqas Ahmed Khan of the World Bank said Pakistan needed to develop a pipeline of investable projects capable of generating carbon credits and attracting financing. The conference presentation estimated a potential value of $5.9 million to $8.85 million, while emphasising the need for credible baselines, measurement, reporting and verification systems, safeguards and federal-provincial approvals to ensure the integrity of carbon credits. It also highlighted the importance of engaging prospective buyers at an early stage to establish market demand and develop appropriate financing arrangements. Explaining the international carbon-market framework, Muhammad Abid of GIZ distinguished between compliance markets, where credits are used under legally binding emissions-reduction frameworks, and voluntary markets, where organisations purchase credits on a voluntary basis. He also discussed Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, which allows countries to transfer internationally recognised emissions reductions through cooperative arrangements, subject to accounting rules designed to prevent double counting. The discussions placed carbon finance within a broader proposed framework for mobilising resources from public budgets, fiscal transfers, climate and green finance, development partners and private investment. Andrew McCarthy of the Asian Development Bank called for a consensus statement defining responsibilities between federal and provincial governments and the establishment of a National Clean Air Financing Framework to support large-scale air quality improvements. Beyond carbon markets, the conference examined investment opportunities in transport, agriculture, industrial emissions control and clean cooking. Proposed transport interventions included electric-vehicle charging infrastructure, electric ride-sharing, improved vehicle inspection systems and expanded mass transit, while longer-term measures envisaged greater use of rail for freight movement and the integration of transit-oriented development into urban planning.–APP

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday on limited feeders due to ongoing development works being carried out by the district administration.
According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in Islamabad Circle from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Banigala, G-6, Sports Complex, F-7/1, Suparco Chowk, Iqbal Town, SERVICE ROAD EAST, Sudhran Road, Khanna East, Jhang Syedan, Frash Town, KIRPA, Abbasia Market, G-9/1, I-8/2, I-10/2, OLD EXCHANGE, G-13/2-1, DARGAH, N.I.H, Mohra Noor, Company Bagh, Numble, Upper Topa, Saidpur, Balawara, FECHS (E-11/2), D-12/2, D-12/1, Services, SHAH ALLAH DITTA, Northern Strip E-11, Northern Strip-2, Faisal Masjid, Ayub Market, HC-1, HC-2, T&T Colony, PTCL, G8-1, G-8, G-8 Markaz, Marvi, G-9/4 feeders.
In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Al-Noor Colony, Qadeer Road, KRL feeders, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Dhoke Suleman, Fazaiya Colony, 6Th Road, T&T, PTCL, New Mulpur, Shakrial, AFOHS, Qayyumabad, Gangal, Affandi Colony, Muhammadi Chowk, Industrial, Tehmasma Abad, Jamia Masjid, Bagh Sardaran, Jinnah Road, Liaqat Bagh, Fawara Chowk, Madina Colony, Kiyani Road, New Race Course, Officer Colony, Ameer Hamza Cly, Shamas Colony, MFM, Seham, Chakra, Range Road, Mohan Pura feeders. Similarly, in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: MOHRA NAGIAL, Walayat Compelx, MORGAH, Mehboob Shaheed, Dhok Noor, ROSE LANE, Gulshanabad, Defence Road, Humayun Road-I, Askari-14, New GHQ, BANK ROAD, TIPU ROAD, BOSTAN KHAN, N.P.F-I, HUMAK, JHANDA, Ex-Lawyer Colony D, TULSA ROAD, KALYAL, HAYAL, QURESHI ABAD, CANTT, PARYAL, JAPAN ROAD, Kahuta City, T.H.Q, KRL Colony, Fazal Ahmed Shaheed, Sep Ibrar Hussain, GHUMTI, NEW KALYAM, KURNB KASWAL, SYED KASRAN, MAHOOTA, Askari-7, Dhoke Farman, G.H.Q, City Centre, FAUJI FERTILZER CO, PAKISTAN RAILWAY, CMH FLATS, Shahpur, ADYALA feeders.
In Attock Circle power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Khan Abad Feeder, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Ghazi Kohli, Kala Khan, Faisal Hills-1, Faisal Hills-2, Wapda Town, AWT-IV, Lala Rukh, Khan Abad, Small Industrial Estate, Munir Abad, Ahmed Nagar, Hussainabad, HAJI SHAH, Sirka (D/C), Shadi Khan (D/C), Darya Sharif (D/C), NARTOPA, Peoples Colony.–**APP**

Pakistan needs resilient, affordable housing

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Programme Manager (DPM) UN-Habitat Pakistan Hamid Mumtaz Khan has said that Pakistan needs affordable, adequate and climate-resilient housing solutions to address its growing housing deficit, rapid urbanization and recurring natural disasters.
In an interview with APP, he said that rapid and often unplanned urbanization was contributing to the expansion of informal settlements and slums, while recurring disasters had further intensified the country's housing challenges, with millions of houses affected since the 2005 earthquake.
Addressing the growing housing crisis required a comprehensive approach that focused not only on increasing housing supply but also on ensuring affordability, adequate basic services and the resilience of existing and future homes, he added. Khan emphasized the need for affordable and incremental housing solutions, access to serviced land, appropriate financing mechanisms and the upgrading of existing informal settlements through meaningful community participation. He said adequate housing must provide access to safe drinking water, sanitation, essential services and a secure living environment, particularly for low-income communities. Highlighting the importance of disaster-resilient construction, he said resilience should be incorporated into housing planning, design and construction to protect communities against earthquakes, floods and the growing impacts of climate change. He stressed that new housing developments should comply with appropriate building standards, while vulnerable existing structures could be strengthened through cost-effective retrofitting.
Climate-responsive designs, energy-efficient construction, improved drainage, rainwater management and the use of appropriate building materials could further enhance the resilience of communities to floods and rising temperatures, he added. Referring to the National Housing Policy, Khan said it provided an important framework for addressing housing affordability, supply constraints, informal settlements, access to basic services and disaster resilience. However, he noted that effective implementation of the policy would require coordinated efforts by federal, provincial and local governments, the private sector, communities and development partners. Explaining UN-Habitat's role in Pakistan, he said the organization worked closely with government institutions and communities to promote adequate, affordable, resilient and sustainable housing.
Its initiatives included upgrading informal settlements, improving water and sanitation services, strengthening drainage and solid waste management, promoting rainwater conservation and enhancing building safety through measures such as seismic retrofitting.–**DNA**

AIOU and Turkish Institute organize art workshop

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in collaboration with the Yunus Emre Institute of Turkiye has organized a workshop on Ebru, a traditional Turkish art form to equip women with practical skills and create opportunities for their economic empowerment. A total of 30 women participated in the workshop and received hands-on training in this unique art. The workshop was organized by the university's Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange in collaboration with the Yunus Emre Institute. The initiative aimed to enhance women's creative abilities and enable them to use this art form for professional activities and income generation. Addressing the inaugural session, Country Director of the Yunus Emre Institute, Eren Miyasoglu said that traditional arts were an important part of a nation's cultural heritage and creative identity.
He noted that such training programmes helped strengthen ties between different cultures while providing participants with opportunities to learn new skills.
He also emphasized the importance of initiatives that offered practical training to women and promoted traditional arts. Director of the Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange Dr Zahid Majeed said that in line with the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood the university was equipping students with practical skills to prepare them for new opportunities at both local and international levels. He added that such programmes helped women acquire skills, utilize their abilities and move towards economic independence. Turkish Ebru artist Dogan Cagan provided participants with hands-on training in various Ebru art techniques. He also highlighted the potential of this art form as a means of creative expression and a source of economic opportunities. –**DNA**

PM&DC clears 99pc of registration applications

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has successfully processed and issued 302,587 out of 304,819 registration applications received up to October 2026, clearing nearly 99 per cent of the total cases.
According to official sources, the achievement reflects the council's efforts to improve registration services, expedite application processing and facilitate doctors and dental professionals through its digital registration system.
They said under the leadership of PM&DC President Prof Dr Rizwan Taj, the council has introduced improved workflow management, regular monitoring and administrative coordination to ensure timely disposal of applications and address pending cases.
As per registration portal statistics, the council issued 90,683 renewal-of-full-licence applications out of 90,837 received, while 54,044 full licences were issued against 54,620 applications. Similarly, 51,702 provisional licences were issued out of 51,736 applications, while 40,619 Good Standing Certificates were issued against 40,630 applications received. The council also processed 17,158 postgraduate qualification registration applications out of 17,203 and issued 11,065 faculty registrations against 11,308 applications. Furthermore, 7,343 applications for foreign basic provisional licences for Pakistani nationals were issued out of 7,347 received.–**APP**

WHO supports special polio campaign

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting a special polio vaccination campaign in high-risk areas of Peshawar and Khyber districts to protect more than 900,000 children up to 10 years of age against the crippling disease. Under the campaign, polio drops and a booster dose of the injectable polio vaccine are being administered in 78 high-risk union councils across the two districts. WHO teams are supporting the vaccination drive to strengthen immunity among children and prevent the transmission of poliovirus in areas vulnerable to the disease. The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to reach every eligible child with life-saving vaccines and accelerate Pakistan's progress towards polio eradication.–**APP**



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Canada Breaks Free from America's Security Yoke

Qamar Bashir

IT took generations to build one of the world's most remarkable relationships between two neighboring countries. It took less than two years of Donald Trump's second presidency to shake its foundations. Canada, which considered the United States its most dependable friend, economic partner and security guarantor, suddenly discovered that its greatest strategic strength—its extraordinary dependence on America—could also become its greatest vulnerability. On October 29, 2026, Prime Minister Mark Carney unveiled Canada's first comprehensive national security strategy in more than twenty years, The Plan for a Stronger Canada: National Security for Canadians. This was no routine bureaucratic exercise. It represented a fundamental reassessment of Canada's sovereignty, economic security, military preparedness and intelligence capabilities in an international environment where even longstanding alliances could no longer be taken for granted.

For generations, Canada and the United States represented an extraordinary model of peaceful coexistence. Their relationship extended beyond geography into culture, language, commerce, industry, energy, technology and collective defense. Their economies became so deeply integrated that automobile components crossed their shared border repeatedly before becoming finished products. Electricity, natural gas, petroleum, steel, aluminum, agricultural commodities and industrial materials flowed through interconnected networks serving both nations. Canada consequently had powerful reasons to trust its southern neighbor. American military superiority, NATO commitments and the North American Aerospace Defense Command provided a formidable security umbrella. Canada maintained its own armed forces and intelligence institutions, but its defense planning operated within an exceptionally close partnership with Washington. It never seriously contemplated matching American military strength, because cooperation appeared more rational than strategic competition.

Then came Donald Trump's second presidency, beginning in January 2025. His repeated suggestions that Canada should become America's fifty-first state, combined with confrontational trade policies and public pressure on Canadian leaders,fundamentally disturbed the assumptions underpinning this relationship. What Washington sometimes presented as political rhetoric was interpreted by many Canadians as an affront to their national dignity, independence and sovereignty. Tariffs intensified the confrontation. Canadian industries that had built their production systems around predictable access to American markets suddenly faced uncertainty. Steel manufacturers, aluminum producers, automobile companies and agricultural exporters confronted the possibility that economic interdependence could be transformed into political leverage. The relationship that once guaranteed prosperity was increasingly perceived as exposing Canada to decisions made beyond its control.

Canada's response under Carney has been to pursue greater strategic autonomy. Rather than accept that its economic and diplomatic options must remain confined by Washington's preferences, Ottawa has emphasized diversifying commercial partnerships with Europe, Asia, the Middle East and other regions. The objective is not necessarily to abandon America,but to ensure that disagreement with America cannot paralyze Canada. The new security strategy makes this transformation unmistakable. It places economic security at the foundation of national security and identifies eight strategic sectors: emerging technologies, critical minerals, defense, energy, transportation, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, food security, and financial systems. Canada intends to protect domestic industrial capabilities, strengthen supply chains and reduce vulnerabilities arising from excessive external dependence. Sovereignty, in this framework, is no longer merely a constitutional principle. It is an economic and technological necessity.

The military dimension is equally significant. Canada plans to increase defense expenditure from the NATO benchmark of two percent of GDP in 2025–2026 toward the alliance's five-percent defense investment commitment by 2035. Its armed forces will prioritize defending Canadian territory, especially the Arctic, while developing capabilities to respond to threats extending from conventional warfare to cyberattacks, space-based operations and hybrid conflict.

Scientific intelligence has advanced astonishingly, but political wisdom has not always kept pace. The capacity to develop extraordinary machines does not automatically produce the moral maturity required to respect sovereignty, honor commitments or resolve disagreements peacefully. A civilization capable of reaching beyond Earth should also possess the wisdom to prevent powerful nations from treating weaker neighbors as subordinate territories. Canada's awakening therefore offers a lesson in the distinction between friendship and dependence. Friendship flourishes when both parties retain dignity, independence and freedom of choice. Dependence becomes dangerous when one partner possesses sufficient economic or military leverage to dictate the other's decisions. Genuine alliances should strengthen sovereignty rather than require its surrender. Carney's strategy does not advocate abandoning the United States. It explicitly seeks continued cooperation based upon mutual respect and shared responsibility. That distinction is essential. Strategic autonomy does not require isolation, hostility or military competition with every powerful neighbor. It requires sufficient domestic strength, diversified partnerships and independent institutions to ensure that cooperation remains voluntary rather than compulsory.

The writing on the wall is unmistakable. Nations that neglect their economic resilience, defense preparedness, technological capabilities and diplomatic independence may eventually discover that their most trusted relationships cannot protect them against sudden political upheaval. Canada's new security strategy is a response to that vulnerability,and its implementation will test whether sovereignty can be strengthened without destroying the benefits of partnership. The ultimate tragedy would be for humanity to master artificial intelligence while remaining captive to the ancient instinct that might make right. Canada's experience reminds the world that friendship must rest upon equality, alliances upon trust, and security upon national capability. A nation that cannot stand on its own feet can never be entirely certain that the hand supporting it will not one day become the hand threatening it.

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



A Challenge for Pakistan's Transit Trade

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



A journey of around 20 days may make this option attractive for certain categories of cargo, although the actual advantage will depend on freight charges, border procedures, handling costs and the reliability of future services. A single shipment is not enough to establish whether the route will become a regular alternative on a large scale. Its long-term significance will depend on whether similar trains operate consistently and whether the service can accommodate growing volumes of trade

A CHALLENGE for Pakistan's Transit Trade: A direct freight train carrying industrial goods from China has reached Afghanistan through Central Asia, highlighting the changing pattern of regional trade and raising questions about Pakistan's role as a transit route for its landlocked neighbour. The train departed from China's Shandong province, crossed the Khorgos border crossing into Kazakhstan, travelled through Uzbekistan and arrived at Afghanistan's Hairatan dry port after a journey of around 20 days. The shipment, reportedly worth about $1.2 million, includes textiles, chemicals, tools and construction machinery. The development offers Afghanistan another route for importing goods from China. It also presents a challenge for Pakistan, which has long benefited from handling Afghan-bound cargo through Karachi's port and transporting it by road to Peshawar and onward across the Torkham border.

For years, this route formed an important part of Pakistan's transit trade. Goods arriving at Karachi were moved through the country's road network before entering Afghanistan. The process generated revenue from port operations, transport, warehousing, customs-related services and other commercial activities. It also gave Pakistan an opportunity to benefit from its geographical position between the Arabian Sea and Afghanistan. The emergence of a direct rail connection through Central Asia could gradually reduce Afghanistan's dependence on this traditional route, particularly if rail transport proves competitive in terms of cost, reliability and delivery time.

For a landlocked country such as Afghanistan, access to efficient trade corridors is essential. Imports are needed not only to meet consumer demand but also to supply factories, construction projects and other economic activities. The availability of alternative routes can help traders reduce their dependence on a single transit corridor and negotiate more favourable transport arrangements. The new rail movement demonstrates the potential of existing railway links between China and Central Asia. Instead of sending goods by sea to Karachi and then moving them overland through Pakistan, traders can use a northern route through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to reach Afghanistan.

A journey of around 20 days may make this option attractive for certain categories of cargo, although the actual advantage will depend on freight charges, border procedures, handling costs and the reliability of future services. A single shipment is not enough to establish whether the route will become a regular alternative on a large scale. Its long-term significance will depend on whether similar trains operate consistently and whether the service can accommodate growing volumes of trade. Rail transport also has its limitations. Not every product is suited to the same route, and traders must consider the availability of railway facilities, the cost of transferring goods between transport systems and the time required for customs clearance. Sea transport through Karachi may remain competitive for many shipments, particularly where large volumes and established supply chains make it economical. Nevertheless, the new connection gives Afghan importers another option. In regional trade, the availability of alternatives can itself change bargaining power, even before a new route handles a substantial share of total cargo.

The route through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan reflects the growing importance of Central Asia in regional connectivity. Railway links can help these countries expand transit services, develop logistics facilities and earn revenue from the movement of goods across their territories.

For Afghanistan, stronger links with Central Asia could diversify its trade and reduce the risks associated with relying too heavily on one corridor. For China, overland connections provide another means of reaching regional markets and strengthening commercial ties with neighbouring countries. The benefits, however, are not automatic. Reliable infrastructure, predictable border procedures, coordination between customs authorities and stable commercial arrangements are necessary if such routes are to attract regular business. Delays at borders or high handling charges can undermine the advantages of rail transport. The economic value of the new corridor will therefore depend on more than the arrival of a single train. Regular services, transparent tariffs and efficient movement across national borders will determine whether it becomes a significant channel for trade.

For Pakistan, the development should be a reason to reassess its transit trade policy. The country's geographical position has long offered an advantage, but location alone cannot guarantee continued business. Traders will choose routes according to cost, speed, reliability and ease of doing business. Pakistan has much to gain from retaining its position as a major trade gateway for Afghanistan and the wider region. Karachi remains an important port, while the country's transport network provides access to Afghan markets. But these advantages need to be supported by efficient port operations, modern logistics, streamlined customs procedures and fewer delays at border crossings. If moving goods through Pakistan becomes expensive or unpredictable, importers will have stronger reasons to consider alternatives. The new rail route is a reminder that commercial decisions are shaped by practical considerations rather than geography alone. Pakistan can respond by reducing the time required to clear transit cargo, improving coordination between ports and transport operators, and making border procedures more transparent. Better roads, warehousing and freight services would also help keep the country's transit corridor competitive. More consistent trade arrangements with Afghanistan could further strengthen confidence among businesses that depend on cross-border commerce.

The direct train from China should not be interpreted as proof that Pakistan is about to lose its position in Afghan trade. The scale of any shift will depend on future freight volumes, costs and the frequency of rail services. Yet it signals that regional trade routes are changing and that Pakistan cannot take its existing advantages for granted. The choice facing Pakistan is straightforward: improve the efficiency of its transit system or risk losing business to routes that offer traders better terms. As China and Central Asian countries strengthen their commercial links with Afghanistan, Pakistan will need to turn its geographical advantage into a practical economic benefit. In an increasingly connected region, transit trade is not secured by location alone. It must be earned through reliable services, competitive costs and policies that allow commerce to move with minimum delay.

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Pak Navy building partnerships across maritime regions

Fawad Hassan

This diversity is one of AMAN's principal strengths. Navies bring experience shaped by different coastlines, shipping patterns, security challenges and resources. Bringing those perspectives together helps participants examine familiar problems from unfamiliar angles. A lesson drawn from one maritime region may offer a useful starting point for addressing a challenge elsewhere. The exercise also provides room for professional engagement among countries whose broader strategic outlooks may differ. Protecting shipping, responding to distress and addressing maritime crime create...

A SHIP in distress cannot wait for nations to resolve their differences. Nor do piracy, trafficking or disruptions to maritime trade remain confined to the waters where they originate. At sea, geography creates shared interests, and emergencies test the strength of relationships built beforehand. This reality gives Pakistan Navy's Exercise AMAN its enduring relevance: maritime cooperation must be cultivated before it is needed. Commencing on 27 January 2027, the tenth edition of AMAN will mark twenty years since Pakistan Navy launched the initiative in 2007. The anniversary invites reflection on how a multinational naval exercise has developed into a sustained platform for engagement across maritime regions. Under the motto "Together for Peace," AMAN has brought diverse navies into a common professional setting, providing opportunities to build confidence through dialogue and practical cooperation.

Its founding purpose remains compelling. The oceans sustain trade, energy supplies and livelihoods, yet securing them exceeds the capacity of any single navy. Maritime forces operate with different resources, procedures and national priorities. Working effectively together requires familiarity that cannot be improvised during a crisis. AMAN creates space to develop that familiarity through repeated contact, shared planning and coordinated activity. The exercise's expanding participation illustrates its growing international reach. From 28 countries in 2007, representation increased to 50 in 2023, while the ninth edition in February 2025 brought together over 60 countries through ships, aircraft, specialist teams and observers. These different forms of participation allow a broad range of maritime nations to contribute, exchange experience and develop professional connections.

Numbers, however, tell only part of the story. The more consequential measure is the willingness of countries to return and deepen their engagement. Trust develops gradually: through a planning discussion, a procedure understood, or a training serial completed successfully. Across successive editions, such encounters can turn initial acquaintance into dependable working relationships. AMAN's continuity gives this process an institutional foundation. Pakistan's location lends particular significance to its role as host. Situated on the Arabian Sea, close to the approaches to the Gulf, the country occupies an important position within the wider Indian Ocean maritime environment. Through AMAN, Pakistan Navy connects concerns arising in these waters with experience from other maritime regions. Historical participation from the Gulf, Europe, East Asia and North America has widened the exchange of operational knowledge and regional perspectives.

This diversity is one of AMAN's principal strengths. Navies bring experience shaped by different coastlines, shipping patterns, security challenges and resources. Bringing those perspectives together helps participants examine familiar problems from unfamiliar angles. A lesson drawn from one maritime region may offer a useful starting point for addressing a challenge elsewhere. The exercise also provides room for professional engagement among countries whose broader strategic outlooks may differ. Protecting shipping, responding to distress and addressing maritime crime create specific areas of shared interest. Cooperation on these tasks can sustain communication and build confidence without requiring agreement on every international issue. In a divided strategic environment, maintaining such avenues of engagement has considerable value. AMAN gives these relationships practical substance through its harbour and sea phases. Discussions, demonstrations and planning ashore prepare participants for coordinated activities at sea, including manoeuvres, maritime security drills and search-and-rescue exercises. This progression allows ideas discussed around a table to be tested under operational conditions, where clarity of communication and understanding of procedures become essential.

For the personnel involved, the benefits can outlast the exercise. Officers who have planned together gain insight into one another's methods. Crews that have operated alongside foreign ships acquire experience in coordination across different systems and practices. During a subsequent encounter or emergency, that familiarity may help reduce uncertainty and support a more effective response. Pakistan Navy expanded the scope of this engagement through the inaugural AMAN Dialogue in 2025. By bringing naval and coastguard leaders together with other stakeholders, it complemented practical training with discussion of regional and global maritime concerns. The connection matters: operational experience can inform strategic debate, while dialogue can help identify priorities for future cooperation. As maritime challenges evolve, AMAN's relevance will depend on adapting while preserving its clear purpose. Cyber risks, emerging technologies and environmental pressures add new demands to established security responsibilities. Professional exchanges between editions, focused follow-up and the application of lessons learned could further strengthen the partnerships developed during the exercise.

For Pakistan Navy, the twentieth anniversary represents both an achievement and a responsibility. Sustaining a platform of this breadth requires consistent effort, credible organization and attention to the interests of participating nations. Its future success will rest on the quality of engagement and the practical value partners derive from it. When the tenth edition convenes in January 2027, its significance will extend beyond the ships assembled and flags displayed. It will lie in the relationships renewed, knowledge exchanged and capacity for cooperation strengthened. Two decades after its inception, AMAN continues to give practical expression to a necessary idea: nations that depend on the same seas have a shared interest in keeping them secure.

Islamabad POST
Monday, November 02, 2026

Briefs

Taliban cannot absorb...

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terrorist groups operating against Pakistan were acting as Indian proxies. Referring to Pakistan's previous conflict with India, he said New Delhi had sent "dozens and dozens" of sophisticated drones, which Pakistan successfully countered. "We turned them into dust everywhere," he said, adding that Pakistan had since moved further ahead in terms of its operational readiness. The ISPR DG also said that the Afghan Taliban regime is harbouring terrorist leaders and allowing armed groups to operate from Afghan soil against Pakistan. He said Islamabad was not seeking Afghanistan's isolation and remained engaged with Kabul, but expected the Afghan Taliban to "act like a state" and prevent terrorism from its territory. "We only ask you that don't support terrorism inside Pakistan. Stop harbouring the terrorist leaders," he said. The spokesperson said that terrorist formations were coming from Afghanistan and receiving weapons from there, while Afghan citizens and even personnel of the Taliban regime had been found among groups involved in attacks against Pakistan. "If you do it, then there will be a cost," he warned. "And we are capable of imposing that cost and we have a clear strategy how to impose that cost." He also said that Afghanistan are providing an environment where multiple militant organisations were able to operate, while rejecting allegations that Pakistan was hosting or coordinating anti-Taliban elements.

Pak becomes chair of...

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He added that such an approach would enable "developing and low-income economies to move beyond crisis management towards sustainable growth". Secondly, he added that under its chairmanship, Pakistan will advocate for "more equitable and fair governance, meaningful participation in decision-making and greater responsiveness of the Bretton Woods institutions to the evolving needs and realities of their members". Thirdly, the finance minister said affordable and timely development financing, sustainable debt solutions, stronger global financial safety nets, climate resilience and greater mobilisation of public and private capital would be prioritised. "Our task is to ensure that the immense potential of developing economies is not constrained by an international financial architecture that has yet to fully adapt to a changing world," Aurangzeb was quoted as saying.

'KP will to have first righty to...

FROM PAGE 01

the province itself and then Pakistan. His assertions follow allegations by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman that the imposition of governor's rule and emergency in KP was linked to the government's motive to take control of its resources. He had also questioned the government's position on mineral resources during a National Assembly session earlier this week, when he had criticised the Centre over emergency and governor's rule in KP. Meanwhile, claims have been circulating on social media that KP's minerals would be given or sold to the US. This followed a statement made by Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker during an interview with The Centrum Media on Sept 30, expressing US interest in Pakistan's mineral resources. Kundi, without making any specific mention, said in his address that several reports may be circulating in the media and on social media, but his priority remained the protection of the people of KP.

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani was pride of Peshawar

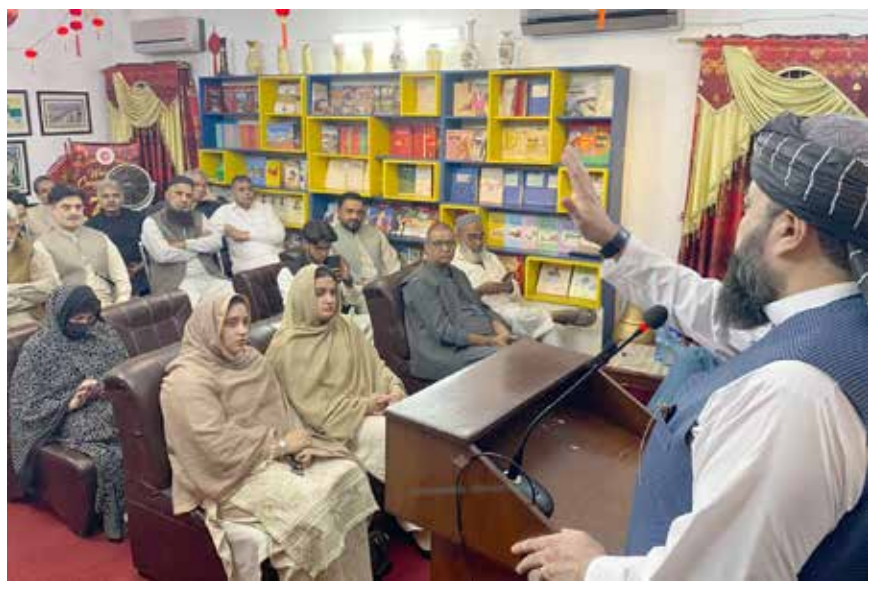
The provincial adviser said Peshawar had produced numerous distinguished personalities whose abilities and contributions brought honour to both the city and the country

DNA

PESHAWAR: Memorial ceremony at China Window marks his first death anniversary, honouring his contributions to journalism, banking, literature and social causes

PESHAWAR: Provincial Adviser for Religious and Minority Affairs and prominent religious scholar Maulana Tayyab Qureshi has said that the late Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani made valuable contributions to strengthening Pakistan-China friendship, developing the banking sector and promoting journalistic and social activities. He described Gilani as a distinguished banker, journalist and sincere advocate of Pakistan-China friendship whose passing has left a void that will be felt for years to come. He was addressing a memorial ceremony held at China Window, the Chinese cultural and information centre in Peshawar, on Gilani's first death anniversary. A large number of figures from journalism, banking, education, literature and social organisations attended the gathering to pay tribute to his life, personality and services.

Maulana Qureshi said Gilani's life was marked by positive and constructive contributions across several fields. He worked with sincerity and consistency to strengthen Pakistan-China friendship, while his services to the Bank of Khyber remain unforgettable. His personality, he added, combined professional competence, intellectual and literary interests, and a strong commitment to society. He said Gilani's father,



Syed Hassan Gilani, was among Pakistan's renowned journalists. Gilani successfully carried forward his father's distinguished journalistic traditions while establishing his own identity through hard work and ability. His contributions continued a family legacy that placed great value on knowledge, writing and service to society.

The provincial adviser said Peshawar had produced numerous distinguished personalities whose abilities and contributions brought honour to both the city and the country. He regretted, however, that younger generations were often left unfamiliar with their achievements and struggles after their passing. Keeping their memories alive and passing on knowledge of their contributions, he stressed, was a shared responsibility. Commending China Window's organisers, Maulana Qureshi described the ceremony honouring Gilani—a journalist, advocate of Pakistan-China friendship and former secretary of Pak-China Friendship—as a valuable initiative. Such gatherings, he said, do more than revive memories: they give young people an opportunity to learn about the lives, struggles and social contributions of those who came before them.

Others who addressed the ceremony included Fida Muhammad Khan Sarhadi and Tanveer Ahmad Nisar, founding members of literary and social organisations; senior journalists Zahir Shah Sherazi, Shams Mohmand and Sahibzada Naseemur Rehman; banker Rehmanullah Khattak; China Window Administrator Amjad Aziz Malik; Waqar Ahmad Awan; and University of Peshawar Additional Registrar Akhtar Amin. Highlighting different aspects of Gilani's work, the speakers said that alongside promoting Pakistan-China friendship, he played a notable role in organising literary and social events. His activities brought people from different walks of life together and created opportunities for constructive dialogue.

They said his personality and achievements could not be confined to a single field. Banking defined his professional career, journalism formed part of his family and intellectual heritage, and Pakistan-China friendship represented a distinguished chapter of his service to society. In each field, he demonstrated his commitment through practical contributions. The speakers said the best way to honour figures such as Gilani was to preserve the record of their services, highlight their positive influence and carry forward the traditions of service and friendship to which they devoted their lives. The ceremony marking his first death anniversary, they added, was both a recognition of his contributions and a renewed commitment to ensuring that the memory and legacy of Peshawar's distinguished sons remain alive for future generations.

Barca hammer Alaves to retain Liga top spot

> "They make the difference, Lamine and Raphinha, with them we will achieve big things"

BARCELONA: Raphinha and Lamine Yamal each struck twice as Barcelona thrashed Alaves 6-1 on Saturday to reclaim their La Liga lead and get back on track after two damaging defeats. Earlier Atletico Madrid, second, earned a solid 2-0 win at Levante, but Barca moved back two points clear of the Rojiblancos by routing the Basque visitors at Camp Nou.

Still stinging after a Champions League defeat by Paris Saint-Germain and then last weekend's La Liga home Clasico loss against rivals Real Madrid, Hansi Flick's side found their groove once more.

Raphinha netted twice in the first half, either side of a Fermin Lopez strike, and Yamal found the net just before the interval. Teenage winger Yamal netted again midway through the second half and substitute Anthony Gordon chipped home Barca's sixth, before Mariano Diaz pulled one back for Alaves. "It was a hard week for us, there was no better place than Camp Nou in front of our fans (to bounce back)," Lopez told Movistar. "They make the difference, Lamine and Raphinha, with them we will achieve big things." There was a minute's silence at the start of each of the day's matches in memory of the 69 victims of the train crash in the province of Toledo that rocked Spain this week.

Flick lined up with Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong playing at center-back and youngster Brian Farinas making his first start at right-back, amid a spate of defensive injuries. It did not hamper the champions.

Barcelona moved ahead in the eighth minute, with La Liga's top scorer Raphinha continuing his red-hot form after Lopez teed him up.

Lopez doubled Barcelona's lead himself in the 23rd minute. Yamal slipped the midfielder in and, from a tight angle, he smashed the ball across goal and fortuitously in at the far post, seemingly intending to cross it. Karim Adeyemi and Yamal both missed glorious chances from close range to expand on Barca's lead, with Raphinha showing the duo how to do it as he bagged his 15th league goal.

Lopez sent the forward through on goal and Raphinha produced a lethal finish across Antonio Sivera. Perhaps frustrated by his miss, Yamal smashed home the fourth with an instinctive low strike from the edge of the box in first half stoppage time. Adeyemi blazed another presentable chance over the crossbar early in the second half after Lopez unselfishly set him up. Yamal got Barca's fifth with a neat dink over the goalkeeper after substitute Gabriel Jesus played him through on goal. Gordon produced a similar finish for Barca's sixth and the only tarnish on their evening was former Real Madrid striker Diaz netting late on. – **APP**

Gwadar's first tuff tiles and pavers manufacturing unit inaugurated

DNA

GWADAR: Director General of the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), Moin ur Rehman Khan, formally inaugurated Gwadar's first tuff tiles and pavers manufacturing unit, "Zemal Crete," established by Zemal Builders, during a ceremony held here. Spread over three acres of land, the industrial facility has a production capacity of 18,000 tuff tiles per day. The establishment of the unit is expected to meet the growing local demand for construction materials and facilitate ongoing development activities in Gwadar. On the occasion, Haji Muhammad Sharif Zemal, owner of Zemal Builders and a prominent contractor, explained that the industrial unit had been established in response to the increasing demand for tuff tiles and pavers in Gwadar, with the objective of ensuring convenient and timely access to locally manufactured construction materials for various development projects. Speaking at the ceremony, GDA Director General Moin ur Rehman Khan welcomed the private sector's investment in Gwadar's industrial development, describing it as a positive step towards strengthening the city's construction industry and local economy. According to a Gwadar Pro's report he noted that previously, tuff tiles and other related construction materials had to be transported from Karachi, resulting in additional transportation costs.

CICG Releases Report on China's Poverty Alleviation Experience

ISLAMABAD: The CICG Centre for Europe and Asia (China Pictorial Publications) released a report examining international perspectives on China's poverty alleviation achievements, philosophy and experience during the 2026 China-South Asia Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development Cooperation. Qiao Zhenqi, Director of New Media Operations at the CICG Centre for Europe and Asia, formally launched the report, titled International Public Opinions on the Achievements, Philosophy, and Experience of China's Poverty Alleviation, Gwadar Pro reported. The report examines international perspectives on China's poverty alleviation efforts across four dimensions: achievements, institutional governance, underlying philosophy and development experience. Organized by CICG and Understanding China Forum (UCF), The event brought together Pakistani and Chinese officials, development experts and representatives of international organisations to discuss poverty reduction, inclusive development and opportunities for regional cooperation. – **APP**

Ton-up Fakhar, fifties from Minhas and Baig guide Pakistan to tri-series glory

Pakistan bounce back from 14-2 as left-handed opener leads chase with magnificent 127-run knock

LAHORE: Fakhar Zaman's explosive century, supported by half-centuries from Saad Baig and Arafat Minhas, guided Pakistan to a thrilling three-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the home ODI tri-series final at Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday. Chasing a challenging target of 326, Pakistan reached the finish line with seven wickets down and nine balls remaining, securing the title in front of their home crowd. Pakistan's pursuit began poorly as Dilshan Madushanka struck twice in his opening two overs, removing young opener Maaz Sadaqat for five and Babar Azam for a duck. The early dismissals left the hosts struggling at 14 runs. However, Saad Baig joined Fakhar Zaman at the crease, and the pair steadied the innings with an impressive 149-run partnership for the third wicket. Both batters registered half-centuries during the stand, putting Pakistan back on course. Maheesh Theekshana eventually ended the partnership in the 27th over, dismissing Baig for 74 off 75 balls. His innings included 11 boundaries and helped Pakistan reach 163-3. Fakhar continued to anchor the chase, adding 57 runs for the fourth wicket alongside all-rounder Salman Ali Agha. During the partnership, the left-handed opener completed his 12th ODI century. Madushanka finally brought Fakhar's outstanding innings to an end in the 34th over, bowling him for a match-high 127 from 99 deliveries. His knock featured 11 fours and six sixes. Agha departed two overs later after contributing 17 from 25 balls, leaving Pakistan at 230-5 after 36.5 overs. With the chase entering a crucial stage, young batters Hasan Nawaz and Arafat Minhas took responsibility, producing a vital 94-run partnership that brought Pakistan within reach of victory. Minhas led the charge with an attacking 61 off just 31 deliveries, hitting four sixes and three fours. His innings ended in the 48th over when Asitha Fernando dismissed him. Fernando struck again in the same over, removing Faheem Ashraf for a golden duck and reducing Pakistan to 324-7 in 47.5 overs. Captain Shaheen Shah Afridi then sealed the victory in style, smashing Madushanka for a six over square leg on the third delivery of the penultimate over. – **DNA**

Abubakar, Rubtsova clinch ITF J-30 Lahore singles, doubles crowns

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Abubakar Talha and Russia's Varvara Rubtsova claimed the boys' and girls' U-18 singles and doubles titles respectively as the ITF J-30 Lahore Ali Embroidery Mills International Junior Tennis Championship 2026 concluded at Aitchison College, marking the return of international junior tennis to the city after a gap of 25 years.

In an all-Pakistan boys' singles final, Abubakar overcame compatriot Hassan Usmani 7-6(7-5), 6-0, recovering from a closely contested opening set to dominate the second and secure the title. Hassan, meanwhile, reached his first international junior final, underlining the progress of Pakistan's emerging tennis talent. Abubakar added the boys' doubles trophy to his collection, partnering Hamza Roman to defeat Ahtesham Humayun and Amir Mazari 6-3, 6-2.

Russia's Rubtsova secured the girls' singles crown with a convincing 6-2, 6-2 victory over fellow Russian Stefaniila Vasilevskaia, completing an impressive campaign in Lahore. In the girls' doubles final, Rubtsova completed the brace of titles as she, partnering with Evelina Dzepa, defeated Daixi Hu and Bismel Zia 6-0, 6-0.

Ali Embroidery Mills Chief Executive Officer Tariq Zaman attended the concluding ceremony as chief guest. Among the distinguished guests were Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, former Punjab sports secretary Fazal-ur-Rehman, Col (R) Asif Dar, Aitchison College Director of Sports Sajjad Rasool, Haider Ismail from USA, Naseem Ahmed, and Said Hassan, along with players, officials and members of the tennis fraternity.

Organised by the Punjab Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA) with the support of Ali Embroidery Mills, the ITF J-30 event attracted more than 42 players from China, Kazakhstan, Australia, Russia, Bangladesh and other countries. The international participation provided Pakistani players with an opportunity to compete against foreign opponents, gain valuable match experience and earn ranking points.



PLTA Senior Executive Vice-President Rashid Malik, recipient of the Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, thanked the sponsors, institutions and officials whose support contributed to the successful staging of the championship. He particularly acknowledged Tariq Zaman for sponsoring the event and supporting the development of junior tennis in Pakistan. Malik also appreciated Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi for his leadership and support in bringing international junior tennis back to Lahore. He said the hosting of successive international tournaments, including ITF junior, Futures and women's events, was an encouraging development for Pakistan tennis and would help local players improve their standards and international rankings.

Ishaq Dar talks to Uzbek FM

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has assumed the Chairpersonship of the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) for 2026-2027. The two Ministers discussed the dates and preparations for the upcoming SCO CHS Summit 2027, as well as SCO calendar of activities. Exchanging views on regional developments, FM Saidov appreciated Pakistan's sustained efforts for promoting regional peace and security. Both Ministers exchanged greetings for the leadership of their respective countries and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations.

Trump says US can strike...

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accused Iran of repeatedly backing away from agreements. "They're going fine, but they're not very reliable. They make a deal and then they back out," he said, adding that Iran wanted an agreement but it remained to be seen whether it would follow through. Trump said the US had already crippled Iran's navy, air force and air defence systems and struck its nuclear facilities. He claimed one or two sites remained to be dealt with and could be targeted "in 10 minutes". The US president said Washington had no urgency to conclude negotiations, despite describing the talks as going well. Asked whether the US could resume attacks on Iran as early as the coming week, Trump dismissed the question as "stupid", adding that he would not disclose any plans for potential military action.

Iran warns new war could last...

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Britain's spying service, MI6, as a "hostile group" and declared the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force "terrorist organizations" in a retaliatory move against London's malicious actions against the Islamic Republic, IRNA reported on Sunday The Iranian Foreign Ministry announced the measures on Sunday, citing Britain's participation in the US-Israeli war against Iran and its decision to place the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) under the country's State Threats Act 2026. The ministry said the decisions were made under a resolution of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and in response to Britain's actions over the past year. Under the first measure, MI6, formally known as the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), has been designated a "hostile group" under Note 2 of Article 1 of Iran's Law on Intensifying Punishment for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile Countries against National Security and National Interests.

US acknowledges Pak...

FROM PAGE 01

"We obviously have heard those concerns on their part. We obviously don't want them to be targeted by terrorism," he added. Rubio's remarks came as Islamabad renewed its criticism of the Afghan Taliban regime over what it described as Kabul's failure to address terrorist activity originating from Afghan soil. In a statement on Saturday, Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting rejected remarks by Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, accusing the leadership of shifting blame to Islamabad while ignoring what it called the central issue undermining bilateral relations: terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. The ministry said Pakistan would not tolerate terrorist sanctuaries across the border and reserved the right to take all necessary measures under international law to eliminate threats to its national security. It described the Taliban regime's continued refusal to address terrorism as the principal obstacle to normal relations, saying Pakistan's security would not be held hostage to the regime's "inaction, evasions or misplaced priorities".

Briefs

Lebanese farmers brave danger to harvest their olives

ZIBQIN, Lebanon: In a field overlooking a lush valley in southern Lebanon, residents of the village of Zibqin balanced on branches picking their olives while Lebanese Army soldiers stood nearby.
Zibqin is adjacent to Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli troops have demolished dozens of villages, saying armed group Hezbollah had embedded itself in civilian infrastructure – a claim the group denies. Israeli shelling frequently strikes the valley below the olive groves despite a June ceasefire between the two sides. As Palestinians, Israeli rights groups and the UN report increased violence and olive thefts by Israeli settlers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Lebanese farmers also fear for their safety, illustrating how conflict is again upending the annual harvest. Despite the danger, Lebanese farmers are returning to fields they have tended for generations, determined to harvest a crop that is one of their main sources of income and nutrition. Ali Bzieh, a 65-year-old farmer from Zibqin, said he had no choice but to come to the fields. "This is my land, this is my livelihood, this is a harvest we wait for from one year to the next," he said, sitting under the branches of an olive tree. "We have an attachment to this land, to the plants, and to the crops – we don't leave them.–**APP**

Unexploded munitions, landmines kill 3 children in Syria

HAMA: A series of tragic explosions involving unexploded ordnance and landmines across Syria has left three children dead and six others injured.
In the northern Hama countryside, a cluster munition left behind by the ousted regime exploded in the town of Lataminah, killing a six-year-old child and injuring three others aged four and five. The children were playing in a home garden when the device detonated. Residents rushed them to a private hospital in Kafr Zita for emergency treatment.
According to Abdul Hamid Al-Qaddour, director of Al-Wisam Hospital, one of the injured children was later transferred to Hama Hospital with severe injuries, while the other two remain in stable condition.
The tragedy follows two other deadly explosive incidents in different regions.
Earlier on Friday, a landmine explosion in Khirbet Ghazaleh, Daraa province, killed one child and injured another. In a separate incident in Um Al-Keif village within the Tal Tamr area of western Hasakah countryside, another landmine blast killed one child and left two others injured.–**APP**

Fitch affirms Abu Dhabi at 'AA' with stable outlook

RIYADH: Fitch Ratings has affirmed Abu Dhabi's long-term issuer default ratings at "AA" with a stable outlook, citing the emirate's high gross domestic product per capita, very strong fiscal and external metrics, and low government debt.
The ratings agency said Abu Dhabi's government debt remains among the lowest of Fitch-rated sovereigns, while its sovereign net foreign assets rank among the highest. However, the rating is constrained by the emirate's heavy reliance on hydrocarbons, a relatively weak but improving economic policy framework, geopolitical risks and governance indicators that lag behind those of its peers, according to the agency. Abu Dhabi's economic expansion has been supported by growth in non-oil activities. The emirate's GDP grew 7.7 percent year on year in the third quarter of 2025 to 325.7 billion dirhams ($88.7 billion).–**APP**



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in their work during Kashmir Chowk Underpass project.

Call for stronger inclusive oriented global financial system

"The future of developing economies is not peripheral to the future of the global economy. It is central to it," the Finance Minister stated, highlighting the immense potential of emerging and developing nations as drivers of investment, innovation, entrepreneurship and global growth

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday assumed the Chairmanship of the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four (G-24), reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the collective voice of developing economies and advancing a more responsive, fair and development-oriented international financial system.
Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, described the Chairmanship as a profound responsibility, calling for renewed international cooperation, stronger multilateral institutions and reinforced global commitments to address climate shocks, development financing gaps and global economic fragmentation, said a press release.
"The future of developing economies is not peripheral to the future of the global economy. It is central to it," the Finance Minister stated, highlighting the immense potential of emerging and developing nations as drivers of investment, innovation, entrepreneurship and global growth.
Outlining Pakistan's agenda, Senator Aurangzeb identified three strategic priorities for its Chairmanship:
First, placing development at the centre of global economic policymaking. Macroeconomic stability must serve as a foundation for investment, productivity, employment and shared prosperity, enabling developing and low-income economies to move beyond crisis management towards sustainable growth. Second, strengthening multilateral frameworks for the collective benefit of members through more inclusive and representative institutions. Pakistan will advocate for more equitable and fair governance, meaningful participation in decision-making and greater responsiveness of the Bretton Woods institutions to the evolving needs and realities of their members. Third, advancing a development-oriented international financial architecture. Priorities will include affordable and timely development financing, sustainable debt solutions, stronger global financial safety nets, climate resilience and greater mobilisation of public and private capital. "Our task is to ensure that the immense potential of developing economies is not constrained by an international financial architecture that has yet to fully adapt to a changing world," Senator Aurangzeb emphasised. Drawing on Pakistan's own experience of economic stabilisation, reform and resilience, the Finance Minister underscored the importance of aligning financial stability with long-term development objectives, while ensuring that reforming economies have the necessary financing and policy space to pursue sustainable growth.
He reaffirmed that Pakistan's Chairmanship would be guided by the G-24's long-standing principles of consultation, consensus and collective advocacy, working closely with members across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, alongside the IMF, World Bank and other international partners, to translate shared priorities into practical outcomes.
Senator Aurangzeb also acknowledged Nigeria's leadership as outgoing Chair and expressed Pakistan's commitment to building on the Group's progress.
The Finance Minister stressed that the effectiveness of collective leadership must be judged by tangible development outcomes. "The true measure of our collective leadership will not simply be the strength of our voice, but the difference that voice makes," he stated.
He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing the G-24's mission "from collective voice to collective influence, and from collective influence to meaningful progress.–**DNA**

Regional coop vital to address climate-induced displacement

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday stressed the need for timely regional cooperation to address the growing threat of climate-induced displacement in South Asia.
According to a spokesperson, he said the threat was particularly serious in South Asia, where weak regional cooperation could hamper coordinated efforts to deal with the consequences of climate change. He warned that climate-induced displacement could become another source of regional instability unless countries prepared for the challenge collectively. He said cooperation in climate forecasting, disaster management and population displacement could help countries anticipate common challenges and develop effective responses. The real challenge was to ensure that people forced to leave their homes due to climate change could rebuild their lives with dignity and access to essential services. Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan must make climate mobility a permanent consideration in its development planning. Provincial and local governments needed reliable information about areas likely to be affected and the services required to support displaced populations. He emphasized that land-use policies, affordable housing, vocational training, education and healthcare facilities must be planned in line with changing population patterns. Referring to the growing climate crisis, he said sinking coastlines in Bangladesh and drought-hit districts in Pakistan reflected the mounting pressure on livelihoods across South Asia. Quoting the International Organization for Migration (IOM), he said around 40.5 million people could face displacement by 2050 due to climate-related changes, warning that several parts of South Asia could become increasingly difficult to inhabit. He said the warning deserved serious attention as large-scale displacement could further aggravate existing challenges, including poverty, overcrowded cities, unemployment and competition for limited resources.–**APP**

Newly elected SCCI President greeted

SIALKOT: Newly elected President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Khawar Hussain Spall, has received heartfelt congratulations from a delegation comprising media representatives and prominent business personalities. The delegation included Anwar Hussain Bajwa, Group Leader of the Working Journalists Group and correspondent for Express News; Sakhawat Mughal, President of the Working Journalists Electronic Media and correspondent for Hum News TV; Tahir Shahbaz Mughal, CEO of Ocean Surgical; and Mian Asif Anwar, a renowned industrialist and CEO of Mian Group of Poultry. During the meeting, the delegation extended its best wishes to Khawar Spall for his new responsibilities and expressed confidence in his leadership. The participants also reaffirmed their commitment to continuing their cooperation and support for the business community, particularly in addressing the issues faced by industrialists and safeguarding their rights.–**APP**

Syria's security inseparable from Gulf stability

MANAMA: Syria considers the security and stability of Gulf states an integral part of its own national security and will not remain on the sidelines in the face of aggression against its neighbors, Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani said on Saturday.
In an interview with Asharq News on the sidelines of the 22nd IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain, al-Shaibani said Damascus was holding high-level discussions with Gulf countries on political, economic, security and military cooperation, describing post-Assad Syria as a trusted regional partner. The dialogue, organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies from Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, brings together delegations from more than 50 countries, including over 40 ministers and senior military commanders, as well as leaders of international organizations. "We will not stand by as a spectator in the face of any aggression against the Gulf states," Al-Shaibani said, adding that a stable Syria was essential to broader regional stability. The minister confirmed discussions on Syria's possible integration into a regional security and defense architecture with Gulf partners, including consultations on the proposed Makkah Pact or equivalent collective-security arrangements.
He said Syria stood with Gulf states and Jordan against aggression and strongly condemned missile and drone attacks, stressing that its regional policy was based on international law, respect for sovereignty and cooperation with neighboring countries.
"Geography is destiny, and integration is a choice," he said, describing Syria as a potential bridge for prosperity and economic cooperation rather than a platform for threatening its neighbors.Al-Shaibani also addressed recent Israeli strikes in the Daraa countryside, saying intensive communications with Jordanian officials had helped contain the situation. He said Jordan's leadership understood the need to close the chapter while safeguarding Syrian rights and preventing similar incidents from recurring.
"Relations between Syria and Jordan are far too deep to be compromised by temporary friction," he said, expressing confidence that the two countries could overcome the recent tensions. On border arrangements, he said discussions were focused on modernizing and refining existing coordination mechanisms rather than negotiating an entirely new agreement. He stressed that cooperation must respect the sovereignty of both countries and ensure effective joint border control.
Speaking earlier at a plenary session on the foundations of regional security, Al-Shaibani described Syria's decision to join the international coalition against Daesh as a historic step. He said Damascus had turned the page on the legacy of the ousted regime and was working to establish stability, restore state institutions and confront cross-border crime.
Arms, he said, derived their legitimacy exclusively from the state, adding that Syria wanted to share its experience in addressing militias and weapons outside government control, which he described as threats to regional security.
He called for greater intelligence-sharing and operational coordination to combat cross-border smuggling networks, warning that actions taken outside agreed coordination mechanisms undermined trust among neighboring countries.–**APP**

Jam, Rajeh discuss expanding trade, agricultural coop

ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Rajeh Albugamy, called on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan at his office in Islamabad to discuss strengthening bilateral trade, economic cooperation and investment opportunities between the two brotherly countries.
Welcoming the Ambassador, Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's deep-rooted and historic relations with Saudi Arabia, highlighting the Kingdom's special significance as the custodian of the Haram. He said the Government of Pakistan had made sustained efforts over the past three years to further strengthen bilateral relations through enhanced government-to-government, business-to-business and people-to-people engagement, said a press release issued on Saturday. The Commerce Minister emphasized that the longstanding brotherly relationship offered considerable opportunities for greater economic integration, particularly in view of Saudi Arabia's economic diversification under Vision 2030 and Pakistan's production and industrial capabilities. He highlighted the potential for cooperation in scaling up production, improving product quality, adopting modern technologies and strengthening industrial competitiveness. He noted that collaboration in these areas could enable Pakistani businesses to better meet the requirements of the Saudi market while creating mutually beneficial economic opportunities. The Minister also underscored the importance of expanding Pakistan's export base and strengthening private-sector partnerships to translate the growing economic engagement into tangible trade outcomes.
During the meeting, the Saudi Ambassador reaffirmed the enduring bonds of brotherhood between the two countries and assured continued support for strengthening bilateral economic relations. He highlighted opportunities for enhanced regional connectivity and cooperation, particularly in the agriculture sector.
Both sides also discussed the Pakistan–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement and its early signing and implementation.
The Minister noted that the agreement would provide an important opportunity to enhance market access, expand bilateral trade and strengthen economic engagement.
The Saudi Ambassador expressed his commitment to maintaining close engagement with the Ministry of Commerce to facilitate greater economic cooperation and identify new avenues for mutually beneficial partnerships.
Both sides agreed to maintain regular coordination and follow-up engagement to advance bilateral trade, investment and agricultural cooperation, with a shared objective of translating their longstanding friendship into stronger economic ties.–**DNA**

UAE says hoping for breakthrough yet 'braced for the worst' in Iran-US war

MANAMA: The UAE is hoping for a breakthrough in negotiations between Iran and the United States while being prepared for the worst, a senior official said on Sunday, following threats of a resumption of the Middle East war.
"We're hoping that there is a diplomatic breakthrough," diplomatic adviser to the Emirati president Anwar Gargash said during a conference in Manama.
"It is not the interest of the region to go through another round ... But I think we're also, as we've shown before, braced for the worst."
Following a visit to Tehran this week by a Qatari delegation, Iran has dispatched envoys to the Gulf country to continue consultations as part of indirect negotiations with the US to end the war.
But US President Donald Trump reiterated his threats on Saturday, saying the United States still has to "take care of" one or two targets in Iran.
"We just can't allow Iran to take this region and the global economy hostage," US Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Donald Blome said at the Manama conference on Sunday.
"The hand of negotiation has been extended, and those channels have continued to be open and active at the same time," Blome said.
"We've been also prepared to go in another direction."
On Saturday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump has not made a decision about fresh strikes on Iran and that the US would be open to a diplomatic solution. The war began on February 28 with joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran, which retaliated by targeting, among others, Gulf countries allied with Washington.–**APP**

Qatari gas tanker struck in Gulf

DOHA: A Qatari tanker has been attacked with "unidentified objects" while transiting Gulf waters, the country's state news agency reported Sunday.
The attack on Friday evening struck a liquefied natural gas carrier, Al Mayeda, which belongs to the Qatar Gas Transport Company, Qatar News Agency said.
Since the Middle East war broke out in February, Iran has been targeting vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and wider Gulf in an effort to assert control over shipping.
It says ships must obtain its permission to transit.
In response, the US has been blockading Iranian ports.
None of the crew members onboard the vessel struck on Friday were injured and there was no environmental impact from the attack, the report said. The ship was in a "safe condition" and operational, the Qatari company was cited as saying. Qatar, a mediator in the war, has stepped up diplomatic efforts in recent days in an attempt to revive negotiations between the United States and Iran.–APP

Saudi non-oil growth accelerates to 1.9% in Q3

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's non-oil activities grew 1.9 percent year on year in the third quarter of 2026, accelerating from 0.8 percent in the previous three months, according to official flash estimates. The expansion helped cushion the wider economy's decline. Real gross domestic product fell 3.8 percent from the same period last year, after a 4.7 percent contraction in the second quarter, the General Authority for Statistics reported. The latest figures highlight the contrasting pressures on the Kingdom's economy, with a sharp contraction in oil activities weighing on overall growth while non-oil sectors continued to expand. The figures come amid wider regional economic disruption following US and Israeli strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, which triggered a regional conflict and disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital corridor for global oil and gas supplies. Oil activities declined 20.4 percent annually.–**APP**

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Qatari gas tanker stuck in Gulf

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Bolivia declares state of emergency

LA PAZ: Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz declared a state of emergency Saturday to free up resources for dealing with the impact of the El Nino weather phenomenon, wreaking havoc around the world.
The decree also calls for deploying more rescue teams in hard-hit areas as Bolivia grapples with both flooding and drought because of El Nino, Paz said in an address to the nation. "This will be a phenomenon that will have very severe impacts in terms of drought and floods, and we need the cooperation of all institutions," Paz said.
Drought is affecting 78,000 families in six of the country's nine departments and has led to the loss of more than 75,000 head of cattle, according to a government report this week. El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.
The United Nations warned this week that the current El Nino could have "unprecedented" strength that would bring havoc to Latin America, eastern and southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Among Bolivia's neighbors' Peru has seen increased temperatures and wildfires, which have already claimed the lives of at least 12 people. Chile has experienced the rainiest October ever recorded in Santiago, the capital. –**APP**

Serena Hotels celebrates 5 Years of Mehfil-e-Sukhan

Some of Pakistan's most celebrated poets gather for the fifth edition of Serena's annual mushaira; At its heart, cultural diplomacy is simply that: an invitation to sit together and share in something enduring," said Mr. Aziz Boolani, Global CEO of Serena Hotels



Saifullah Ansar / DNA

[ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels hosted the fifth edition of Mehfil-e-Sukhan on Saturday evening, bringing together some of Pakistan's most distinguished poets for its annual mushaira at the Islamabad Serena Hotel. Held under Serena's Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, the evening honoured one of the region's oldest literary traditions, and the enduring power of Urdu verse to bring people together across generations, regions and backgrounds.

Presided over by Abbas Naqvi and Shakeel Jazaib, the mehfil featured Kishwar Naheed, Iftikhar Arif, Anwar Shaoor, Abbas Tabish, Izhar ul Haq, Hamid Ateeq Sarwar, Haris Khaleeq, Ahmed Salman, Wasi Shah, Adnan Baig, Shakeel Jazib, Ashfaq Nasir, Saima Aftab, Rehman Faris, Zarnigar Abbas and Saba Uddin Hunzai. Spanning the classical and the contemporary, their readings reflected the range of Urdu poetry and its continuing ability to speak to the present.
"Poetry has always been a meeting place. For five years, Mehfil-e-Sukhan has opened Serena's doors to the poets who give voice to Pakistan, and to the audiences, from Pakistan and beyond, who come to listen. At its heart, cultural diplomacy is simply that: an invitation to sit together and share in something enduring," said Mr. Aziz Boolani, Global CEO of Serena Hotels.
Since its first edition in 2022, Mehfil-e-Sukhan has become a fixture of the capital's cultural calendar: a setting in which celebrated poets and appreciative audiences meet in the spirit of the traditional mushaira. Its fifth edition reaffirms Serena's commitment to keeping Urdu's literary heritage alive. Mehfil-e-Sukhan forms part of Serena's wider support for literature and the arts across Pakistan, including the Lahore Literary Festival and the Quetta Literary Festival, which give writers, poets and thinkers a platform to share ideas with wider audiences. Through its Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, Serena opens its spaces to Pakistan's artists, writers and thinkers, and to the communities, at home and abroad, who come to meet them. It reflects a belief that understanding between people often begins with shared culture, and that Pakistan's rich and plural heritage deserves to be celebrated, preserved and heard.

LPG twice the rate in open market

ISLAMABAD: As the government again notified an increase in the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for November, its price in the open market is twice as high as the official rate amid a shortage of LPG due to the US-Iran war. In a notification on Saturday, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) notified Rs294,075 per tonne for November compared to Rs279,341 in the previous month. Following the increase, the official retail rate of an 11.8 kg domestic cylinder of LPG is Rs3,470, up by Rs173. The official LPG rate is Rs294 per kilogramme.
The oil and gas regulator said that the LPG producer price was linked with Saudi Aramco-CP and the US dollar exchange rate. It added that compared to the previous month, Saudi Aramco-CP had increased by 6.47 per cent, while the average dollar exchange rate had slightly decreased by 0.12pc, resulting in an increase in the LPG consumer price by Rs14.73 per kg.
In the open market, LPG is selling for up to Rs630 per kg, while the company-operated franchises are charging up to Rs400 per kg, with many warning that the crisis would compound due to the gas shortage.
LPG Distributors Association of Pakistan Chairman Irfan Khokhar said that the situation was serious because of the Iran border closure. He said at least 70 per cent of LPG was imported from Iran, while only 30pc was locally produced. "The government has to make serious efforts to control market manipulations," Mr Khokhar added.
On the other hand, LPG marketing companies threatened to shut down their businesses from Nov 16 if the private sector was sidelined in the upcoming LPG policy. Pakistan LPG Marketers Association Chairman Ali Haider warned that they will observe a strike from Nov 16 if the government implemented the policy. He said the government should not reverse the deregulation of LPG, adding that the gas was in short supply due to the Iran border closure. – **APP**

US not behind Bolsonaro flight from Brazil

DNA

ATLANTA: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that Washington was not directly involved in Flavio Bolsonaro's arrangements to leave Brazil after his election loss.
President Donald Trump said that Bolsonaro could, however, stay in the United States "as long as he wants."
Bolsonaro, who lost his bid to be president in Sunday's run-off vote, arrived with his family in the US on Wednesday after a court ordered his passports to be seized amid multiple investigations against him.
"He had previously held a visa, and the president made a decision to allow him to enter the country," Rubio told a press conference in Atlanta, Georgia, where he hosted G20 foreign ministers for a two-day meeting.
Rubio added that "the US government was not involved directly" in arrangements Bolsonaro made to leave his country.
Following the vote, the 45-year-old bolted from Brazil via Argentina and Ecuador in a plane that some US media, including The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, reported was chartered by Jason Miller, an adviser to Trump.
The White House has not commented on the flight, but Trump has called the Brazilian election "disgraceful."

FBI says North Korea behind $6bn crypto theft from Binance

Binance resumes bitcoin withdrawals after covering bulk of stolen $6.3 billion

NEW YORK: The FBI accused North Korea of stealing more than $6 billion in virtual assets from the cryptocurrency exchange Binance in what is thought to be the biggest-ever crypto heist. The US law enforcement agency's statement came as Binance offered reassurances that it was covering the losses from the hacking attack, saying it has used company funds to buy tokens to replenish 90% of what was stolen.
Binance is the world's largest crypto exchange by daily trading volumes. News of the cyberattack caused the prices of most major cryptocurrencies to fall sharply on Friday.
The FBI confirmed earlier suspicions from private investigators and analysts that a North Korea-affiliated group called TraderTraitor was behind the hack. TraderTraitor is the same group blamed for a $1.5 billion theft from the Bybit platform in February last year. "The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is releasing information advising the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was responsible for the theft of more than $6 billion USD in virtual assets from cryptocurrency exchange Binance, on or about October 29, 2026," the statement said.
The FBI added that it had observed "TraderTraitor actors" converting stolen assets into Ethereum, and expected those assets to be laundered further by converting them using decentralised finance and instant swap services. It said it was urging private sector entities "to block transactions with or derived from addresses TraderTraitor actors are using to launder these stolen assets." US President Donald Trump, however, cast doubt on North Korea's involvement in the hack.
"I'm not concerned. We're learning about it. We don't know if it's North Korea," Trump told reporters at his residence in Florida late Saturday. The president often reflects with pride on summits he held with North Korean leader Kim Jong Binance resumed bitcoin withdrawals on Sunday and said others would follow in phases after covering 95% of the $6.3 billion in tokens stolen from its platform in the world's largest digital heist.
The heist, which analysts say may be the biggest financial robbery ever, adds to a string of crypto thefts. Last year, attackers stole $2.9 billion worth of cryptocurrency across nearly 150 attacks, according to researchers at TRM Labs.
Binance, founded in China, posted on its status page shortly after 0600 GMT that the planned withdrawals had begun. The first phase is to cover 15 cryptoassets including bitcoin, ether, XRP and dogecoin.– **DNA**

Pakistan Plans to privatise three DISCOs in first quarter of 2027

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is planning to privatise three power distribution companies (DISCOs) – Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) – in the first quarter of 2027, Prime Minister's Adviser on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission Muhammad Ali has said. In an interview, Muhammad Ali said that due diligence for the three companies was already underway, while potential investors had requested additional time to assess the complex transactions. He said the government had initially planned to hold bidding in December, but the process might be delayed slightly, with the target now set for the first quarter of next year.
The government has also started work on the privatisation of Hyderabad and Sukkur power distribution companies, with their transactions expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2027. Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Hazara distribution companies are also part of the government's privatisation programme, with a target to complete their process in the second half of 2027.
Muhammad Ali described power sector reform as a national security issue, saying high energy costs were undermining industrial competitiveness, exports and economic growth. He said Pakistan needed to reduce electricity tariffs and introduce competition in the power supply market to prevent consumers and industries from shifting away from the national grid. Referring to the experience of K-Electric, he acknowledged that investors had raised concerns about regulatory uncertainty, tariff revisions and the protection of long-term investments. He said the government was working on safeguards to address these concerns, including finalising investment plans and multi-year tariffs before bidding.
According to Muhammad Ali, DISCOs would be required to improve their performance through smart metering, technology adoption, reduction in electricity losses, better recovery, uninterrupted power supply and improved load management. He said investors would face penalties for failing to meet performance benchmarks, while improved efficiency and reduced losses would be rewarded. The benefits of improved performance would also be shared with consumers.
The Privatisation Commission has prepared a comprehensive reform paper covering tariff structures, investment plans, business activities and the introduction of a competitive electricity market. He said the government intended to share the reform proposals with the public by mid-November after consultations with relevant institutions, the Prime Minister and the Steering Committee.
The proposed reforms also aim to gradually move away from the uniform electricity tariff by introducing a competitive supplier system, while retaining a supplier of last resort for consumers unable to access competitive suppliers.
Muhammad Ali said investors would receive returns in Pakistani rupees rather than dollars, with returns linked to inflation and calculated under the capital asset pricing model. He stressed that investors must receive a fair return on their investments, but the government would also ensure that consumers benefited from improvements in efficiency.
On employees' concerns, he said the government would protect DISCO workers and provide a specific period during which investors would not be allowed to take adverse action against employees or change their employment terms. He added that employees would remain essential to operating the electricity distribution system even after privatisation. The adviser said the government was also examining the privatisation of Pakistan State Oil (PSO), Sui Southern Gas Company and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, while strategic activities of PSO could remain under government control.

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