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Jeffries poised to become first black speaker of the US

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New French envoy interacts with media at NPC



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ECC gives nod to a number of uplift projects



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Big blow to President Trump

Democrats retake control of Congress

White House official says Trump would resist "radical left" regardless of midterm election outcome; The Democratic wave underscored voters' deep frustration with Trump's stewardship of the economy and his decision to launch a war against Iran in February, which drove gas prices up sharply. In poll after poll, voters expressed anxiety about the cost of living and anger at the way Trump has handled the issue

NEWS DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: Democrats captured majorities in both the Senate and House on Tuesday, scoring sweeping victories that reached deep into Republican strongholds as tens of millions of voters delivered a scathing rebuke to President Donald Trump. The size and breadth of the Democratic wave were still coming into focus, but the party prevailed in states long thought to be out of reach, including conservative bastions like South Carolina, Texas and Iowa.

The Democratic wave underscored voters' deep frustration with Trump's stewardship of the economy and his decision to launch a war against Iran in February, which drove gas prices up sharply. In poll after poll, voters expressed anxiety about the cost of living and anger at the way Trump has handled the issue. In Kansas, Adam Hamilton, a megachurch pastor, became the first Democrat to win a Senate seat since the Great Depression nearly a century ago.

In Ohio, Democrat Sherrod Brown claimed a seat that belonged to Vice President JD Vance two years ago, while Texas Democratic state Representative James Talarico withstood a barrage of outside spending to defeat scandal-plagued Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton. Both Ohio and Texas voted for Trump by a double-digit margin in 2024.

In South Carolina, a state that Trump carried by nearly 18 points in 2024, pediatrician Annie Andrews triumphed over Republican Senator Darline Graham, who was appointed to the seat after the death of her brother, Senator Lindsey Graham. Trump elevated Paxton and Graham ahead of more established candidates despite clear liabilities. Paxton has been at the center of a litany of controversies, including his 2023

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Israel election commission rejects Netanyahu charges of fraud

DNA

TEL AVIV: Israeli electoral authorities on Wednesday rejected allegations promoted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of fraud by Arab parties, who could hold the key to removing him from power after a divisive vote. President Isaac Herzog will at noon (1000 GMT) officially receive the results of the October 27 election as he decides whether to give Netanyahu or his rival Gadi Eisenkot the first chance to form a government, with neither commanding enough votes alone. The Central Elections Committee said it had conducted an audit of 9,069 polling stations following complaints and was confident that the announced results "accurately reflect the will of the voters".

"All complaints submitted by political factions have been reviewed and there were no findings indicating harm to the integrity of the election," it said in a statement. Netanyahu has repeatedly alleged fraud by Arab-majority parties, pointing to the arrests of several people with envelopes of cash on election day and later claiming lawmakers received money from Qatar — allegations that have been levelled at his own aides in the past. Late on Tuesday, Israeli Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara said she would not question

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Cabinet okays Kuwait defence accord

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Wednesday ratified the defence cooperation agreement between Pakistan and Kuwait, according to a handout by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). "The federal cabinet ratified a defence cooperation agreement between Pakistan and Kuwait.

This agreement, which aims to foster cooperation in the defence sector between the two brotherly nations, was concluded on June 11, 2023. The Kuwaiti government had ratified the agreement on July 19," the handout said.

In 2023, Pakistan and Kuwait signed a defence pact to further strengthen defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two countries. The statement also said that the cabinet approved the transfer of powers delegated to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister to the province's governor. The Centre declared an emergency and governor's rule in the province on Oct 11.

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Capital to have new five-star hotel

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD:Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday announced that the government would convert the controversial One Constitution Avenue project in Islamabad into a five-star hotel within months, following the federal cabinet's approval of a joint investigation team's (JIT) report. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Naqvi said the government would approach a major international hotel chain to operate the building, which was originally approved for a five-star hotel.

"We will make every effort to convert this building into a five-star hotel within the next few months, which was its original purpose," the interior minister said. He noted that Islamabad faced a severe shortage of hotels and expressed hope that an agreement with a major hotel chain would be finalised soon.

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meeting the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. – DNA

PM Shehbaz says

Pakistan continuing efforts for peace in Middle East as before

Now when LPG is imported, competition will be promoted and it will be auctioned in lots. The government will take the profits and subsidise it for the common man," he said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated that Pakistan was continuing its efforts for the restoration of peace in the Middle East amid escalating global fuel prices. The premier made the remarks while addressing a meeting of the federal cabinet. In his address, he noted that global oil prices had "skyrocketed" due to the instability in the region.

"Pakistan is playing its role as before in restoring peace in the region," he said, recalling Pakistan's recent engagements with Tehran and other regional actors in the matter, as well as engagements under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye. Last month, Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, accompanied

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China says trying to avoid ME escalation

DNA

BEIJING: China said on Wednesday that avoiding a return to hostilities in the Middle East was a "top priority" in its diplomatic efforts with countries in the region. Beijing has stepped up efforts in recent days to resolve the eight-month-long crisis after US President Donald Trump issued a fresh war threat against Iran over the weekend. "The top priority is to avoid the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East that would bring

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Briefs

ECP objects to fmr judge remarks

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday objected to remarks made by former senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mansoor Ali Shah, regarding polls in KP and Punjab and the reserved seats case pertaining to the PTI. Shah made the remarks at an event organised by the US-based Community Alliance for Peace and Justice on October 29, where he was asked about his dissenting opinion in the 2023 SC ruling on provincial elections in Punjab and KP and whether it was a "turning point" and the beginning of a "division" within the SC. In its 3-2 verdict, the SC, after taking a suo motu notice, directed that elections should be held within 90 days in both provinces. Two judges, including Shah, had dissented from the ruling, saying that the suo motu proceedings initiated by then-chief justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, were "wholly unjustified".

Police baton-charge rally in Karachi

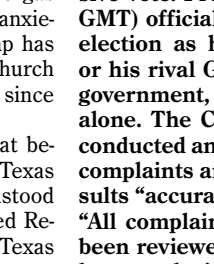
NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Thirty-eight people were detained on Wednesday as police used tear gas and baton-charged protesting teachers headed towards Chief Minister House from Karachi Press Club (KPC). Hundreds of teachers had gathered outside the press club on the call of the All Sindh Primary Teachers Association. They were headed towards CM House to present their demands that pertained to the service structure and called for delegating powers for transfers and postings to district officers. The protesters chanted slogans and attempted to move towards the CM House. However, when they arrived near Fawara Chowk, police baton-charged them and used tear gas shells to push them back toward the press club.

Iran war played a role in Republicans' losses, admits Trump

US president says Democrats would send "insane" legislation to his desk and he would veto it

NEWS DESK



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump acknowledged that the war in Iran played a role in Republicans' losses in Tuesday's midterm elections, as Democrats prepared to take control of both the US House and Senate and challenge his legislative agenda. In an interview with Fox News, Trump said Democrats would send legislation he considered "insane" to his desk and that he would veto it. "They'll send over things that are insane, and I'll veto them," he said. "And after a couple of months of vetoes, they'll call and they'll say, 'How do we get this stuff done?' And we'll work together." Trump said the war in Iran had weighed on Republican

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US people have rejected war, says Iran

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Iranian parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf said on Wednesday that Americans have rejected the Iran war, and the US government should not ignore public opinion by attacking his country again. "Americans said NO TO WAR, and we endorse this message. If the US govt betrays their public will to serve international paymasters and blackmailers, it will learn our NO comes with a Nightmare,"

Continued on Page 06

NAB summons JUI-F chief's son over alleged irregularities

Asad Mahmood made appointments during his tenure as communications minister in 2022-23, says anti-graft body

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned former communications minister Asad Mahmood, son of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, over alleged irregularities in Pakistan Post Office appointments made during his tenure in 2022 and 2023. Mahmood was appointed federal minister for communications in the coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), following the ouster of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government through a no-confidence motion in April 2022. The anti-corruption watchdog directed Mahmood to appear before its investigation team on November 10 at 11am to respond to questions concerning the recruitment process.

The investigation relates to alleged irregularities in appointments made at the Pakistan Post Office during his tenure as communications minister between 2022 and 2023. According to the NAB notice,

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Trump's midterm defeat and Pak foreign policy dilemma

Opinion

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



THE defeat of U.S. President Donald Trump's political camp in the midterm elections may not immediately alter realities on the ground for Pakistan, but it does place Islamabad in an awkward diplomatic position. Over the past few years, Pakistan's leadership invested significant political capital in cultivating ties with Trump and his administration. Some voices in Pakistan even went as far as proposing Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, portraying him as a leader capable of resolving major international conflicts. Today, with his diminished political standing, that enthusiasm appears increasingly uncomfortable and politically costly.

For Pakistan, the immediate consequences are likely to be more symbolic than practical. U.S.-Pakistan relations are shaped by institutions rather than individuals alone. Military cooperation, economic engagement, security concerns, and regional stability remain enduring interests for both countries. Therefore, a change in the political balance in Washington does not automatically translate into a dramatic shift in policy toward Pakistan. However, perception matters in diplomacy. Trump's electoral setback weakens the political leverage of those governments that openly aligned themselves with him. Pakistani policymakers now find themselves on the defensive, having invested heavily in a figure whose influence in Washington has been substantially reduced. The challenge is not that U.S. policy will suddenly turn hostile, but that Islamabad may have fewer political allies in a Washington increasingly dominated by Trump's opponents.

This reality becomes particularly important because many critical decisions involving foreign assistance, defense cooperation, sanctions, and strategic partnerships require approval from Congress and the Senate. With Democrats exercising greater control over these institutions, Islamabad will need to engage a broader spectrum of political actors rather than relying on relationships built around a single political figure. Pakistan has faced congressional skepticism before, and navigating this environment could become more difficult in the years ahead.

One of the most significant geopolitical implications concerns Iran. Trump's confrontational approach toward Tehran was built on a strategy of maximum pressure, economic sanctions, and the threat of military action. Following a major electoral setback, however, any future military initiative would inevitably face greater scrutiny at home and abroad. Political authority and moral legitimacy are often closely linked, and leaders weakened by electoral defeat rarely enjoy the same freedom of action as they once did.

As a result, the possibility of a prolonged confrontation with Iran appears less likely. Tehran may view recent developments as evidence that its strategy has yielded results. Iran has repeatedly leveraged tensions in and around the Strait of Hormuz to highlight the costs of instability in the Gulf. Even the threat of disruption to maritime traffic has contributed to volatility in global energy markets and rising oil prices. Since higher fuel prices directly affect consumers in the United States and other major economies, they also carry political consequences.

Many analysts argue that economic pressures, including energy costs, played a role in weakening public support for Trump's political movement. From Tehran's perspective, this would represent a significant strategic success. While Iran did not defeat the United States militarily, it may have demonstrated that pressure on global energy markets can create political costs for American leaders. If that assessment proves correct, Iran's approach may be studied as an example of how a regional power can exploit economic vulnerabilities within a much stronger adversary.

For Pakistan, however, the more important lesson is the necessity of maintaining a balanced foreign policy. Islamabad cannot afford to place all its strategic bets on either Washington or Beijing. The international system is becoming increasingly fragmented, and middle powers must learn to engage multiple centers of influence simultaneously.

Recent Pakistani outreach toward Russia reflects this thinking. Islamabad has sought greater cooperation with Moscow in energy, trade, and regional security. Such engagement can provide additional diplomatic and economic options, particularly at a time when global alliances are in flux. Yet this shift is not without risks.

European capitals have watched Pakistan's growing interaction with Russia with a degree of concern. While Europe may not express its dissatisfaction publicly, there is little doubt that excessive alignment with Moscow could complicate Pakistan's relations with the European Union. This is particularly important because Europe remains Pakistan's largest trading partner. The benefits Pakistan receives through the GSP+ framework have played a vital role in supporting exports and economic growth. Losing goodwill in European capitals would therefore come at a significant cost. Pakistan must therefore carefully evaluate what Russia can realistically offer. Moscow may be an important geopolitical actor, but its economic capacity and investment potential remain limited compared to Europe, China, or the United States. Strategic diversification is sensible; strategic overdependence on another power is not.

Another factor often overlooked is Afghanistan. Pakistan's relations with the Taliban-led government have become increasingly strained in recent years. Meanwhile, Russia has steadily expanded its engagement with Afghan authorities and is exploring opportunities for economic and technical cooperation. Reports of Russian technological assistance and growing dialogue with Kabul suggest that Moscow may enjoy influence in Afghanistan that Pakistan cannot take for granted.

This dynamic should encourage policymakers in Islamabad to think carefully about their regional strategy. Good relations with neighbors must remain a priority, but they should not come at the expense of relations with major global blocs. Foreign policy works best when it creates options rather than narrowing them.

Ultimately, Trump's political setback does not fundamentally alter Pakistan's strategic environment. Yet it serves as a reminder that foreign policy should never become overly dependent on a single leader, country, or bloc. Pakistan's future interests are best served through balance: maintaining ties with the United States, deepening economic relations with Europe, managing its partnership with China, exploring opportunities with Russia, and improving relations with its neighbors. In a rapidly changing world, strategic flexibility is likely to prove far more valuable than political loyalty to any one power.

– Ansar Mahmood Bhatti is a prominent Pakistani journalist and Editor with extensive experience in reporting and analyzing Pakistan's domestic politics, foreign policy, and international affairs.

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Thursday November 05, 2026

Danyal lays foundation stone for corridor reconstruction

RAWALPINDI: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the comprehensive reconstruction and modernization of the China Market-Gordon College Road transit corridor under a Rs 138.318 million provincial development grant.

Executing under the urban uplift vision of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the project has been assigned to the specialized engineering divisions of the Communication and Works (C&W) Department for high-grade execution and fast-tracked completion.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony organized by the local trader community, Barrister Danyal affirmed that the project will dismantle multi-decade traffic bottlenecks, optimize micro logistics for the commercial hub and streamline daily commutes for students attending central educational institutions.

He emphasized that upgrading urban road networks remains central to the provincial government's student-centric and economic development framework.

He furtjer said that similar fast-tracked road rehabilitation projects are simultaneously progressing across Rawal Road, 5th Road and Railway Workshop Road.

The engineering design incorporates a rebuilt subbase built to sustain heavy commercial traffic and public transit amounts, with integrated subsurface stormwater drainage channels to permanently prevent monsoon inundation across Liaquat Road, Naya Mohalla, and adjacent market zones.

The ceremony concluded with a ribbon-cutting walkthrough led by Barrister Dany Chaudhry along with senior C&W engineers, business leaders and local residents.–**APP**

Construction on Peshawar Road underpasses accelerates

RAWALPINDI: Civil works on two major underpasses along Peshawar Road, located at Qasim Market and Charing Cross, have achieved 80 percent completion as part of the Punjab government's mega infrastructure project to establish a fully signal-free corridor across Rawalpindi.

According to latest project updates, heavy construction machinery and technical crews are executing round-the-clock operations to finish the remaining 20 percent of infrastructure work within days. Under the explicit directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi, the work has been accelerated. The project is expected to be completed and open to traffic in December.

According to a senior official at Punjab Highways, the engineering protocols are being strictly enforced at both underpass sites, including underground power cable relocations, advanced drainage systems, and stormwater runoff networks to prevent urban flooding. To facilitate uninterrupted construction, City Traffic Police Rawalpindi has implemented a comprehensive traffic diversion plan.–**APP**



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, meets Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr. İrfan Neziroğlu, to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in agriculture, livestock, FMD vaccine production, technical training and meat exports. – DNA

KP plans to install 1,000 smart meters

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has proposed installing up to 1,000 smart water meters under a £150,000 GeoSmart Water initiative aimed at reducing water losses, improving revenue collection and strengthening digital management of water utilities. According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, the project, titled "GeoSmart Water – Integrated GIS and Smart Metering System for Efficient Water Resource Management," is included in Pakistan's Climate Prosperity Plan. The proposed initiative envisages a 12-month pilot involving the installation of 500 to 1,000 Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled smart water meters, along with geographic information system (GIS) mapping, digital billing and technology-based leak detection. The project aims to improve water resource management by reducing non-revenue water, enabling transparent billing and providing data dashboards for utility management.–**APP**

Pak, KSA to strengthen edu, cultural ties

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy, paid a courtesy visit to the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

The meeting was also attended by the Federal Secretary for Education, Mr. Nadeem Mahbub, along with senior officials and other professionals from the education sector. During the meeting, both sides held constructive discussions on matters of mutual interest and explored avenues for further strengthening the longstanding and brotherly relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the fields of education, higher education, cultural exchange, and professional development. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral educational cooperation through academic exchange programmes, institutional partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, and the promotion of collaborative opportunities between universities and higher education institutions in both countries. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening cooperation in higher education, facilitating academic mobility, and creating opportunities for students, researchers, faculty members, and education professionals to benefit from shared knowledge and expertise. Both sides exchanged views on expanding opportunities for scholarships, student exchange programmes, faculty development, joint research initiatives, and academic collaboration.

They also highlighted the importance of establishing stronger linkages between universities and educational institutions to promote innovation, research excellence, and the international exchange of academic experiences. The meeting also explored prospects for enhanced cultural cooperation, particularly through the promotion of Arabic language education, Arabic literature, and cultural exchange initiatives. The participants discussed the importance of promoting linguistic understanding and cultural awareness through academic programmes , educational institutions, and collaborative activities that bring the people of both countries closer.

Furthermore, opportunities for cooperation in various other fields, including defence-related education, professional training, knowledge sharing, and institutional development, were also discussed.

Both sides acknowledged the importance of broadening the scope of bilateral engagement beyond traditional areas of cooperation and exploring new avenues that could contribute to mutual progress and development. The Federal Secretary for Education, Mr. Nadeem Mahbub, emphasized the need to further strengthen cooperation in higher education between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He highlighted the immense potential for establishing academic partnerships, promoting joint research, facilitating student and faculty exchanges, and encouraging collaboration between universities and research institutions of the two countries. He further underscored that stronger educational linkages would provide valuable opportunities for the exchange of expertise, the development of human resources, and the promotion of academic excellence. He also highlighted the importance of translating bilateral discussions into practical initiatives that could deliver meaningful and sustainable outcomes for both countries.

The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, welcomed the Ambassador and appreciated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's continued engagement with Pakistan. He emphasized the significance of educational and cultural cooperation in further strengthening the historic relationship between the two brotherly countries._**APP**

Call for preserving shared Silk Road heritage for youth

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Zamir Assadi, Research Fellow at the China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC), has called for enhanced efforts by Pakistan and China to promote their shared cultural heritage and historical links through the ancient Silk Road, stressing the need to transmit this legacy to younger generations through greater awareness of their common history and civilizational ties. Speaking on the sidelines of an international cultural exhibition on Wednesday, Assadi said highlighting historical and cultural similarities between the two countries is vital to connecting young people with their shared past and encouraging them to preserve this heritage for future generations. He said that several artefacts displayed at the exhibition bore similarities to those preserved at Pakistan's Taxila Museum, reflecting centuries-old cultural exchanges and historical connections between the two regions. Both countries, he noted, were linked through the ancient Silk Road, which facilitated the exchange of ideas, art and cultural traditions.

According to UNESCO, Taxila was situated along a branch of the Silk Road connecting China with the West, while artworks at China's Mogao Caves also reflect influences from the Gandhara civilisation. Assadi said that Pakistan had a rich historical and archaeological heritage to showcase internationally, ranging from Gandhara civilization sites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the historic monuments and landmarks of Lahore. He also highlighted Pakistan's efforts to promote heritage-based tourism, noting that the government had established a task force in July to advance tourism linked to the Gandhara heritage. Emphasizing the role of young people, he said that the younger generation could become custodians of this shared legacy by developing a deeper appreciation of history and cultural values and transmitting them to future generations. He also encouraged Chinese people to visit Pakistan to explore the cultural similarities between the two countries, experience its rich archaeological heritage and witness efforts to preserve its historic sites and artefacts._**APP**

Kundi for stronger federal-provincial coordination

ISLAMABAD, Nov 04 (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, accompanied by provincial officials, visited the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and held a meeting with its senior officials to discuss investment promotion and economic development in the province.

The meeting was attended by Adviser to Governor on Industries Dr. Muhammad Irshad, Adviser on Planning and Development Usman Saifullah Khan, Secretary Science and Technology Nisar Ahmad, the Chief Executive Officer of Economic Zones, and members of the Board of Investment.

During the meeting, participants held detailed discussions on investment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, optimal utilization of the province's Special Economic Zones, and measures to promote a business-friendly environment.

Governor Kundi was briefed on the role of the SIFC in promoting investment, facilitating businesses, and implementing regulatory reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor emphasized the vast investment potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and stressed the need for effective coordination between federal and provincial institutions to fully capitalize on these opportunities and accelerate economic growth.–**APP**

Orientation held ahead of Cervical Cancer Prevention campaign

PESHAWAR: Health Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a Media Orientation Workshop at the ERU Hall, DHO Office here Wednesday, with the support of the Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, ahead of the second phase of the Cervical Cancer Prevention Campaign scheduled for 11–24 November 2026.The orientation aimed to enhance media professionals' understanding of cervical cancer, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), symptoms, prevention, and the importance of cervical cancer prevention vaccination. Participants were also briefed on global and national statistics, campaign objectives, target population and vaccination arrangements.

The technical sessions were facilitated by Dr. Muhammad Arif, EPI Coordinator, Peshawar; Dr. Qazi Taimor, Divisional Officer, World Health Organization (WHO); Dr. Saad, Disease Surveillance Officer, Peshawar and Muhammad Shoaib, SBCC Officer, MERF. According to global estimates, cervical cancer caused approximately 660,000 new cases and 348,000 deaths worldwide in 2022, making it the fourth most common cancer among women.–**APP**

Effort afoot for civic facilities

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a day-long workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Wednesday stressed the need for concerted efforts by oil and gas exploration companies to strengthen basic civic facilities, particularly education, healthcare and access to clean drinking water, to improve the living standards of people in underprivileged areas. They emphasized that greater focus should be placed not only on launching new development initiatives but also on improving and strengthening existing infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of social sector interventions and extend their benefits to a wider segment of the population. The workshop, organized by the Pakistan Petroleum Exploration and Production Companies Association (PPEPCA), brought together representatives of oil and gas exploration and production companies to share their experiences, achievements and contributions towards community development and social uplift across the country. The participants highlighted the importance of coordinated CSR initiatives, saying that collective efforts by companies operating in the energy and petroleum sectors could play a significant role in bridging the development gap between disadvantaged communities and more developed areas of the country. Addressing the workshop, PPEPCA Secretary General Ibrar Khan said the association served as a collaborative ecosystem, promoting collective action.–**APP**

Power transmission projects reviewed

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Division on Wednesday reviewed ongoing and proposed power transmission projects, highlighted implementation bottlenecks and emphasized export-led growth to strengthen Pakistan's economy and reduce reliance on foreign borrowing. Committee meeting was chaired by Acting Chairman Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, according to press release issued by National Secretariat. The Committee was informed that 40 ongoing projects were being implemented under 17 loan agreements with financial assistance from international development partners, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Agence Française Development, KfW Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency. Around 52 per cent of the total agreed loan amount had been disbursed. The projects cover six major categories, including transmission and distribution system augmentation, construction and upgradation of grid stations, CASA-1000 and related infrastructure. Another 38 projects are in the proposed pipeline, with completion timelines extending up to 2036, while ongoing projects are expected to be completed between November 2026 and December 2028. The Committee was apprised of key implementation challenges, including delays in the allocation of rupee cover, which affected loan disbursements, utilization and payments, as well as limited shutdown windows for transmission line augmentation and reconductoring works. Delays in approvals and No Objection Certificates (NOCs), particularly for the Tarbela 5th Extension Project.–**APP**



PTI dreams of regaining power but will have to account for corruption: Muqam

BATAGRAM : Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON and President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, here Wednesday said that the public's enthusiasm on Youm-e-Nijat was remarkable, adding that the people have rejected the previous PTI government and that the party, despite dreaming of regaining power, will have to answer for its alleged corruption.

He expressed these views while addressing a large public gathering in Battagram on Wednesday, marking the end of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) 14-year rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Thousands of PML-N workers and local residents attended the gathering, organised as a Day of Gratitude to celebrate the end of PTI's 14-year poor rule in the province. The participants raised enthusiastic slogans in favour of Engineer Amir Muqam, PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army. They also expressed their support for peace, national security and stability.

The venue turned into a centre of great political enthusiasm, with participants expressing strong solidarity with their leadership. The gathering also witnessed slogans against the alleged poor performance of the previous PTI government, with participants criticising its 14-year rule and expressing concerns over the challenges and hardships faced by the people of the province. Addressing the gathering, Engineer Amir Muqam said the people of Battagram were courageous, adding that the massive public turnout had exposed the false narrative being propagated by certain YouTubers based abroad.

He said the people's happiness over getting rid of the previous incompetent government was evident and congratulated them on its end. He assured the people that the PML-N leadership would strive to fulfil their expectations. Recalling the devastating 2005 earthquake, the federal minister said he had stood alongside the people during the tragedy and had personally witnessed the armed forces working on the frontlines to serve the affected population.

He said the armed forces had rendered immense sacrifices for the country, adding that the brave Pakistani forces had defeated an enemy several times larger than themselves and shattered its arrogance. Engineer Amir Muqam termed the Hazara Motorway a gift from former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to the people, saying it had significantly reduced travelling distances and facilitated commuters.

The federal minister also assured the people of resolving their issues, including electricity supply and road infrastructure. He announced Rs100 million for the upgradation of the electricity system and said he would also take up the matter of road improvement with the Chairman of the National Highway Authority (NHA). Commenting on PTI's political ambitions, he said the party was dreaming of restoring its government but would have to account for corruption, adding that his party had also faced the consequences of PTI's tenure in the province.–**APP**

Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Thursday November 05, 2026

French envoy willing to work with media

Welcoming the ambassador, NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial said that the National Press Club was playing an active role in promoting journalists' welfare, professional training and journalistic activities. He described the ambassador's visit as an important development towards strengthening media relations and mutual cooperation between Pakistan and France.

DNA

ISLAMABAD :French Ambassador to Pakistan, Jean-Noël Poirier, visited the National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad, where he was warmly received by NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial, Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao, and senior journalists. During the visit, the French ambassador also planted a sapling at the Press Club and was briefed on its various departments, facilities and journalistic activities. Welcoming the ambassador, NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial said that the National Press Club was playing an active role in promoting journalists' welfare, professional training and journalistic activities. He described the ambassador's visit as an important development towards strengthening media relations and mutual cooperation between Pakistan and France.

NPC Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao briefed the ambassador in detail about the history and organisational structure of the Press Club, its ongoing initiatives for journalists' welfare and its professional activities.

He emphasised that organising training programmes to enhance journalists' professional capabilities, equip them with modern journalistic skills and provide them exposure to international media practices was an important need of the time.

Dr. Furqan Rao expressed hope that, with the cooperation of the French Embassy, various training workshops and professional sessions would be organised to enhance the capacity of Pakistani journalists. These initiatives would provide journalists with opportunities to learn about modern journalism, communication skills and international journalistic experiences.



He said that the National Press Club was keen to play a positive and constructive role in further strengthening journalistic and cultural relations between Pakistan and France.

Speaking informally with NPC office-bearers and journalists, French Ambassador Jean-Noël Poirier said that he was willing to work with Pakistani journalists and to explore opportunities of cooperation with the National Press Club. He emphasised the importance of maintaining communication and exchanging views with journalists. The ambassador's visit was described as an important step towards promoting media relations between the two countries, exchanging professional experiences and exploring new opportunities to enhance the professional capacity of Pakistani journalists. Discussions were also held on further strengthening mutual contacts and organising joint activities in the future. National Press Club Abdur Razzaq Sial thanks the ambassador for visiting national press club.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

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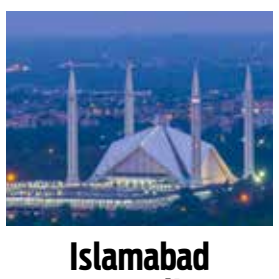
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Syedaal for modernising passport system

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar has called for further modernisation of the passport issuance system through advanced technology, digital services and automation to improve public facilitation.

He appreciated the government's initiatives to improve passport services and promote the use of modern technology. During a meeting with Director General Immigration and Passports Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa at Parliament House, Syedaal Khan Nasar praised the department's performance and institutional reforms. However, he stressed the need to modernise the system in line with contemporary requirements. He also met tribal elders, lawyers, civil society representatives, students and other prominent personalities.

The discussions covered public issues, national affairs and the country's political and economic situation. During his meeting with the DG Passports, the existing passport issuance system, departmental performance, security features and facilities for citizens came under discussion. The deputy chairman said the government's efforts to improve passport services and facilitate citizens were encouraging.

However, he stressed the need for further measures to improve departmental efficiency and public convenience.

He directed the authorities to expand the use of modern technology, digital systems and automation at every stage of passport issuance.

He said the process, from submitting an application to receiving a passport, should be made faster, more transparent and accessible.

He added that citizens should not face unnecessary delays, long waiting periods or administrative difficulties. An effective mechanism should also be introduced to resolve public complaints promptly.

Syedaal Khan Nasar said the effective use of technology and better administrative measures could strengthen public confidence in the department.

While appreciating the department's overall performance, he called for continued reforms in line with international standards, technological developments and changing security requirements.

The meeting also discussed plans to introduce passport issuance facilities through NADRA in the near future. Other matters included strengthening passport security and improving Pakistan's international passport ranking. The DG Passports informed the deputy chairman that the number of official (blue) passports had been reduced from 74,000 to 49,000 in line with administrative discipline and international requirements.

Meanwhile, during meetings with other delegations, Syedaal Khan Nasar said the government was taking steps to promote economic growth, control inflation and provide relief to the public.

He cited the recent reduction in petroleum product prices as one such measure. He expressed hope that the relief would also lead to lower prices of other essential commodities.—**DNA**

Kamal launches Care1166 digital complaint system

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal on Wednesday launched the Care1166 Health Complaint Management System at the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), introducing a centralized digital platform to facilitate public complaints and strengthen accountability across the health sector.

Under the new system, residents of Islamabad will be able to register complaints regarding the Ministry of National Health Services and its attached departments and institutions through a single helpline number, 1166, without having to visit different government offices.

The portal aims to provide citizens, particularly those living in remote areas, with convenient access to relevant authorities through telephone calls, ensuring that their health-related concerns are formally registered and addressed. According to the ministry, complaints will be automatically forwarded to the concerned departments or designated officers, while their progress will be monitored from registration to resolution. A central dashboard has been established to maintain a record of every complaint, its assignment to the responsible officer and the action taken for its resolution. The health minister will also be able



to review complaints and their progress through the dashboard from his office, enabling direct oversight of the performance of relevant departments. The system is designed not only to facilitate the registration of public complaints but also to ensure follow-up and track the practical steps taken by authorities to resolve them. The centralized platform will also help identify health-related issues and disease trends in different areas through analysis of complaints received from citizens. Initially, the system will facilitate complaints regarding government hospitals and dispensaries in Islamabad, with designated officers assigned at respective hospitals to ensure timely redressal. The platform will maintain a centralized and traceable record of hospital-related complaints, enabling the Ministry of Health to directly monitor public grievances and service delivery across government healthcare facilities. The ministry said the initiative would particularly help women, low-income families.—**DNA**

Pakistan, UK vow to boost bilateral coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom on Wednesday held their annual Counterterrorism (CT) Dialogue here, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson, both sides reviewed ongoing cooperation in counterterrorism at bilateral and multilateral forums. The Pakistan delegation was led by Dr. Fareha Bugti, Director General (CT), while the UK side was headed by Thomas Barry, Director for National and Economic Security in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The UK side expressed condolences over the loss of innocent lives in terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The UK reiterated that it stands with Pakistan in the fight against terrorism.

The two sides held detailed and constructive discussion on the evolving global and regional security environment and exchanged views on the threats posed by terrorist entities, including transnational terrorist networks. Both sides expressed concerns over the continuing threat posed by terrorist groups.—**APP**

FIA books 12 Libya deportees

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has registered a human smuggling case against 12 persons deported from Libya and initiated legal action against agents allegedly involved in sending them abroad illegally through Dubai and Egypt in an attempt to reach Italy by boat.

According to an FIA official on Wednesday that, the 12 Pakistani nationals were handed over by FIA Immigration at Islamabad International Airport to the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Rawalpindi for further legal proceedings.

He said the deportees were identified as Muhammad Adnan Haider, Muhammad Jamal, Nabeel Ahmed, Saqib Shabbir, Muhammad Faizan, Sajjad Mahmood, Muhammad Akhlaq, Muhammad Anees, Roheel Tameer, Rehman Khalid, Saqib Ali and Arif Hussain.

The official said preliminary investigations revealed that different agents had allegedly lured the citizens with promises of overseas employment and arranged their travel from Pakistan to Libya through Dubai and Egypt on visit or Umrah visas. He said the agents allegedly planned to transport the citizens illegally from Libya to Italy through sea routes using boats.

The official said the agents were also accused of collecting large amounts of money from the citizens in exchange for arranging their illegal journeys abroad.—**APP**

DG orders transparency in recruitment process

ISLAMABAD, Nov 04 (APP):The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has commenced physical recruitment tests at 11 designated centres across Pakistan, including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and other cities, while Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi has directed officials to ensure strict merit, transparency and proper facilities for candidates throughout the selection process.

According to details compiled by APP from NCCIA, physical tests are being conducted at designated centres in Islamabad, Faisalabad, Multan, Lahore, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Quetta and Gilgit.

Candidates from different parts of the country are participating in physical fitness assessments, including running tests, as part of the nationwide recruitment process Meanwhile, Director General NCCIA Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired a meeting at NCCIA Headquarters to review the nationwide recruitment process, monitoring arrangements, administrative requirements.—**APP**



Briefs

Shifa Int'l Hospital organizes Pink Hike 2026

ISLAMABAD: Shifa International Hospital on Tuesday organized the Pink Hike 2026 to raise awareness about breast cancer and highlight the importance of early detection in saving lives. The event brought together doctors, breast cancer survivors and members of civil society, who participated in the awareness hike to show solidarity with patients and promote breast health awareness. Doctors attending the event highlighted the importance of early diagnosis, regular screening and timely medical consultation, emphasizing that early detection significantly improves the chances of successful treatment. The participation of breast cancer survivors also provided an opportunity to encourage women to seek timely medical advice and overcome hesitation in discussing breast health concerns. The initiative aimed to promote public awareness and reinforce the message that early detection and timely treatment can help save lives._**APP**

British Council, P@SHA to boost digital jobs for youth

ISLAMABAD: The British Council, in partnership with the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), has joined hands to advance digital employment opportunities for youth, particularly women, in Gilgit-Baltistan under the EU-funded TVET Sector Support Programme.
A roundtable on Industry Linkages and Graduate Employability was convened at Serena Hotel, Gilgit, bringing together representatives from government, academia, the IT industry and development partners to strengthen collaboration between training institutions.–**APP**

ICCI join forces to promote renewable energy in Pakistan

He emphasized that greater reliance on solar, wind and other alternative energy sources was essential for sustainable economic and industrial development

DNA



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, highlighted the vital role of renewable energy in strengthening Pakistan's economy, enhancing energy security, reducing industrial production costs and attracting investment. He emphasized that greater reliance on solar, wind and other alternative energy sources was essential for sustainable economic and industrial development.
He expressed these views during a meeting with a joint delegation comprising Chairman Pakistan Alternative Energy Association (PAEA) Asif Javed along with members of its Executive Committee, Chairman Renewable Energy Association Pakistan (REAP) Tayyab Niaz accompanied by his Executive Committee, and Vice Chairman Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) Choudhry Uzair along with his Executive Committee, who visited ICCI to congratulate its newly elected leadership. The meeting focused on strengthening institutional cooperation between PAEA and ICCI to promote the sector and address its key challenges.
Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan emphasized the importance of closer engagement between business institutions and renewable energy stakeholders to facilitate investment, improve the policy environment and encourage the adoption of modern clean energy technologies.
The visiting delegation appreciated ICCI's commitment to strengthening institutional collaboration and expressed confidence that a strong partnership between PAEA and ICCI would open new avenues for investment, facilitate technology transfer and accelerate the development of Pakistan's alternative energy industry. Both sides discussed jointly organizing awareness programmes, training sessions, seminars and conferences. The proposed collaboration would also focus on promoting renewable energy solutions for the industrial sector, encouraging local battery manufacturing, creating employment opportunities and developing EV charging infrastructure across Pakistan. President ICCI assured the delegation of the Chamber's full support in promoting the alternative energy sector and pledged to work closely with the associations to strengthen industry linkages, facilitate business opportunities and advance their shared objectives.
On this occasion Executive members Israr Mishwani, Abbas Hashmi, ICCI senior members Khalid Chaudhry, Waseem Chaudhry, Mehmoon Shafqat, Nauman Bhatti and other were also present.

2 agents held in Albania work visa fraud

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has nabbed two agents for allegedly defrauding a citizen of Rs 1.5 million on the pretext of arranging a work visa for Albania.
According to an FIA official on Wednesday, the operation was carried out by the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Rawalpindi, which took two suspects, identified as Ghulam Dastgir and Shahid Hussain, into custody in connection with FIR No. 647/2026. He said the suspects allegedly received Rs 1.5 million from the complainant after promising to send him abroad on an Albania work visa. The official said investigators were examining the alleged fraud, while the role of other individuals involved in the case would also be determined during the investigation. He said Inspector Zainab Batool was investigating the case. The official said FIA Islamabad Zone remained committed to taking legal action against individuals involved in human trafficking, visa fraud and other related offences.–**APP**

IRSA releases 99,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 99,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 49,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1503.17 feet, which was 101.17 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 25,000 cusecs and 58,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1193.80 feet, which was 143.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 7,800 cusecs and 24,400 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 80,700, 50,000, 34,800.–**APP**

Stronger media engagement to promote water awareness

He stressed that direct exposure to projects and the experiences of beneficiaries could help strengthen media coverage by ensuring that reporting was informed by firsthand information and credible evidence

ISLAMABAD: International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Communication Specialist Amjad Jamal has emphasised the need to treat the media as a partner rather than an adversary in promoting public awareness of water and climate-related challenges. "We must take the media as our friends, not our adversaries," he said while addressing the second day of the sixth Pakistan Water Week 2026, a five-day international conference. He described journalists as essential allies in translating research and scientific evidence into public understanding and, ultimately, better policymaking. Amjad Jamal said IWMI had been actively engaging with bureau chiefs, editors and beat reporters to sensitise them to critical water and climate issues. He cited the institute's Environmental Journalists Quarterly Meetings, organised under CGIAR's Policy Innovations Science Program and the FCDO-funded Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan programme, as a practical example of this engagement. Under these initiatives, journalists covering climate change, water and agriculture are taken on field visits to interact with beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders and observe project sites where IWMI has installed scientific instrumentation. He said such field engagements enabled journalists to witness interventions firsthand, interact with communities and develop evidence-based stories reflecting ground realities. He stressed that direct exposure to projects and the experiences of beneficiaries could help strengthen media coverage by ensuring that reporting was informed by firsthand information and credible evidence.–**APP**

Pak, Turkiye agree to boost coop in FMD, vaccine production

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and, Türkiye on Wednesday agree to strengthen cooperation in Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control, vaccine production, livestock development and agricultural training. The consensus to this effect was evolved in a meeting between Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain and Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu. They discussed,l concrete measures for strengthening bilateral cooperation in agriculture, livestock, vaccine production, human resource development and value-added food exports, said a press release. Both sides agreed to translate the longstanding strategic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye into practical initiatives through institutional linkages, technical collaboration and direct engagement between relevant ministries, universities and experts. A key focus of the meeting was capacity building and technical training. Pakistan informed the Turkish side of its plan to send an initial group of around 30 participants to Türkiye under the proposed training programme for 100 trainees.–**APP**

Final arguments seek in Saidpur Village compensation case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday sought final arguments on November 10, in a case concerning the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) operation in Saidpur Village and payment of compensation in accordance with a Supreme Court judgment. Justice Raja Inaam Ameen Minhas, while hearing 127 petitions, directed the parties to assist the court in light of the Supreme Court's 2008 judgment. Secretary Interior Ahmed Raza Sarwar also attended the hearing and observed the proceedings. During the hearing, Justice Minhas observed that compliance with court orders was mandatory under the law and not a matter of courtesy. He said no action could be taken without a court order and stressed that no one should be subjected to injustice. The judge said he wanted to resolve the matter by addressing the genuine rights of the affected people and directed the parties to proceed transparently and focus on the relevant legal points. CDA counsel Shehryar Tariq informed the court that plots had been allotted and all relevant details were available. He said a list of people who had already received plots was also available, adding that the authority had provided the court with all details concerning the Saidpur matter and responded to every notice. Justice Minhas directed the lawyers to come prepared with legal arguments on November 10, observing that he would not entertain technical arguments on that date. He also noted that he would not be available after November 11.–**APP**

WHO supports polio campaign targeting 24m kids

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the Government of Pakistan and its partners in the ongoing nationwide polio vaccination campaign, targeting nearly 24 million children across 97 districts. WHO teams are working on the ground alongside government health authorities and partner organisations to strengthen vaccination efforts and protect children against the crippling disease. The campaign aims to ensure that every child under five receives polio vaccine, helping prevent the spread of poliovirus and protect communities from lifelong disability. WHO emphasized that continued collaboration among government institutions, health workers and development partners was essential to achieving the goal of a polio-free Pakistan. The ongoing sub-national polio vaccination campaign continued for a third day on Wednesday across 97 selected districts of the country, with more than 13.3 million children vaccinated during the first two days. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), the campaign will continue until November 8, targeting approximately 24 million children under five years of age. More than 200,000 frontline polio workers are participating in the campaign, conducting door-to-door visits to administer vaccine drops and protect children against the crippling disease. Provincial and regional vaccination figures showed that more than 5.168 million children had been vaccinated in 13 selected districts of Punjab, while approximately 3.875 million children received polio drops in 20 districts of Sindh. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, around 2.709 million children were vaccinated across 27 selected districts, while more than 1.095 million children received the vaccine in 31 districts of Balochistan. In Islamabad, more than 295,000 children had been vaccinated, while approximately 101,000 children received polio drops in three selected districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Similarly, more than 127,000 children were vaccinated in two selected districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The NEOC said polio was an incurable disease that could cause lifelong paralysis, but children could be protected through timely vaccination.–APP

IHC seek district admin response on appeal against shisha cafes, ban

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad High Court (IHC) division bench on Wednesday issued notices to the district administration and sought its response on an intra-court appeal challenging a single bench decision imposing a ban on shisha cafes in the federal capital.
The owners of shisha cafes requested the court to suspend the single bench's decision; however, the bench observed that it would decide the matter after hearing the administration.
A division bench comprising Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas and Justice Ayaz Shaukat heard the appeal.
During the hearing, Justice Minhas observed that the High Court had issued an earlier judgment before the single bench's decision, which had also directed the authorities to frame rules and imposed a ban on shisha cafes. He questioned how no-objection certificates (NOCs) had subsequently been issued.
Counsel for the appellants, Adil Aziz Qazi, submitted that the NOCs had been issued by the administration and that the applicants had invested millions of rupees after receiving them. He requested the court to allow them to continue operating under those NOCs.
Justice Minhas observed that notices were being issued to ascertain how the NOCs had been granted in the absence of rules governing shisha cafes. He further noted that the relevant rules had still not been framed despite the matter being brought before the court through an appeal. The bench issued notices to the district administration and adjourned further proceedings. Meanwhile, The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed for hearing of the appeals of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi against their convictions in the £190 million case on November 10.
A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif will hear the appeals, according to the cause list issued by the IHC Registrar's Office.
The court has sought arguments from counsel for the convicts on their appeals challenging the sentences.
At the previous hearing, the court had adjourned the proceedings without taking up the matter following a request by PTI founder's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar. An accountability court had sentenced Imran Khan to 14 years in prison and Bushra Bibi to seven years in the case. Both convicts subsequently filed appeals before the IHC, seeking annulment of their sentences.–**DNA**

اپیل

جناب آصف علی زرداری صاحب، صدر مملکت اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان
جناب شہباز شریف صاحب، وزیر اعظم اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان
جناب سید عاصم منیر صاحب، فیلڈ مارشل، چیف آف ڈیفنس فورسز پاکستان
جناب محسن نقوی صاحب، وفاقی وزیر داخلہ پاکستان
جناب عطااللہ تارڑ صاحب، وفاقی وزیر اطلاعات ونشریات پاکستان
جناب سہیل اشرف صاحب چیئرمین، کیپٹل ڈویلپمنٹ اتھارٹی/ چیف کمشنر وفاقی دارالحکومت اسلام آباد

انتہائی ادب واحترام سے اپیل ہے کہ آج سے کم وبیش 42 سال قبل وفاقی دارالحکومت اسلام آباد میں بین الاقوامی اخبارات، میگزین وجرائد کی ایوان صدر، قومی اسمبلی، سینیٹ، وزرا کے دفاتر کے ساتھ بین الاقوامی ایمبیسیوں، سرکاری وغیر سرکاری دفاتر اور قارئین کرام کے گھروں پر علی الصبح ترسیل کے لئے سی ڈی اے کے جانب سے اخبار مارکیٹ بنائی گئی تھی جس میں اخبار کی صنعت کا مزدوررات کے پچھلے پہر قومی وبین الاقوامی اخبارات وجرائد کی ترسیل کے لئے اپنی خدمات پیش کرتا تھا اور اخبار مارکیٹ کے لئے طے شدہ لوازمات میں سے ابھی تک کوئی بقایا جات نہیں۔اس دوران اخبار مارکیٹ کے بیرونی حصہ میں خالی جگہ کا بھی سی ڈی اے نے اخبار مارکیٹ کو ایک لیز جاری کی جس کا کرایہ سی ڈی اے نے کمرشل ریٹس پر وصول کرنے کا کہا جس پر اخبار فروش یونین نے سی ڈی اے سے کہا کہ اسکا کرایہ اخبار مارکیٹ بلڈنگ کے ریٹس کے مطابق طے کریں ہم کرایہ دینے کو تیار ہیں لیکن سی ڈی اے نے کوئی جواب نہیں دیا جس کے بعد اخبار فروش یونین نے یہ پلاٹ سی ڈی اے کے سپرد کر دیا بعد ازاں کافی عرصہ گزرنے کے بعد سی ڈی اے نے اس خالی پلاٹ کی مد میں لاکھوں روپے کے کرایہ کا نوٹس بھیج دیا اور اس کی عدم ادائیگی کا بہانہ بنا کر اخبار مارکیٹ کو سیل کر دیا ہے۔

اب تین سو اخبار فروش رات کے پچھلے پہر کھلے آسمان تلے سڑک پر شدید سردی، بارش طوفان میں اخبار لینے پر مجبور ہیں اور ان اخبارات وجرائد کو ایوان صدر، ایوان وزیر اعظم، وزراء کے دفاتر، بین الاقوامی ایمبیسیوں، سرکاری وغیر سرکاری دفاتر اور قارئین کرام کے گھروں تک پہنچانے کا اپنا فرض نبھا رہے ہیں جبکہ ان غریب اخبار فروشوں کی روزی کا ذریعہ اخبار مارکیٹ کو جبراً بند کر دیا گیا ہے۔

ہماری تمام قابل صد عزت وتکریم صاحبان اقتدار سے اپیل ہے کہ ہمارا حق "اخبار مارکیٹ" ہمیں واپس دیا جائے ہم سی ڈی اے کی جانب سے لگائے گئے متنازعہ واجبات کی ادائیگی کے لئے بھی تیار ہیں۔

ہمیں ایمان کی حد تک یقین ہے کہ معزز ومحترم صاحبان اقتدار اخبار مارکیٹ کو ہمارے سپرد کر کے سی ڈی اے کی جانب سے کی گئی زیادتی کا ازالہ ضرور کریں گے۔

العارض

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The Opening of Pul-e Abrisham and Pakistan



THE decision by Afghanistan and Iran to introduce round-the-clock commercial operations at two major border crossings marks an important step towards expanding trade between the neighbouring countries. For the first time, commercial vehicles are being allowed to move throughout the day and night at the Pul-e Abrisham and Milak crossings, raising hopes of faster cargo movement and lower transport costs. The move comes as Afghanistan seeks to diversify its trade routes, strengthen economic relations with neighbouring countries and reduce its dependence on a limited number of transit corridors. Early figures released by Afghan officials suggest that the extended operating hours have already increased traffic at the border.

According to Saifullah Mohammadi, chief of staff at the Nimroz governor's office, border administration, customs and transport agencies are prepared to provide services to traders and drivers around the clock. Officials say the number of cargo vehicles crossing the border has risen from approximately 400 to 800 a day since the introduction of 24-hour operations. If sustained, this increase could have a considerable impact on commercial activity between the two countries. Faster customs clearance and uninterrupted movement of trucks would help traders plan shipments more efficiently, reduce delays and lower the costs associated with keeping vehicles and goods waiting at the border. For landlocked Afghanistan, access to reliable trade routes is a matter of economic necessity. The country depends on neighbouring states for access to international markets, and interruptions at border crossings can affect the supply of essential goods, industrial inputs and construction materials. A wider choice of routes gives Afghan traders greater flexibility and reduces the risks of relying too heavily on a single corridor.

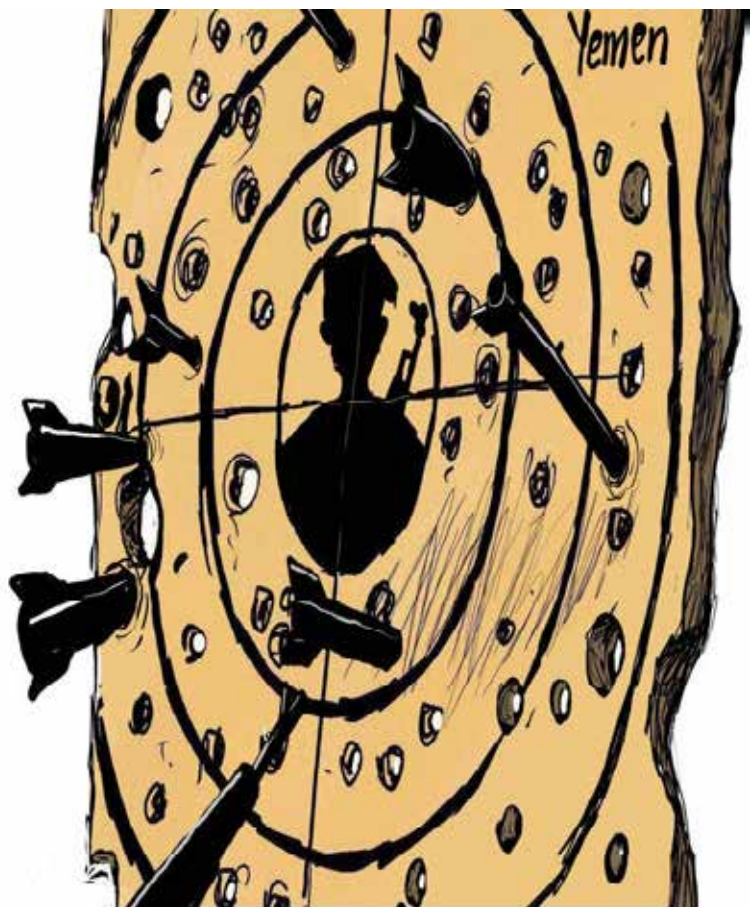
Afghanistan's efforts to strengthen trade with Iran are part of a broader attempt to develop alternative regional connections. Its geographical position places it between South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, giving it the potential to serve as a link between these markets. Turning that potential into economic gains, however, requires reliable transport facilities, efficient border management and sustained cooperation with neighbouring countries. The Pul-e Abrisham and Milak crossings are important in this regard. Extending their operating hours allows commercial traffic to move beyond the restrictions imposed by conventional working schedules. For exporters and importers, the availability of customs and transport services at night can be particularly useful in reducing congestion and avoiding unnecessary delays. Iran also stands to benefit. Afghanistan represents an important neighbouring market for Iranian goods, while improved access to Afghan territory can strengthen Iran's commercial links with Central Asia and other regional markets. Greater movement of goods can create business opportunities for transport companies, traders, warehouses and other services operating around the border. Yet the success of the initiative will depend on more than keeping the crossings open. Customs procedures must remain efficient, transport services must be available and both sides must coordinate their border operations. If trucks are allowed to arrive throughout the day but face long delays in documentation and clearance, much of the expected benefit will be lost. The reported increase from 400 to 800 vehicles a day is encouraging, but its durability will be the real test. Regular monitoring of traffic, clearance times and transport costs will be necessary to determine whether the new arrangement is producing lasting economic benefits.

The expansion of trade between Afghanistan and Iran illustrates the possibility of keeping economic cooperation separate from sectarian disagreements. It does not mean that all political or religious differences between the two countries have disappeared. Rather, it shows that such differences need not prevent cooperation in areas where both sides have common interests. For people living near the border, the benefits of improved trade are immediate and practical. More cargo movement can support employment in transport, loading, warehousing and related services. Traders can gain access to larger markets, while consumers may benefit from a more reliable supply of goods. These gains depend on the continuation of regular commercial activity rather than occasional announcements or temporary arrangements.

The growing trade activity between Afghanistan and Iran also deserves attention in Pakistan. For decades, Pakistan has served as one of Afghanistan's principal trade routes through Karachi, Peshawar, Torkham and other border facilities. Its ports and transport network have provided an important outlet for Afghan imports and exports. However, repeated border closures, delays in customs clearance and political tensions have encouraged Afghan traders to explore other options. The expansion of trade through Iran and the development of links with Central Asia reflect this search for greater flexibility. Pakistan's geographical position remains an important advantage, but geography alone cannot guarantee commercial business. Traders are concerned with the cost of transport, the time required to clear goods, the reliability of border operations and the predictability of government policies. If alternative routes offer better conditions, businesses will consider using them.

Pakistan therefore needs to improve its transit facilities, simplify customs procedures and ensure that commercial movement is not unnecessarily disrupted by political disagreements. Trade with Afghanistan should be treated as an economic opportunity, even when relations between the two governments face difficulties. Whether the initiative becomes a lasting success will depend on its implementation. If the reported increase in cargo traffic continues and both countries maintain efficient border services, the crossings could become an important channel for regional commerce. For Pakistan, the message is equally clear: its transit advantage must be supported by efficient services, reasonable costs and consistent policies. In a region where trade routes are increasingly interconnected, countries that make commerce easier are more likely to attract it.

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America at the Crossroads: Can a Democratic Congress Restrain Donald Trump?

Qamar Bashir



Relations with Canada and Europe could become another major battleground. Trump's tariffs, confrontational negotiating style and willingness to question longstanding partnerships have encouraged allied governments to reconsider their dependence on the United States. Canada, in particular, has increasingly emphasized economic sovereignty, diversified trade and greater national security independence. A Democratic Congress could investigate the economic consequences of tariffs, seek to restrict certain presidential trade powers...

THE United States of America stands at one of the most consequential political crossroads in its recent history. The midterm elections of November 3, 2026, are not merely a contest between Democrats and Republicans for control of Congress. They represent a national referendum on the policies, leadership, political philosophy and international conduct of President Donald Trump. Their outcome could determine whether the remaining two years of his presidency will be characterized by largely unrestrained executive authority or increasingly determined congressional resistance.

For nearly two years, Republicans have enjoyed control of both chambers of Congress, allowing President Trump considerable political space to advance his domestic and international agenda. Yet their narrow majority in the House and 53–47 advantage in the Senate have left them vulnerable to an electoral reversal. Democrats entered election night determined to capture both chambers, transforming Congress from an instrument of presidential support into a formidable institution of accountability.

Early election results have provided Democrats with significant encouragement. Former North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper has been projected to defeat Trump-backed Republican Michael Whatley, capturing a Senate seat previously held by Republicans. Democratic Senator Jon Ossoff has secured reelection in Georgia, while Christopher Pappas has been projected to win New Hampshire's Senate contest. These victories strengthen Democratic hopes of overcoming the Republican majority. Democratic successes have also emerged in Illinois, Pennsylvania and other states. Juliana Stratton has been projected to win the Illinois Senate race, while Governors JB Pritzker and Josh Shapiro have secured projected reelection victories. Nevertheless, several competitive contests remain unresolved, and the final balance of congressional power cannot be established until sufficient races have been called.

The electoral forecasts have been particularly encouraging for Democrats. Some leading models placed their probability of capturing the House above 90 percent, while several projected a substantial possibility of winning the Senate as well. However, statistical forecasts are not election results. The ultimate verdict belongs to American voters, whose ballots will determine whether Republicans retain their congressional foothold or Democrats achieve a historic political comeback.

Beyond the electoral arithmetic lies a much larger question: what would a Democratic-controlled Congress mean for an administration whose decisions have generated controversy far beyond America's borders? From the confrontation with Iran to relations with Russia and Ukraine, from tariff disputes with Canada and Europe to the ambitions surrounding Greenland, the Trump presidency has challenged established assumptions about American diplomacy, economic cooperation and international security. The war involving Iran has become one of the most consequential issues facing the administration. However, congressional opposition would not automatically terminate military operations. The Constitution makes the President commander-in-chief, while reserving to Congress the authority to declare war, authorize military force and control federal appropriations. Under the War Powers Resolution, the President generally must report qualifying military deployments to Congress within 48 hours, with a 60-day termination requirement and a possible 30-day withdrawal period in the absence of congressional authorization. The continuing dispute over the boundaries of presidential war powers makes this one of the most difficult areas of constitutional governance. Ukraine presents another opportunity for a fundamental change in American policy. Trump's approach toward Russia, his criticism of European allies and the uncertainty surrounding American military assistance have unsettled governments that once regarded Washington as the principal guarantor of European security. Democrats could attempt to restore substantial assistance to Ukraine, reinforce NATO commitments and subject changes in sanctions policy to more rigorous scrutiny.

Relations with Canada and Europe could become another major battleground. Trump's tariffs, confrontational negotiating style and willingness to question longstanding partnerships have encouraged allied governments to reconsider their dependence on the United States. Canada, in particular, has increasingly emphasized economic sovereignty, diversified trade and greater national security independence. A Democratic Congress could investigate the economic consequences of tariffs, seek to restrict certain presidential trade powers and encourage a return to cooperative diplomacy. Greenland represents perhaps the most striking example of how territorial ambition can unsettle international relationships. Trump's interest in acquiring the strategically important Arctic territory has generated serious concerns about sovereignty and the future of relations with Denmark and Europe. Congressional opposition could make any coercive territorial initiative politically and financially difficult, reinforcing the principle that international borders cannot simply be altered according to the ambitions of powerful governments.

Domestically, the consequences could be equally profound. Democrats would gain the opportunity to challenge immigration enforcement, mass deportation policies, environmental deregulation, controversial spending priorities and aspects of the administration's economic program. Congressional committees could summon senior officials, demand documents, conduct investigations and expose administrative decisions to public scrutiny. Such powers could transform the political atmosphere in Washington.

Nevertheless, the American constitutional system was deliberately designed to prevent any single institution from exercising unlimited authority. The President can veto legislation approved by both chambers, and Congress generally requires a two-thirds majority in each chamber to override that veto. The President can also issue executive orders within the boundaries of existing law, direct federal agencies, negotiate executive agreements and exercise substantial discretion in foreign affairs.

This constitutional architecture explains why a Democratic victory would complicate Trump's presidency without necessarily bringing his agenda to a halt. A hostile Congress could block major legislative initiatives, investigate executive conduct and obstruct presidential appointments if Democrats control the Senate. But Trump could continue pursuing policies through lawful executive authority, diplomatic initiatives, regulatory decisions and the administration of previously authorized programs.

Whatever the final results, President Trump will remain in the White House until the constitutional end of his term. A Democratic Congress cannot simply erase his presidency, reverse every executive decision or compel an immediate transformation of American foreign policy. But it can ensure that the President's decisions encounter institutional scrutiny, financial constraints and sustained political opposition. Ultimately, the 2026 midterm elections could become a defining moment not because they remove presidential power, but because they test the constitutional limits of that power. If Democrats capture both chambers, Donald Trump may still possess formidable authority to pursue his political ideology for another two years, but he will no longer enjoy the same degree of congressional support. The American people have an opportunity to restore equilibrium between executive ambition and legislative responsibility. Whether their verdict produces cooperation, confrontation or constitutional deadlock will depend upon the political maturity of both parties and the willingness of the President to recognize the authority of an independently elected Congress. The world can only hope that this democratic exercise will help restrain unnecessary confrontation, revive diplomacy, restore confidence among America's allies and replace the politics of unilateral power with the wisdom of constitutional balance. The true victory of the 2026 midterms will not be measured merely by the number of Democratic or Republican seats, but by whether America emerges from this historic political crossroads more responsible at home, more dependable abroad and more committed to peace than conflict.

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

Partnerships Across Maritime Regions

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The initiative's expansion reflects its growing international relevance. From 28 participating countries in its inaugural edition in 2007, AMAN attracted participation from more than 60 countries in its ninth edition in February 2025. The introduction of the AMAN Dialogue alongside that exercise further enriched its diplomatic and intellectual dimensions, providing senior naval and maritime representatives...

THE oceans have never been merely geographical boundaries separating nations. They are arteries of international commerce, conduits of cultural exchange and, increasingly, arenas where the security and prosperity of distant societies intersect. Throughout history, maritime routes have connected civilisations, facilitated the movement of ideas and enabled nations to prosper through trade. Today, however, the same waters are exposed to geopolitical rivalries, security threats and competing strategic ambitions. Their future, therefore, depends not simply upon naval strength but upon the ability of nations to cultivate trust, cooperation and a shared commitment to peace.

The Holy Quran repeatedly draws attention to the seas, their resources and the benefits Allah Almighty has bestowed upon humanity through them. It invites mankind to reflect upon ships sailing across the waters, the sustenance obtained from the oceans and the countless signs of divine wisdom embodied in creation. These references carry a deeper message; the resources of nature are blessings entrusted to humanity, and their responsible use requires wisdom, gratitude and a sense of collective responsibility. The Quranic emphasis on consultation, justice, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence offers an enduring framework for relations among nations. In a world increasingly troubled by confrontation, these principles deserve renewed attention, particularly in the maritime domain.

It is within this broader perspective that the Pakistan Navy's AMAN exercises have acquired significance. Launched in 2007 under the banner "Together for Peace", AMAN has evolved into an international platform bringing regional and extra-regional navies together with maritime stakeholders. Its underlying philosophy recognises that the oceans cannot be secured through isolated national efforts. Maritime threats disregard political boundaries, making cooperation not merely desirable but indispensable.

The tenth edition, under the theme "Partnerships Across Maritime Regions", reflects the growing importance of this understanding. Its central message is that sustainable maritime security rests upon cooperation, confidence-building and connectivity among nations. The theme also acknowledges that countries separated by geography or differing strategic interests can nevertheless identify common objectives and work towards shared prosperity.

The Indian Ocean provides a compelling context for such cooperation. It is among the world's most consequential maritime regions, linking the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and East Asia. Vital commercial and energy supply routes pass through its waters, making their security essential to the functioning of the global economy. Any disruption caused by piracy, maritime terrorism, trafficking, regional conflict or threats to commercial shipping can have consequences far beyond the immediate geographical area. Environmental degradation and the growing vulnerability of maritime infrastructure add further complexity to an already challenging security environment.

No single country can adequately address these concerns. Effective maritime governance requires information-sharing, professional coordination, operational understanding and respect for international law. Multinational naval exercises provide an opportunity to develop precisely these capacities. By bringing together naval forces with different experiences and operational traditions, AMAN encourages professional interaction and creates an environment in which mutual confidence can develop. Its value lies not only in demonstrating operational preparedness but also in strengthening relationships that may prove essential during an actual crisis.

The initiative's expansion reflects its growing international relevance. From 28 participating countries in its inaugural edition in 2007, AMAN attracted participation from more than 60 countries in its ninth edition in February 2025. The introduction of the AMAN Dialogue alongside that exercise further enriched its diplomatic and intellectual dimensions, providing senior naval and maritime representatives an opportunity to discuss emerging challenges and explore areas of common interest. This progression illustrates how a naval exercise can gradually develop into a wider instrument of maritime diplomacy.

For Pakistan, the initiative carries particular strategic and economic importance. Its location along the Arabian Sea places it close to significant international shipping corridors, while Karachi and Gwadar offer opportunities for expanding maritime trade and regional connectivity. The country's economic future is also linked with the development of its blue economy, including shipping, fisheries, port services, marine tourism and other ocean-based industries. Yet these opportunities cannot be fully realised without secure sea lanes, reliable maritime infrastructure and a stable regional environment.

Pakistan Navy's contribution to maritime security must therefore be viewed in a wider context than the protection of national waters alone. Its responsibilities extend to safeguarding commercial interests, maintaining the security of sea lines of communication and contributing to regional stability. Initiatives such as Regional Maritime Security Patrols, alongside multinational engagements, demonstrate the importance Pakistan attaches to collective maritime responsibility. A secure maritime environment benefits not only coastal states but also landlocked countries whose trade and economic activities depend upon access to international markets.

There is another dimension of maritime cooperation that deserves equal consideration; its humanitarian purpose. Search-and-rescue operations, disaster relief and assistance to vessels in distress require immediate coordination, regardless of political differences. At sea, human life must take precedence over strategic calculations. Naval forces that develop professional relationships during peacetime are better positioned to cooperate when emergencies arise. In this respect, maritime exercises can serve a purpose far greater than conventional military preparedness.

The tenth edition of AMAN, marking twenty years since the initiative was launched, represents an important institutional milestone. Its longevity reflects continuity of purpose, while its expanding international participation demonstrates the relevance of its underlying philosophy. Yet the real measure of its success will not be the number of warships assembled or the scale of naval manoeuvres. It will be the trust established, understanding developed and practical cooperation sustained beyond the exercise itself.

At a time when geopolitical competition threatens to turn vital waterways into theatres of confrontation, the idea of partnerships across maritime regions offers a constructive alternative. Nations need not share identical political interests to cooperate in protecting commercial navigation, combating maritime crime and preserving the oceans as a common avenue of prosperity.

The seas have connected humanity for centuries. They should not become instruments of division in an increasingly interconnected world. The Quranic invitation to reflect upon the blessings of the oceans carries an obligation to use them responsibly and for the collective good. Through AMAN and its enduring message of "Together for Peace", Pakistan Navy is seeking to translate that aspiration into practical cooperation. Ultimately, the strength of maritime nations should be measured not only by their ability to defend the seas, but also by their willingness to ensure that these waters remain avenues of peace, stability and shared human progress.

The Islamabad POST
Thursday, November 05, 2026

Briefs

Democrats retake control of...

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impeachment and securities fraud charges, while Graham's admitted inexperience drew negative headlines. Trump campaigned heavily for Paxton, Graham and Ohio's Jon Husted as part of a late election blitz that included more than two dozen rallies, and the president told his supporters repeatedly to "pretend I'm on the ballot" in an effort to fire up his base. On Tuesday night, as it grew clear Republicans were in danger of losing their congressional majorities, Trump wrote on social media, "I wasn't on the Ballot and if I was, we would have won IN A LANDSLIDE! Thank you for your attention to this matter." Democrats had flipped six Republican Senate seats in all, ensuring a majority even if they don't manage to hold their own seats in competitive Michigan and Minnesota. Democrats were also on track to take control of the US House of Representatives after flipping at least eight Republican seats in states including Kentucky, New Jersey and North Carolina and showing strength even in solidly conservative districts.

Israel election...

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anyone without evidence after reports that the head of the domestic security service Shin Bet, a Netanyahu ally, had asked to interrogate Arab parties. Netanyahu's Likud party lashed out at her, saying that she was trying to "obstruct the investigation and to cover up this serious case of manipulation of the electoral process by foreign actors". Eisenkot, a former military chief trying to unite centrists and the centre-right and turn the page on Netanyahu's long, polarising reign, accused Likud of attempting a "pogrom against democracy".

Iran war played...

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candidates, even as voters backed his handling of it. "I think a part of it was Iran, but at the same time people understood the importance of what I've done with Iran," he said. His remarks come as Democrats captured majorities in both the Senate and House, scoring sweeping victories that reached deep into Republican strongholds as tens of millions of voters delivered a scathing rebuke to Trump. The size and breadth of the Democratic wave were still coming into focus, but the party prevailed in states long thought to be out of reach, including conservative bastions like South Carolina, Texas and Iowa.

Cabinet okays...

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It said the powers included "the conduct of day-to-day affairs during the period of emergency in the province, to facilitate the smooth handling of administrative matters in KP and further improve governance". "The KP governor will submit a review report to the federal government every month regarding the exercise of all such powers," the statement said. It stated that the federal cabinet welcomed the decision and expressed the hope that the KP Advisory Council, under the leadership of the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, would make full efforts for the welfare and prosperity of the people of the province and for establishing peace and security. Moreover, the federal cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Finance, approved the design of new currency notes, the statement added. "The cabinet was given a detailed briefing on the new currency notes. The briefing stated that proposals were solicited from artists and designers across the country for the design of the new currency notes and a cabinet committee established by the prime minister conducted detailed consultations on it with all stakeholders," the handout said.

Pakistani handicrafts shine at Dunhuang cultural expo

Mirza said he had brought brass horses for the Chinese Year of the Horse because "people like this animal". Stock was limited, he added. Some of his designs, he said, were ones "Chinese people like"



ISLAMABAD: Handmade rosewood, brass and stone crafts from Pakistan are on display at a cultural expo in Dunhuang, northwest China. Two Pakistani exhibitors are showing handicrafts. One of the firms, Khan Traders, run by a pair of brothers, carries about 100 products in its booth. "Totally handmade, no machine," said Naeem Mirza, the younger brother, China Economic Net (CEN).

Mirza's rosewood range runs from candy jars and tea tables to tissue boxes, jewellery boxes and dried-fruit trays.

Asked whether one glossy jar was plastic, he was quick to say it was Pakistani rosewood, likening the timber to huali, a rosewood used in Chinese classical furniture.

Mirza said he had brought brass horses for the Chinese Year of the Horse because "people like this animal". Stock was limited, he added. Some of his designs, he said, were ones "Chinese people like".

Pressed to pick one product for Chinese buyers, Mirza chose the pale green stone he calls Pakistani jade. "This colour is natural," he said. He was offering discounts on the opening days to introduce his products to visitors. His elder brother, Munir Muhammad, said he had been doing business in China for about two years and planned to stay in Dunhuang for another two months. Stone and wood pieces, he said, were likely to draw the most interest from Chinese buyers. Pakistan's exports to China rose 8.4 per cent year on year to US$2.68 billion in the 2025–26 fiscal year, which ended on June 30, according to data from the State Bank of Pakistan. The 9th Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Cultural Expo run from 2 to 4 November in Gansu province. – **APP**

Bayern skeleton crew sink Atletico in Champions League

DNA

MADRID: Bayern Munich overcame a horror list of absences to cruise to a 2-0 win away at Atletico Madrid in the Champions League on Tuesday. Teenage Germany forward Lennart Karl opened the scoring and Konrad Laimer added another as Bayern triumphed despite a bulging casualty ward. Jamal Musiala, Luis Diaz, Serge Gnabry and Ismael Saibari were on Bayern's injury list but it meant little as freshly-minted Ballon d'Or winner Harry Kane and captain Joshua Kimmich marshalled his troops to a memorable victory. The German champions also arrived in Madrid without coach Vincent Kompany, sick with a meningitis-related condition. "There was a lot of noise around us heading in but we're very convinced of the squad we have, of the players we've got at our disposal and I think we showed over 90 minutes the type of football we can play," Laimer, who was named man of the match by UEFA, told Amazon Prime.

"We could've scored another goal or two. It was a very deserved win against a good team and an important three points."

Despite laying on an assist for Laimer, Kane failed to score meaning he missed out on equalling Cristiano Ronaldo's record for scoring in 11 straight Champions League games.

"We are standing together despite the difficult times at Bayern in the last weeks and are delighted we could experience this team victory together," Bayern captain Manuel Neuer said.

"We heard that people were doubting how well we could perform today against a top team, just two points behind Barcelona in La Liga, but to give an answer in the way we did is sensational."

Atletico's 'cold shower'

Atletico's Marcos Llorente told Movistar+ the hosts were stunned by Bayern's opener. "They're a strong side but we were holding our own. It's the little details that decide a game, and we weren't expecting that first goal. "We were covering well, so it hit us like a bucket of cold water."

With two wins and two draws, Bayern climbed to eighth spot on the table while Atletico finish Tuesday night in 22nd spot on the 36-team table.

Undermanned Bayern were handed a boost pre-match when Michael Olise was given the all clear to start after being subbed out late with a knee injury against Borussia Dortmund on Saturday.

Olise joined Bayern's two remaining senior forward Kane and Karl in the starting line-up, with wingback Alphonso Davies pushed up onto the left wing.

Atletico were received their own late injury withdrawal when Christian Romero was ruled out on matchday. Julian Alvarez came close to giving the hosts an early lead, flashing inches wide of the post three minutes in. Kane had his own chance to break the deadlock midway through the opening half but blasted wide of Jan Oblak's goal on the turn. Atletico had repelled the visitors despite ceding possession and field position but it was a simple mistake from the hosts which allowed Bayern to take the lead.

Pakistan's Maliha Ali topples Russia's Drozdova at MMA world championships

DNA

MALIHA Ali defeated Veronika Drozdova, a two-time European champion and, at 19, by split decision in their featherweight (65.8kg) bout at the world championships of amateur mixed martial arts. Maliha, who is also a wushu champion and a national kickboxing gold medallist, came into the tournament off a silver medal at the IMMAF World Cup in Angola earlier this year. The fight was won early and nearly lost late. Fighting from a southpaw stance, Maliha started cautiously before closing the distance and pinning the Russian against the cage. She landed clean strikes to finish the opening round strongly, though Drozdova found a couple of overhand lefts. Maliha dominated the second. She secured a takedown, taking the fight to the floor, and moved into full mount, sitting astride her opponent's torso, to land heavy blows from the top. But she had spent much of her energy in those two rounds and appeared to tire in the third, where Drozdova took her down and controlled the action on the ground. The round went to the Russian, but the first two belonged to Maliha. The judges agreed. When the final bell rang, she stood with her arms raised, not in certainty, but in hope. When her name was announced, Maliha let out a roar.

PFF Names 23-Member Squad for Asian Cup Qualifiers

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has finalised a talented 23-member national squad for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers, scheduled to be held in Laos from November 8 to 20, marking another important step in Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its youth football programme and develop future national stars. The selected young footballers earned their places through impressive performances at the recently concluded PFF National U-17 Football Championship 2026, which provided a competitive and merit-based platform for emerging talent from across the country to showcase their abilities and stake a claim for national selection.

The selection highlights PFF's commitment to promoting grassroots football, strengthening the youth development pathway and providing talented players with opportunities to represent Pakistan at the international level.

Head Coach Mohammad Habib will lead the young Shaheens in Group D, where Pakistan will face strong continental opponents Iran, Jordan, hosts Laos and Sri Lanka in their quest to secure qualification for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2027. The 23-member squad features three goalkeepers, eight defenders, seven midfielders and five forwards, offering a balanced combination of talent across all departments. Goalkeepers: Samar Razzaq, Wali Ullah and Ahsan Ullah. Defenders: Nadeem Hussain, Hamza Khan, Muhammad Hammad, Syed Manzar Shah, Mubashir Shah, Muhammad Awais, Hasnain Ali and Mohsin Amin. Midfielders: Abdul Sammad, Arsalan Fareedi, Muhammad Khalil Ullah, Muhammad Irmad Sarwar, Muhammad Anees, Bari Dad and Essa Khan. Forwards: Muhammad Raffy, Muhammad Moosa, Muhammad Shahzad, Hazrat Abbas and Haris Khan.

Djokovic overcomes scare late in 2nd set to beat Vacherot

The American player has added Carlos Alcaraz's former coach Juan Carlos Ferrero to his team for 2027. Shelton has already secured his spot in the Nov. 15-22 ATP Finals, along with top-ranked Alexander Zverev, seven-time major winner Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev

DNA

PARIS: Record seven-time champion Novak Djokovic overcame a scare late in the second set to beat big-serving Valentin Vacherot 6-7 (5), 7-5, 6-1 in the first round of the Paris Masters on Tuesday. The men's record 24-time Grand Slam winner is chasing a 103rd career title, which would move him level in second place with Roger Federer. Jimmy Connors leads in the Open era on 109. But the 10th-seeded Serb could have gone out early in Paris. Serving at 4-4 in the second set, he needed to save three break points to prevent Vacherot – who won the Swiss Indoors on Sunday and beat Djokovic in the Shanghai Masters semifinals last year – from serving for the match at the indoor tournament.

"His second serves are faster than my first serves, so it's very tough to play a guy in these conditions, which are really, really fast," Djokovic said. "Last year was very slow, this year is like ice." Djokovic was bamboozled by the Monaco player's "huge" serves and saw 22 aces fly past him.

"For a set and a half, I had difficulty reading his serve," Djokovic said. "Even if I guessed right, it was coming with some speed." After breaking Vacherot to level the match, he broke him at the start of the deciding set to seize the momentum. Djokovic won on his second match point with a fine two-handed backhand winner down the line from the back of the court. Both players took a medical timeout during the second set, with Djokovic having some massage on his right shoulder and Vacherot having his left ankle strapped. Also Tuesday, third-seeded Ben Shelton moved into the third round after beating fellow left hander Cameron Norrie 6-3, 6-4 to equal his season-best total with a 42nd win. The American player has added Carlos Alcaraz's former coach Juan Carlos Ferrero to his team for 2027. Shelton has already secured his spot in the Nov. 15-22 ATP Finals, along with top-ranked Alexander Zverev, seven-time major winner Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev.

Djokovic is chasing a spot but is an outsider at 11th in the race. He needs to reach at least the semifinals here to stay in contention, the ATP said, with only an ATP250 event remaining in Stockholm after Paris. No. 11-seeded Taylor Fritz, who is one place below Djokovic, won 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 against Benjamin Bonzi. In other first-round matches Tuesday, French teenager Mo se Kouame – a fan favorite at the French Open this year – lost 6-3, 6-1 to Nuno Borges, and 2022 champion Holger Rune lost 7-5, 6-4 to No. 12-seeded Tommy Paul. Rune is still finding his way back following an Achilles injury. The 23-year-old Dane returned to action in September and lost to Vacherot in the quarterfinals last week at the Swiss Indoors.

Raphinha, Yamal power Barca to Champions League win over Villa

DNA

BARCELONA: Raphinha struck twice to propel Barcelona to a 3-0 Champions League win over visitors Aston Villa on Tuesday, ending the English side's perfect start to the competition.

Five-time winners Barcelona took an early lead through Lamine Yamal before Raphinha continued his fine goalscoring form with a second-half brace.

Barca bounced back after defeat by champions Paris Saint-Germain in their previous European outing to stay in the hunt for a top eight league phase berth.

Unai Emery's Villa competed well in the first half but were eventually undone by Barca's greater ability in the final third.

The Champions League anthem was not played before the game, as a mark of respect for Tenerife striker Jesus De Miguel, who died on Tuesday morning after an on-pitch collision in a Spanish second division match the previous day, provoking shock across the football world.

"Yes it was (a good win), I want to dedicate this win to the fans, but today I don't want to talk about football, I want to send a message to the family of Jesus – may he rest in peace," Raphinha told Movistar.

"This can happen to anyone, it's very tough... you're going to play a game and the same thing can happen to you...

"From the club, I want to send a message of strength to the family." Villa captain John McGinn had only visited the Camp Nou once previously, on a summer holiday as an eight-year-old, and might have expected better weather than the downpour both teams were subjected to. The skipper might also have expected a more focused start, with Villa handing Barcelona the lead in the seventh minute. The Spanish champions pressed Aston Villa extremely high and Joao Gomes played a poor pass straight to Yamal in his own box. The 19-year-old winger gladly took the gift and stroked past Villa goalkeeper Zion Suzuki.

Emery, who endured one of the worst nights of his career away at Barca when helming PSG in 2017 during a 6-1 defeat, may have feared the worst.

However Villa reacted strongly and Matty Cash had a vicious drive deflected narrowly wide before Joao Cancelo blocked Gomes's effort. Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia was quick off his line to beat Nicolas Jackson to a dangerous through-ball. Suzuki saved from Anthony Gordon as Villa again struggled to bring the ball out from the back under Barca's pressing.

Garcia was called into action again by Johan Manzambi as the match lurched from end-to-end. Barcelona extended their lead early in the second half when Fermin Lopez fed Raphinha, who showed quick footwork before finding the bottom corner.

Cancelo powered a strike narrowly over before setting up Raphinha for Barcelona's third with a superb cross with the outside of his boot. The Brazil winger, who has made the number nine position his own this season, pounced from close range for his 19th goal of the season across all competitions.

Yamal sent a shot skidding wide as Barcelona probed for a fourth. It did not come, but the Catalan giants were able to record a first Champions League clean sheet in 19 games.

US people have rejected...

FROM PAGE 01

Ghalibaf posted on X. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei warned on Wednesday that the Middle East war would become even wider if the United States resumed its attacks on the Islamic republic. "Should such aggressions be repeated, its (the war) scope will become much wider," said Khamenei, who has yet to appear in public since he took office in March, in a written message posted on his official website.

NAB summons JUI-F...

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the Establishment Division had authorised recruitment against 3,938 vacancies in the Pakistan Post Office. However, 4,252 people were allegedly recruited, exceeding the approved number of positions. The notice also alleges that appointments were made against 2,646 abolished vacancies in violation of the cabinet committee's instructions. NAB further said that permanent appointments were made despite recommendations for recruitment on a contractual basis through a testing agency. The allegations outlined in the notice also include the use of fake and bogus documents, recruitment of overage candidates and violations of the domicile quota. The bureau warned that failure to comply with the summons could result in legal proceedings under Section 31 of the National Accountability Ordinance 1999.

China says trying to avoid ME...

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disaster to the region's people," Beijing's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a news conference on Wednesday. Beijing will "support Iran and the US in resolving disputes through negotiations, promote finding a political settlement to the Yemen issue, to help reach a proper and comprehensive solution for the opening of the Strait of Hormuz," she added. China, a top economic partner of Iran, hosted back-to-back meetings on Monday with Iranian, Omani and Saudi officials in Beijing, urging a return to the negotiating table.

Pakistan continuing efforts...

FROM PAGE 01

by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, visited Iran as part of Pakistan's efforts to mediate between Washington and Tehran. In another meeting in October, held under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, CDF Munir, the Saudi defence minister, and the Turkish spymaster met top Iranian officials in Tehran. Last week, the military's spokesman said Pakistan remained "cautiously optimistic" about its mediation between the US and Iran. On Tuesday, PM Shehbaz also recalled that the government had planned to hike fuel prices by Rs15 on Friday.

Capital to have new five-star...

FROM PAGE 01

Naqvi said the federal cabinet had approved the JIT's findings, paving the way for the government to take legal possession of the property. He maintained that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) already held possession of the building in official records, but the cabinet's decision had now provided the necessary legal basis. The minister said the CDA's member administration would immediately assume responsibility for managing the building's affairs, with the government's priority being to make the hotel operational as soon as possible. He also assured that individuals entitled to compensation under the JIT's recommendations would receive their payments. Naqvi thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for supporting the government's position despite criticism following its earlier move to take possession of the property.

Islamabad POST
Thursday November 05, 2026

Briefs

Gold prices up by Rs.13,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold and silver prices witnessed a significant increase in the local market on Wednesday, according to the rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. According to the association, the price of 24-karat gold per tola increased by Rs13,900 to settle at Rs426,036, while 10-gram 24-karat gold rose by Rs11,917 to Rs365,257. Similarly, the price of 10-gram 22-karat gold increased by Rs10,925 to reach Rs334,831.

In the international market, gold prices increased by $139 to settle at $4,035 per ounce. Meanwhile, silver prices also registered an increase of Rs295 per tola to reach Rs5,663, while the price of 10-gram silver rose by Rs253 to Rs4,855. In the international market, silver was quoted at $51.85 per ounce, up by $2.95. The association stated that gold rates were based on inter-bank exchange rates, with purity of 999.0 (24 karat).–**APP**

PSX investor base grows 47.3% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Stock Exchange's investor base expanded by 218,894 during January–October 2026, growing 47.3 percent from 463,071 at the beginning of the year to 681,965 at the end of October.

During October, 26,843 new accounts were opened, comprising 26,801 individual accounts and 42 corporate accounts. The net increase in the investor base during the month was 25,747, said a news release.

Pakistan Mercantile Exchange also recorded 1,077 new accounts in October, bringing its total number of investors to 61,915.

Young people accounted for most new individual accounts at PSX. Investors aged 18–30 opened 14,634 accounts, representing 54.6 percent of the monthly individual total.

Those aged 31–45 opened 9,290 accounts, accounting for 34.7 percent. Together, the two age groups opened 23,924 accounts, or 89.3 percent of new individual accounts Men opened 22,878 accounts, representing 85.4 percent of new individual accounts, while women opened 3,923 accounts, accounting for 14.6 percent. Punjab recorded the largest number of new accounts at 14,891, followed by Sindh with 7,643. Together, the two provinces accounted for 83.9 percent of all accounts opened during October. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded 1,894 new accounts and Islamabad 1,419. Another 370 accounts were opened from Balochistan, 340 from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 150 from Gilgit-Baltistan and 136 from abroad. SECP Chairman Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said simplifying access to investment and protecting investors' rights were priorities for the regulator. He said transparency and effective supervision would help strengthen investor confidence.–**APP**

Oil rises on Iran war uncertainty

SINGAPORE: Oil prices rose on Wednesday in a volatile session as investors awaited Washington's next move in the war with Iran, with Democrats capturing control of US Congress from President Donald Trump's Republicans in midterm elections. Brent futures rose 82 cents, or 0.8 percent, to $104.42 a barrel at 08:10 a.m. Saudi time. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures gained 50 cents, or 0.5 percent, to $96.59, reversing earlier declines. In the previous session, Brent settled at its lowest level in nearly four weeks as traders weighed talks to end the wars in Ukraine and Iran. Vote counting was underway in the US midterm elections, with Democrats snaring majorities in both houses of Congress for the rest of Trump's second term. "President Trump's conflicting signals, with military strikes continuing alongside statements downplaying further escalation, have made it difficult for traders to build strong directional conviction," said Priyanka Sachdeva, head of market insights at Phillip Nova. "I believe some profit-taking and reduction in speculative long positions are justified, particularly after the sharp rally in October," said Sachdeva.–**APP**

ECC okays key financing, sectoral uplift steps

The Committee also recommended that provincial governments and the Islamabad Capital Territory develop appropriate workplace regulations to govern the use of such devices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The Committee considered 11 agenda items submitted by various Ministries and Divisions. The ECC approved three summaries submitted by the Defence Division for separate Technical Supplementary Grants (TSGs), comprising Rs. 54 billion for various ongoing Defence Services projects, another Rs. 1.094 billion for the induction of a Lineage L-1000 aircraft and Rs. 29.139 billion for Project Istaqlal. The approvals are aimed at meeting essential operational requirements and supporting national security priorities. On a summary submitted by the Interior and Narcotics Control Division, the Committee also approved a TSG of Rs. 3.71 million, to meet the helicopter maintenance requirements of the Frontier Corps Balochistan (North).

The ECC also approved the proposed revision in the tiers and bank rate of the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYBALS). The revised structure aims to expand access to affordable financing and promote youth entrepreneurship and employment. The Committee also approved the transfer of Rs. 15.625 billion in savings generated through austerity and fuel conservation measures to the Prime Minister's Austerity Fund 2026, reinforcing the Government's commitment to fiscal discipline and prudent management of public resources. The ECC further approved a TSG of Rs. 275 billion for important water sector projects under the Ministry of Water Resources. The allocation will support the development of key water infrastructure and help advance the implementation of ongoing projects. On a summary submitted by the Commerce Division, the Committee approved restrictions on the import of camera-enabled smart glasses. The Committee also recommended that provincial governments and the Islamabad Capital Territory develop appropriate workplace regulations to govern the use of such devices. The ECC approved the continuation of gas supply to FatimaFert and Agritech, the two SNGPL-based urea manufacturing plants, up to December 31, 2026, subject to the availability of the required energy supply. The Committee also approved relaxation in the applicable Exploration and Production (E&P) Rules for the extension and renewal of 89 petroleum rights, subject to fulfilment of the prescribed conditions. The ECC further approved a TSG of Rs. 1 billion for the gasification of villages falling within a five-kilometre radius of gas production fields during FY 2026-27. The approval will facilitate gas infrastructure development and improve access to natural gas in communities near producing fields. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari; Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik; Minister of State for Finance Mr. Bilal Azhar Kiyani; and Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, along with Federal Secretaries and senior officials from the relevant Ministries, Divisions and departments.



UAE non-oil PMI eases to 54.8 as price pressures intensify

RIYADH: The UAE's non-oil private sector continued expanding in October, with new orders picking up and businesses raising selling prices at a record pace to pass on higher operating costs. According to the latest S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index, the Emirates' PMI stood at 54.8, down slightly from 55.3 in September, but well above the 50 mark, which signals expansion in the non-oil private sector. The data came as geopolitical disruptions weighed on business activity, although resilient demand and continued public investment helped keep the non-oil economy in expansion territory. In the wider region, Saudi Arabia also showed resilience in non-oil business activities, with the Kingdom registering a PMI of 54 in October, while Kuwait and Qatar recorded readings of 52.9 and 46.3, respectively. Reflecting on the UAE report, Principal Economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence David Owen said: "Output prices across the UAE non-oil private sector rose at the fastest rate in the survey's history in October, as input cost inflation quickened to its highest since June 2022." He added: "The unprecedented rise reflected efforts to pass cost burdens on to customers, with firms feeling the impact of higher fuel prices and increased charges for critical materials." Owen noted that these findings point to greater inflationary risks for the UAE economy in the fourth quarter, especially in light of successive increases in petrol and diesel prices. Output growth remained strong at the start of the fourth quarter, easing only marginally from September's seven-month high. Firms surveyed linked higher activity to a range of sectors, including construction, retail, tourism and manufacturing, although some noted constraints arising from regional conflict, competition and lower discretionary spending. New orders rose at a sharper pace than in September, supported by both new clients and repeat business. Companies also reported a boost in foreign order inflows, with new export work rising at its fastest rate in exactly two years. S&P Global further said that employment fell fractionally in October, marking the third decline in the past five months. Some firms reduced headcounts to control costs, offsetting recruitment by other businesses responding to rising sales. Business optimism strengthened in October, with expectations for activity over the coming year rising to the highest level since January, driven by robust demand forecasts and hopes of improving regional conditions. –**APP**

Jordan, IMF reach staff-level agreement

RIYADH: Jordan has reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund on two programme reviews, paving the way for approximately $294 million in financing, subject to approval by the fund's management and executive board. The agreement covers the sixth review of Jordan's economic reform program supported by the Extended Fund Facility and the third review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility. The IMF projected Jordan's economy to grow by 2.7 percent in 2026 and accelerate to 3.1 percent in 2027, according to its June review of the country's economic programme. The outlook comes as the country continues to contend with the economic effects of regional instability. Jordan has also committed to reducing public debt to around 80 percent of gross domestic product by 2028, according to the official news agency, Petra, which reported that the government intends to pursue gradual fiscal consolidation while protecting priority social and development spending. Deputy Chief of the Regional Analytics and Strategy Division in the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF Cesar Serra said in a statement: "Jordan's economy has continued to demonstrate resilience.–**APP**

UK ban on Palestine action challenged at top court

The United States in August also designated Palestine Action as a terrorist group. President Donald Trump has described activists who targeted his Turnberry golf resort in Scotland last year as "terrorists

LONDON: A co-founder of Palestine Action challenged Britain's decision to ban the campaign group as a terrorist organization at the UK Supreme Court on Wednesday, arguing that the move was disproportionate and undermined counter-terrorism laws.

The British government proscribed Palestine Action last year after a series of high-profile incidents mostly targeting defense firms, culminating in a break-in at the Royal Air Force's Brize Norton air base in which two planes were damaged.

Britain's Home Office (interior ministry) argues that the group's escalating actions, causing serious property damage, particularly a 2024 raid targeting Israeli defense firm Elbit Systems, amounted to terrorism and justified the ban. But the move has drawn criticism from civil liberties groups and prominent supporters including Irish novelist Sally Rooney, whose books can no longer be sold in Britain over her plans to provide royalties to the group. There have been more than 3,600 arrests linked to support for Palestine Action between proscription in July 2025 and this June, representing more than one-third of all terrorism arrests in Britain since 9/11, according to Home Office statistics.

With the arrest of over 300 people last weekend outside the US embassy in London, plus two dozen or so outside the Supreme Court on Wednesday, the figure is now more than 4,000 – though any resulting charges could be dropped if the ban is overturned. Founded in 2020, Palestine Action carried out hundreds of "actions," many involving obstructing or occupying premises, or spraying graffiti and breaking windows of businesses they said were linked to providing arms to Israel. After Israel began bombarding Gaza in response to a deadly attack by Hamas-led fighters in October 2023, Palestine Action's campaign escalated, the Home Office says, with the Elbit raid causing an estimated £1 million ($1.35 million) of damage. Lawyers representing Huda Ammori, who co-founded Palestine Action, said that, at the time the group was proscribed, government officials had assessed that just three of 385 actions carried out over five years had met the definition of terrorism. London's High Court initially ruled that the ban was unlawful, but the Court of Appeal overturned that decision in June, rejecting comparisons with historical groups such as the suffragettes who campaigned for women's right to vote.

Ammori's lawyer Raza Husain, however, said on Wednesday that the suffragettes and other groups "used tactics similar or more extreme than Palestine Action," citing the suffragettes' early 20th-century bombing campaign. The Home Office, though, says the 2024 Elbit attack did involve the use of violence and weapons against security staff and police officers, one of whom suffered a spinal injury when she was hit with a sledgehammer. The United States in August also designated Palestine Action as a terrorist group. President Donald Trump has described activists who targeted his Turnberry golf resort in Scotland last year as "terrorists.=–**DNA**

Pak, Turkiye for basmati rice, Mango exports

Highlighting Pakistan's agricultural export potential, Jam Kamal Khan sought Türkiye's support in facilitating greater market access and increasing exports of Pakistani mangoes to the Turkish market

ISTANBUL:Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a bilateral meeting with Türkiye's Minister of Trade, Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, on the sidelines of the 42nd Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) in Istanbul, focusing on expanding bilateral trade, promoting Pakistani agricultural exports and strengthening Turkish investment in Pakistan.

During the meeting, both ministers held productive discussions on matters of mutual economic and commercial interest, reaffirming their commitment to further strengthening trade relations between Pakistan and Türkiye, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

Jam Kamal Khan appreciated Türkiye's strong support for Pakistan's legitimate claims concerning Basmati rice and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation in protecting and promoting Pakistan's premium agricultural products in international markets.

The Commerce Minister also highlighted investment opportunities for Turkish companies in Pakistan, particularly the 1,000 acres of land earmarked for Turkish enterprises in Karachi Industrial Park. He invited Turkish businesses to capitalize on the opportunity by establishing industrial units and expanding their manufacturing and investment footprint in Pakistan.

Highlighting Pakistan's agricultural export potential, Jam Kamal Khan sought Türkiye's support in facilitating greater market access and increasing exports of Pakistani mangoes to the Turkish market.

Responding to the Commerce Minister, Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat emphasized the importance of effective marketing and branding of Pakistani Basmati rice in Türkiye to strengthen its market presence and enhance consumer recognition.

The Turkish Trade Minister also assured his full support for increasing imports of Pakistani mangoes, recognizing the potential for expanding agricultural trade between the two countries.

In a significant development, Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat agreed to send a delegation of Turkish officials to Pakistan to review existing bilateral trade mechanisms and explore practical measures to further improve trade relations.

Both sides underscored the importance of sustained institutional engagement, enhanced business cooperation and closer coordination to translate existing economic opportunities into tangible trade and investment outcomes.

Separately, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan held a meeting with H.E. Ms. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, Director General of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), on the sidelines of the COMCEC session.

During the meeting, the Director General briefed the Commerce Minister on SESRIC's ongoing activities, research initiatives and reports concerning trade among member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). She highlighted the institution's role in providing statistical information and analytical insights to support economic cooperation among Islamic countries.

Jam Kamal Khan appreciated the work undertaken by SESRIC and emphasized the critical importance of accurate, reliable and clean data in economic research and policy analysis. He noted that credible statistical information and evidence-based assessments were essential for identifying emerging trade trends, understanding market dynamics and evaluating trade potential among OIC member states.

The Commerce Minister further highlighted that improved data quality and comprehensive trade analysis could help member countries identify untapped opportunities, address existing trade barriers and formulate more effective strategies to enhance intra-OIC trade.

He underscored the importance of strengthening research-based cooperation and utilizing reliable trade statistics to support informed decision-making and promote greater economic integration among OIC countries.

The engagements reflected Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its longstanding brotherly relations with Türkiye through expanded commercial partnerships, agricultural trade and industrial cooperation, while promoting evidence-based economic cooperation and deeper trade integration across the OIC region.–**DNA**

UAE non-oil PMI eases to 54.8 as price pressures intensify

RIYADH: The UAE's non-oil private sector continued expanding in October, with new orders picking up and businesses raising selling prices at a record pace to pass on higher operating costs. According to the latest S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index, the Emirates' PMI stood at 54.8, down slightly from 55.3 in September, but well above the 50 mark, which signals expansion in the non-oil private sector. The data came as geopolitical disruptions weighed on business activity, although resilient demand and continued public investment helped keep the non-oil economy in expansion territory. In the wider region, Saudi Arabia also showed resilience in non-oil business activities, with the Kingdom registering a PMI of 54 in October, while Kuwait and Qatar recorded readings of 52.9 and 46.3, respectively.

Reflecting on the UAE report, Principal Economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence David Owen said: "Output prices across the UAE non-oil private sector rose at the fastest rate in the survey's history in October, as input cost inflation quickened to its highest since June 2022." He added: "The unprecedented rise reflected efforts to pass cost burdens on to customers, with firms feeling the impact of higher fuel prices and increased charges for critical materials." Owen noted that these findings point to greater inflationary risks for the UAE economy in the fourth quarter, especially in light of successive increases in petrol and diesel prices.

Output growth remained strong at the start of the fourth quarter, easing only marginally from September's seven-month high. Firms surveyed linked higher activity to a range of sectors, including construction, retail, tourism and manufacturing, although some noted constraints arising from regional conflict, competition and lower discretionary spending. New orders rose at a sharper pace than in September, supported by both new clients and repeat business.–**APP**

KSA remains ME's largest gold jewelry market

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia remained the Middle East's largest gold jewelry market in the third quarter of 2026, even as regional demand fell sharply, according to the World Gold Council.

According to the organization's latest Gold Demand Trends report, jewellery purchases in Saudi Arabia fell 12 percent year on year to 8.2 tonnes in the third quarter, down from 9.3 tonnes in the same period of 2025.

Middle East demand slid 22 percent to 26.2 tonnes from 33.4 tonnes a year earlier.

The regional decline in demand across the sector comes amid a period of elevated prices and economic uncertainty, as higher purchasing costs weigh on consumers' discretionary spending.

Although Saudi Arabia has not been immune to these pressures, its comparatively smaller annual decline has strengthened its position as the region's largest jewellery market, highlighting the resilience of demand relative to neighbouring markets. "High gold prices, pressure on household purchasing power and continuing geopolitical uncertainty, notable in anaemic tourist numbers, combined to constrain discretionary purchases across the region," the report said. The UAE recorded one of the region's steepest declines, with jewellery demand falling 29 percent year on year to 4.5 tonnes, from 6.4 tonnes. Kuwait saw a similar 29 percent drop, with demand reaching 1.7 tonnes, while other Middle East markets recorded a 43 percent decline to 2.5 tonnes. Egypt's demand fell 12 percent to 3.8 tonnes, in line with the Saudi rate but in a very different context, as reduced subsidies, persistent inflation and exceptionally high interest rates squeezed household finances. Neighboring Turkiye, by comparison, proved relatively resilient, with demand slipping just 4 percent to 7 tonnes._**APP**

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Briefs

US federal court blocks Afghan deportation plan

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A US federal court on Tuesday blocked the Trump administration's plans to deport scores of Afghan immigrants back to Afghanistan, a move advocacy groups said could endanger their lives.

Judge Valerie Caproni of the US District Court for the Southern District of New York ruled that the United States could not send any Afghan nationals to Afghanistan or Pakistan this week.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Deputy Assistant Director Christopher George told the court there were "no planned or confirmed chartered or commercial flights" to deport Afghan nationals in the US to Afghanistan or Pakistan this week, according to court documents.

US media reported last week that more than 150 Afghans in the US would be deported via Pakistan to Afghanistan as part of President Donald Trump's latest immigration crackdown.

Among the group were relatives of Afghans who assisted the US military in the country prior to the fall of Kabul, according to AfghanEvac, a group seeking to help former Afghan allies. "A week ago, there was a plane. Today, the government told a federal judge there isn't one," AfghanEvac President Shawn VanDiver said in a statement after Tuesday's ruling.

Salik remarks about Punjab corruption surprising, says Asif

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD:Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Wednesday that Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain's remarks regarding corruption in Punjab were "beyond my understanding".

During a talk show on a private television channel on Monday, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader had lavished praise on former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi. However, he had also criticised the present provincial administration, headed by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, alleging that he regularly heard complaints of corruption. On Tuesday, CM Maryam had sent a Rs5 billion defamation notice to the minister, demanding that he retract his remarks. In a post on the social media platform X on Wednesday, Asif said, "Chaudhry Salik Sahib is very respected in my eyes; I respect his elders just as I respect my own.

Pak, UK express concern at threat from terrorists groups

"Both sides expressed concerns over the continuing threat posed by terrorist groups, including the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), operating in and from Afghanistan," the FO said, adding that they underscored the "urgent need for a stable, secure Afghanistan as a cornerstone for lasting peace and prosperity across the region"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom on Wednesday expressed concerns over the ongoing threat from terrorist groups operating in and from Afghanistan, the Foreign Office said. According to a statement by the FO, the two countries held their annual bilateral dialogue on counter-terrorism in Islamabad, in which they reviewed ongoing bilateral and multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation and reaffirmed their shared commitment to combatting terrorism in all its forms.

"The two sides discussed in detail the evolving regional and global security environment and exchanged views on the threats posed by terrorist entities, including transnational terrorist networks," it said.

"Both sides expressed concerns over the continuing threat posed by terrorist groups, including the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), operating in and from Afghanistan," the FO said, adding that they underscored the "urgent need for a stable, secure Afghanistan as a cornerstone for lasting peace and prosperity across the region".

The UK delegation also expressed condolences over the loss of innocent lives in terrorist attacks in Pakistan and reiterated that it stood with the country in the fight against terrorism, the statement added.

Another focus of the dialogue was the exchange of best practices and the exploration of new avenues for partnership to counter new trends in terrorism, including campaigns of misinformation and disinformation, exploitation of social media platforms and emerging technologies, it said.

"Both sides acknowledged Pakistan's contributions to regional stability and security," the FO said, adding that they agreed to strengthen institutional linkages and maintain regular engagement to advance shared counter-terrorism objectives.

According to the statement, the delegations agreed to hold the next round of the dialogue in London in 2027, on mutually agreed dates. Earlier this year, the two countries agreed to enhance cooperation in counterterrorism, combating illegal migration and human smuggling, institutional collaboration and police training.

Pakistan and the European Union (EU) have also agreed to strengthen cooperation at multilateral forums, including the United Nations. Ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been strained in the past few years as Islamabad continues to voice its concern over cross-border terrorism.

Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration in Kabul to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned TTP that are used for attacks in Pakistan. Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan ties excellent: Shaza



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja says Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations have evolved beyond traditional diplomatic ties into a dynamic partnership encompassing trade, investment, energy, defence and digital transformation. Addressing an event in Islamabad today (Wednesday), she said the two countries are paying special attention to further enhancing cooperation in the fields of information technology and digital transformation.

She said the inauguration of the Azerbaijan Service Centre in Islamabad is a beautiful gift and a practical manifestation of the friendship between the two countries. The Federal Minister said Pakistan takes pride in the fact that brotherly countries like Azerbaijan have always stood by it and respected international law and global peace. – **DNA**

Jailed former PM Imran in good health but concerned about his wife

Ex-premier aware of recent political developments, including imposition of governor's rule in KP, say sources

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan was aware of the recent political developments, including the imposition of governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the emergency measures taken by the federal government, when he met his lawyer in Adiala Jail on Monday, sources said.

The meeting, held after a considerable gap, was reportedly restricted to professional and legal matters, in accordance with the understanding that no political discussion would take place. Sources said Imran Khan was already aware of the developments outside prison, including the recent constitutional and political changes, although the lawyer did not brief him on these matters during the meeting.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss Imran Khan's health, which sources described as satisfactory.

However, Bushra Bibi has an eye-related problem, which is a major concern for the jailed founder chairman of the PTI.

According to sources, Imran Khan advised that legal remedies should be pursued through the courts to secure relief, particularly in Bushra Bibi's case. He reportedly stressed that the matter should be taken up through the appropriate judicial forums to seek relief in accordance with the law.

SSGC announces new gas supply schedule for winter

Gas supply to domestic consumers to be prioritised during three designated cooking periods

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has announced designated timings for gas availability to domestic consumers during the winter season, saying it is committed to ensuring supplies during household cooking hours in line with government instructions.

According to an announcement shared by the gas utility, domestic consumers will receive gas during three periods each day, from 6:30am to 9am, 12pm to 2:30pm and 6pm to 9pm.

The company said prioritising domestic consumers and ensuring gas availability during the specified cooking hours were part of its strategy for the winter season.

SSGC said the measures were being taken in accordance with the federal government's directives, with household consumers' convenience remaining a priority.

Separately, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has introduced gas load management for domestic consumers in Islamabad, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, restricting supplies to three daily cooking-time slots from Wednesday as dwindling liquefied natural gas (LNG) availability and rising winter demand put further pressure on the country's gas supply system.

Under the schedule, households will receive gas from 6:30am to 9am, noon to 2:30pm and 6pm to 9pm. The restrictions also cover Islamabad, with the government prioritising domestic consumption over other sectors to manage available supplies during the winter season.

SNGPL has also reduced gas supplies to the compressed natural gas (CNG) sector from 50 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) to 35 mmcfd, with plans to suspend supplies to the sector altogether in the coming days.

The cement industry has already switched to coal, while industrial consumers connected to the distribution network are also facing reduced gas supplies.

Industries connected directly to the transmission network, including both export-oriented and non-export industries, are currently receiving around 200 mmcfd. However, further reductions in supplies remain possible.

Meanwhile, the power sector is receiving approximately 140 mmcfd of gas, while the fertiliser industry is being supplied around 53 mmcfd.

Musk jokes about Trump camp defeat

DNA

WASHINGTON: Tech billionaire Elon Musk joked on Wednesday about Republicans' defeat in US midterm elections after spending hundreds of millions of dollars to help the party.

Democrats seized control of the US Congress on Tuesday, capturing both the Senate and House of Representatives in a stunning rejection of President Donald Trump's political agenda.

"Guess my election-interfering space lasers didn't work this time," Musk said on X, including the shrug emoji.

Musk contributed nearly half a billion dollars to Republican political efforts, making him the largest individual contributor in a federal election cycle since unlimited election spending was allowed in 2010, according to campaign finance tracker OpenSecrets.

His donations have mostly gone to his Republican-leaning America PAC, as well as to the Republican Senate Leadership Fund super PAC.

The SLF used Musk's $158 million in donations in September to support Ken Paxton, the Republican Senate candidate in Texas. Democrat James Talarico defeated Paxton, a close ally of Trump, to become the first Democrat to win statewide office in Texas since 1994.

Indonesia detains 3 police generals

DNA

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesian police said Tuesday they had detained three senior police generals suspected of illegally wiretapping President Prabowo Subianto and dozens of other prominent figures.

Asep Safrudin, head of the National Police's Criminal Investigation Agency, said the suspects were being investigated for illegally intercepting communications, accessing electronic systems without authorization and deleting electronic data. Police identified the suspects as current Presidential Chief of Staff Gen. Listyo Sigit Prabowo, National Police Legal Division head Insp. Gen. Ahrie Sonta Nasution and Insp. Gen. Eko Hadi Santoso, a senior instructor at the National Police Education and Training Institute. All three were detained at the National Police headquarters detention center, Safrudin said.

Hakeem Jeffries poised to become speaker

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Democrats' midterm election win puts Hakeem Jeffries in line to become the first Black speaker of the US House of Representatives, with the dual challenge of opposing President Donald Trump while bridging the gap between his party's moderates and its more vocal progressives. As speaker, Jeffries, representing a New York City congressional district, would preside over a majority that will be sworn in the first week of January, taking the reins from Republicans who controlled the House for the past four years.

"Today begins the great American comeback," Jeffries proclaimed in a victory speech late on Tuesday after media outlets projected the likelihood of Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. He attacked the Trump-led Republican agenda in Congress over the past two years, pledging to pass legislation reversing steep spending cuts — enacted into law on July 4, 2025 — to the Medicaid healthcare program for the poor and people with disabilities.

"The American people have spoken and made clear that they've had enough of the extremism, enough of the corruption. They want a Congress that's going to deliver for the American people," Jeffries said.

Jeffries has long said that, while his caucus would focus on helping the poor and middle class cope with the high cost of living, Democrats would also investigate the Trump administration's dealings with corporate executives, including those who have donated heavily to his various campaigns and projects. He has stopped short of saying the House, under his leadership, would attempt to impeach Trump for a third time. Democratic Representative Robert Garcia of California, who is expected to become chair of the House Committee on Oversight, had two words of advice. "Lawyer up," he said in an election night statement. With votes still being counted across much of the country after Tuesday's elections, the size of the Democratic majority in the House for the next two years was unclear.



The House speaker acts as the boss of the often boisterous 435-member chamber, deciding what legislation advances to a vote or dies on the vine. The House speaker is second in line for the presidency, after Vice President JD Vance.

Later this month, the newly elected House Democrats will gather behind closed doors to anoint their candidate to run in the January election for speaker. Nobody is seen posing a serious threat to Jeffries, according to multiple Democratic aides. Weeks later, with the start of a new Congress, the full House will vote to select the 57th speaker since 1789, with Republicans putting up their own candidate who will be all but certain to fail.

But Jeffries still has some work to do in nailing down the support of several far-left progressives, such as fellow New Yorker and Representative-elect Darializa Avila Chevalier. In a September 30 interview with Vanity Fair, Avila Chevalier would not commit to voting for Jeffries.



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