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Dar speaks at Margalla Dialogue

Terrorism from Afghanistan a serious threat

As regards the US-Iran conflict, the Deputy Prime Minister said Pakistan continues to pursue all diplomatic efforts to sustain engagement, restore dialogue and facilitate a return to the negotiating table

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has said Pakistan will firmly safeguard its legitimate rights under the Indus Waters Treaty and oppose any attempt to weaponize water. Addressing the Margalla Dialogue 2026 in Islamabad, he emphasized that regional stability also depends on respect for the treaty obligations. The Deputy Prime Minister said the just resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions remains indispensable for lasting peace in South Asia. He said leaving the dispute unresolved perpetuates mistrust and exposes the region to recurring crises.

Ishaq Dar recalled Pakistan's decisive and calibrated response to India's unprovoked aggression in May last year, saying it demonstrated our readiness and capability to defend our sovereignty. He said our position is very clear that we will defend our sovereignty with determination and pursue peace with equal commitment.

Ishaq Dar highlighted that terrorism emanating from Afghanistan remains a serious security challenge. He said Pakistan will continue to protect its people while supporting efforts towards a peaceful, stable and economically integrated Afghanistan. He, however, said progress towards this objective requires effective action to ensure that the Afghan territory is not used for terrorism against other countries, particularly Pakistan. As regards the US-Iran conflict, the Deputy Prime Minister said Pakistan continues to pursue all diplomatic

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Pakistan reviews economic diplomacy strategy

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a high-level meeting on Tuesday to review Pakistan's economic diplomacy initiatives and efforts aimed at promoting exports. The meeting focused on enhancing the role of Pakistan's diplomatic missions abroad in strengthening engagement with partner countries, highlighting the country's export potential, and facilitating stronger business-to-business linkages.

During the discussion, Dar underscored the importance of closer coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant government ministries to advance Pakistan's economic objectives. He stressed that diplomatic engagement should contribute directly to national economic growth and export expansion. The deputy prime minister directed all concerned departments and officials to ensure sustained follow-up on diplomatic outreach efforts, emphasizing the need to translate international engagement into tangible economic

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Rubio says no more attacks on Iran

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has accused Iran of being the main source of instability in the Middle East.

"If you guys go through the Middle East and talk about all the instability ... Houthis, the militias in Iraq, Hezbollah, Hamas, the civil war that occurred in Syria ... what do all of these things have in common?" he tells reporters. "Behind every single one of these destabilising activities in the Middle East there's one common denominator: the Iranian regime. They are behind all the instability in the region. They are the source of instability in the region. I think the countries of the region realise that as well," he adds.

No threat to Tabela Dam

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lieutenant General (retd) Muhammad Saeed has ordered a departmental inquiry into the tunnel accident at Tarbela's fifth extension project. The chairman made the remarks during his visit to the Tarbela fifth extension hydropower project to review the situation after the accident and chaired a meeting at the project office.

Consultants, the contractor and Wapda teams briefed the meeting that there is no threat to the integrity of the main Tarbela Dam or any of its structures. The meeting held a detailed discussion on the possible causes of the incident. Precautionary measures and the strategy for dealing with the current issue were also considered, and immediate response measures were finalised.

The chairman also toured the project's intake structure, tunnel, powerhouse and other key sites. He directed the teams to cover all aspects and submit a detailed report at the earliest. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Water Resources said Wapda had been asked to submit a comprehensive report on the Tarbela Dam matter.

According to sources, the inquiry into the incident will be completed within a week. Experts from outside Wapda will also be included in the inquiry. The sources added that responsibility will be fixed and the report will be submitted to the Prime Minister's Office.

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ANTALYA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being received by Mr. Gökhan Yazgı, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of Türkiye upon arrival at Antalya, Türkiye. – DNA

PM in Türkiye to attend COP-31 leaders' summit

On the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister is also scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with Turkish President Recep Erdoğan and other world leaders attending COP31 to discuss matters of mutual interest and strengthen bilateral cooperation

DNA

ANTALYA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Antalya, Republic of Türkiye, today on an official visit to participate in the Leaders' Summit of the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Upon arrival, the Prime Minister was received by Mr. Gökhan Yazgı, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Türkiye, Ms. Amna Baloch, and senior Turkish officials.

The Prime Minister will address the COP31 Antalya Leaders' Summit, highlighting Pakistan's climate priorities and emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced global climate action and strengthened international cooperation to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change, in accordance with established principles. The Prime Minister will also address the High-Level Dialogue on Clean Energy Transition and Electrification, titled "35 by 35: Powering the Future." On the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister is also

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Briefs

Bilawal calls for political reset

MEHTAB PIRZADA

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday called for a "political reset", wherein all political parties must unite for the sake of the country, while also urging the prime minister to take measures to build trust with the government's allies and the opposition. The PPP chairperson was addressing an event to mark the completion of one million houses for flood affectees under the Sindh Flood Resilience Project (SFRP), which he said "made history" by being the largest house-building programme in the world. "The Sindh government has built one million houses, and when this project is completed, we would have built two million houses," Bilawal said.

Houthis claim fresh attacks

NEWS DESK

ADAN: Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree claims that the group carried out four attacks using missiles and drones on Saudi Arabia, in response for coalition airstrikes on their territory in Yemen. "The first operation targeted King Khalid International Airport and several pumping stations along the East-West pipeline in the Saudi ... capital, Riyadh. The strikes were direct, causing fires and damage at the targeted sites," Saree says in a post on X. He says the second operation targeted an Aramco facility in Abqaiq and "successfully achieved its objectives", while the third targeted Saudi troops in Al-Mudarribah and Ras Al-Arah District, "leaving a large number of dead and wounded".

Trump nominates Natalie Baker as US envoy to Pakistan

The nomination has been submitted to the US Senate, whose foreign relations committee will review it. If approved by the committee, the nomination will proceed to a vote by the full Senate



DNA

ISLAMABAD: US President Donald Trump has nominated Natalie Baker, the current charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Islamabad, to be the ambassador to Pakistan, according to a statement by the White House. The nomination has been submitted to the US Senate, whose foreign relations committee will review it. If approved by the committee, the nomination will proceed to a vote by the full Senate. The nomination is likely to be approved as the Republicans has majority in Senate for the moment. However, after January when the new Senate shapes up, Republicans will not have majority.

Baker would be appointed as the US ambassador to Pakistan following the Senate's confirmation. Baker assumed the role of charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Islamabad in January 2025, following the departure of then-ambassador Donald Armin Blome. She arrived in Islamabad as deputy chief of mission in August 2024, according to details available on the embassy's website.

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SIFC, Uzbekistan discuss expanding economic, investment cooperation

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Senior officials of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) held an important meeting with Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, to explore opportunities for strengthening bilateral economic and investment cooperation.

During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on enhancing collaboration across a range of key sectors, including textiles, food processing, agriculture, real estate, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The participants emphasized the importance of utilizing the economic potential of both countries to promote sustainable growth and mutually beneficial partnerships. Officials reviewed prospects for increasing trade and investment activities and discussed measures to facilitate stronger engagement between the business communities of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The two sides agreed that closer cooperation between private sectors could play a vital role in unlocking new commercial opportunities and boosting economic links.

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IHC orders PTI lawyers' meeting with Imran, Bushra

Imran Khan's blood pressure remains uncontrolled and he fears risk of brain haemorrhage, Barrister Salman Safdar tells court

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed that lawyers Latif Khosa and Salman Safdar be allowed to meet Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in Adiala jail, with the attorney general saying the meetings could be arranged if they assured the court that arguments in the appeals would begin at the next hearing.

A division bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif issued directives while hearing appeals filed by Imran and Bushra against their convictions in the £190 million case.

An accountability court in Islamabad had earlier sentenced the former prime minister to 14 years' imprisonment with a fine of Rs1 million, while the ex-first lady was awarded seven years' imprisonment along with a fine of Rs500,000.

During the hearing today, lawyer Khosa told the court that he had repeatedly sought a meeting with Imran but had not been allowed to meet him. To this, the IHC chief justice asked how long Khosa wanted the meeting to last. Khosa requested at least an hour, after which the court

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PTI ready to work with JUI-F, says Gohar Khan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Gohar Ali Khan has expressed the party's willingness to work with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, saying PTI remains part of the joint opposition and is committed to continuing its struggle against the government alongside allied opposition parties.

Speaking to the media, Gohar said PTI believes in strengthening opposition unity to safeguard democratic values and address issues facing the country. He noted that cooperation with JUI-F and other opposition parties would continue as part of broader efforts to mount political pressure on the government. Meanwhile, senior PTI leader and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was shifted to a hospital after his health reportedly deteriorated.

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Smart meters to be installed on transformers: Ahad

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Ahad Cheema chaired a meeting on Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs).
The meeting reviewed development programs for DISCOs and discussed the Economic Affairs Division's (EAD) efforts to arrange funding for installing smart meters on transformers across all DISCOs.
Participants noted that positive progress had been made so far in arranging funding for the smart metering system, which is intended to help curb electricity theft and overbilling, said a release issued here on Tuesday.
The meeting discussed the continuation of the smart metering project after privatisation. Ahad Cheema said the government would put in place arrangements to ensure that private investors carry the project forward.
Smart meters on transformers can help curb electricity theft, improve billing accuracy and protect consumers from overbilling, while safeguarding the interests of consumers, investors and the government.
Negotiations with multilateral partners for development programmes would continue until privatisation is completed. If a DISCO is privatised while negotiations or programme preparations are under way, the relevant financing and development programmes would be transferred to the private investor as part of the handover, subject to agreed arrangements.
Ahad Cheema further emphasised that any new project undertaken by a private investor within a DISCO must be processed through competitive bidding and receive approval from the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), as applicable. **APP**

Old Airport Road made beautiful with seasonal flowers

RAWALPINDI: The Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi has intensified its beautification efforts with the plantation of colourful seasonal flowers along the green belts of Old Airport Road following the arrival of the winter season.
The initiative aims to enhance the city's visual appeal and provide residents with a pleasant, green and attractive environment.
According to the agency, the plantation drive is being carried out under the special directions of the Managing Director, Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, with a focus on improving landscaping and promoting a greener urban environment. The agency is also ensuring regular watering, plant care and cleanliness to maintain the green belts and preserve the beauty of seasonal flowers. Ahmed Hassan Ranjha said that beautifying the city, promoting greenery and providing citizens with a pleasant environment were among the agency's top priorities. He added that efforts to improve green belts and public spaces across Rawalpindi would continue. The agency is committed to making Rawalpindi a cleaner, greener and more beautiful city through sustained horticultural initiatives.—**APP**

Tajikistan embassy, SZABMU hold Avicenna Science Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Pakistan, in collaboration with Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU), organised a scientific event titled "Avicenna Science Day" in Islamabad to highlight the enduring contributions of the renowned Persian polymath Abu Ali Ibn Sina, widely known as Avicenna, to medicine, science and human knowledge.
The event aimed to promote scientific awareness and academic exchange while highlighting the historical contributions of Central Asian scholars to the development of medical sciences. It also provided a platform for academics, researchers and medical professionals to reflect on Avicenna's legacy and its relevance to contemporary healthcare and scientific research. Avicenna, who lived during the 10th and 11th centuries, is regarded as one of the most influential physicians and philosophers in history. His celebrated medical work, The Canon of Medicine, remained a major reference in medical education in both the Eastern and Western worlds for several centuries.
The collaboration between the Tajikistan Embassy and SZABMU underscored the importance of educational and scientific cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan, particularly in the fields of medicine, research and higher education.
The event also highlighted the shared historical and intellectual heritage of the two countries and the potential to strengthen academic linkages through joint research, knowledge-sharing initiatives and institutional partnerships. The organisers expressed the importance of promoting the legacy of great scholars such as Avicenna among younger generations.



Sindh CM okays PPP initiatives to boost investment

KARACHI: In a major push to improve public services, attract private investment and accelerate development across Sindh, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday approved a series of landmark initiatives through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework, including the outsourcing of 750 schools, development of Keti Bandar as a maritime and economic hub, restructuring of Sukkur's water supply and sewerage system, and major road connectivity projects.
Presiding over the 53rd meeting of the PPP Policy Board at the CM House, the chief minister also approved a revised joint venture model for Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (SEZ), bridge financing of Rs2 billion for the Ghotki-Kandhkot Bridge and several initiatives to strengthen Karachi's infrastructure, expand industrial investment and introduce modern digital facilities. The decisions, involving proposals from seven government departments, reflect the provincial government's commitment to using private-sector expertise, investment and technology to improve essential services, create economic opportunities and deliver better facilities to citizens. The meeting was attended by Provincial Ministers Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Syed Sardar Shah and Jam Khan Shoro; Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah; MPAs Ghulam Qadir Chandio and Qasim Siraj Soomro; Special Assistants Syed Qasim Naveed and Muhammad Ali Rashid; Principal Secretary to the CM Agha Wasif; Chairman Planning and Development Board Najam Shah; Senior Member Board of Revenue Khalid Hyder Shah and other senior officials. In a major education-sector decision, the Board approved Phase-II outsourcing of 750 schools under the Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project (SSEIP), Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (SELECT) programme and People's Schools initiative.
The programme covers 453 SSEIP schools, including 401 under additional financing and 52 under original financing, 295 SELECT schools and two English-medium People's Schools._**DNA**

Govt committed to regional educational coop

"Education remains the foundation of regional connectivity, shared prosperity and sustainable development. Pakistan is committed to strengthening educational partnerships that create meaningful opportunities for our youth," she said

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Ms Wajiha Qamar represented Pakistan at the 5th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Educational Institute, held virtually, and presented Pakistan's national statement, reaffirming the government's commitment to strengthening regional educational cooperation, academic partnerships and human capital development. Addressing the meeting, the Minister of State said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the Government of Pakistan was pursuing comprehensive educational reforms aimed at improving access to quality education, addressing the challenge of out-of-school children, strengthening higher education and promoting technical and vocational training. She emphasized that education, innovation and emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and digital learning, were essential for sustainable development and economic prosperity across the ECO region. "Education remains the foundation of regional connectivity, shared prosperity and sustainable development. Pakistan is committed to strengthening educational partnerships that create meaningful opportunities for our youth," she said. Ms Wajiha Qamar called for enhanced cooperation among ECO member states through student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives, institutional partnerships and knowledge-sharing. Referring to the ECO Educational Institute's proposed Work Programme for 2027–2029, she stressed the importance of practical, result-oriented initiatives to promote academic excellence, skills development and regional integration. The Minister of State appreciated the Government of Türkiye, the ECO Secretariat and the ECO Educational Institute for their continued efforts to advance regional educational cooperation. She reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working closely with ECO member states to promote inclusive education, innovation, youth empowerment and sustainable regional development.—**DNA**

Foundation stone laid for uplift projects worth Rs 731m

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has laid the foundation stone for development projects worth Rs731 million being undertaken by the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI) in North Karachi.
Members of the City Council, President of the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry Faisal Moiz Khan, other office-bearers and representatives of the industrial community were also present on the occasion.
Addressing the ceremony, Mayor Murtaza Wahab said that improving basic infrastructure in industrial areas was essential for Karachi's economic growth and the promotion of industrial activities.
He said it was necessary to ensure that both the city and its industries continued to function smoothly, as the growth of industries would benefit ordinary citizens, generate tax revenue for Pakistan, support the government's operations and enable the industrial sector to play its role in earning foreign exchange for the country.
He said that the North Karachi Industrial Area played an important role in the city's economic activities and that improvements in roads, drainage systems and other basic facilities would provide much-needed relief to industrialists and the business community. Better infrastructure in industrial areas would create a favourable business environment, encourage investment and generate new employment opportunities.
He said that the government had stood with industrialists in the past, stood with them today and would continue to extend its cooperation in the future. "If you take one step forward, we will take two. If two steps are not possible, we will take one step, and if even one step is not possible, we will take half a step. What matters is that we must take practical measures to move forward," he said.
Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said Sindh had considerable potential for generating electricity through wind power, with an extensive wind corridor offering opportunities for electricity generation extending beyond Gwadar. Despite this potential, expensive power plants had been established. He said that a way forward had been provided regarding wind power and that the need of the hour was to utilise available resources to provide affordable energy to industries. The Mayor said that practical solutions to the problems faced by investors could only be found by sitting together with the business community. Joint efforts were also needed to reduce the cost of doing business. He said that Karachi's water requirements should not be addressed solely through reliance on dams, as the possibility of bringing canal water to the city could also be explored._**APP**

NBF event to mark Iqbal's 149th birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF), under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, organised an academic and intellectual event to commemorate the 149th birth anniversary of the great poet and philosopher of the East, Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal.
Titled "Iqbal's Message to the Ummah and the Youth", the event was held at the Ahmad Faraz Auditorium at NBF headquarters in Islamabad.
The event aimed to highlight Iqbal's philosophy and teachings, particularly his message of Khudi (selfhood), love and action, and his vision for the intellectual and moral development of younger generations.
Renowned educationist and researcher Dr Aziz Ali Najam delivered the keynote lecture, while the chief guest, Major General (Retd.) Muhammad Tahir, also shared his views.
In his thought-provoking lecture, Dr Aziz Ali Najam shed light on various aspects of Allama Iqbal's life, academic and literary journey, education, political and intellectual struggle, and poetry.
He observed that Iqbal was not merely a poet but a great thinker, philosopher and architect of the intellectual foundations of Pakistan. His poetry and philosophy inspire individuals to recognise their true identity, awaken their sense of selfhood, develop strong character and face life's challenges through practical struggle.
He emphasised that Allah Almighty has bestowed upon human beings the status of Ashraf-ul-Makhluqat (the noblest of creation); therefore, they must understand the purpose of their creation, their position and responsibilities, and utilise their abilities in a positive and constructive manner.
He referred to Allama Iqbal's major literary and poetic works, particularly Bang-e-Dra, Bal-e-Jibril and Armaghan-e-Hijaz, highlighting their intellectual messages of Muslim unity, self-awareness, awakening and guidance for younger generations.—**APP**

Pak seeks global scientific partnership to study 13,500 glaciers

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik has called for international scientific cooperation to study glaciers and mountain ecosystems, warning that melting ice and the growing risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) are threatening vulnerable communities and their livelihoods.
Speaking at the UN Climate Change Pavilion at COP31, the minister said the first impact of climate change was often felt in mountainous regions, making collaborative research on glaciers and associated environmental risks essential.
He said more than 13,500 glaciers had been identified in Pakistan, while the increasing threat of glacial lake outburst floods required coordinated scientific research and international cooperation.
"Pakistan contributes less than one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it remains among the countries most severely affected by climate change," he said.
He warned that glacier melt was putting thousands of people, their homes and sources of livelihood at risk, adding that climate change was not merely an environmental challenge but a question of human survival.
The minister called for equitable distribution of climate finance, saying developing countries facing severe climate impacts needed timely financial assistance.
He observed that climate financing remained concentrated among major emitting countries, despite the vulnerability of countries contributing little to global emissions.
He said scientific research in mountainous regions could also help improve understanding of climate risks in plains and polar regions, stressing the need to move beyond international declarations towards practical cooperation. Highlighting Pakistan's proposed initiatives to promote research and innovation, Musadik Malik outlined plans for a Green Virtual University to connect Pakistani students, researchers and faculty members with leading international universities and scientists. Under the proposed initiative, Pakistani students would have opportunities to participate in joint research, faculty exchanges and student exchange programmes and work with internationally recognised researchers without necessarily having to study abroad.—**APP**



KP hospitals set new benchmarks in healthcare delivery

PESHAWAR: Public-private partnerships (PPP) in health sector between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation (KPHF) and the Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF) are helping transform public healthcare across the province by improving service quality, expanding specialist care and making affordable healthcare more accessible to communities. One of the notable examples is District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Wana in South Waziristan, where service delivery has improved significantly since MERF assumed its management in 2022. According to the Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) of the KP government, the hospital's performance score has increased from 37 percent to between 80 and 84 percent over the last few quarters, making it one of the province's most improved secondary healthcare facilities. The hospital currently serves an average of 780 patients daily, offering specialist consultations, emergency care, dialysis, surgical procedures, laboratory diagnostics and inpatient services. Fourteen specialist consultants are providing services across 11 medical disciplines, with specialists handling 93 percent of outpatient department (OPD) consultations. Recruitment to fill the remaining vacancies in a few specialised disciplines is also under way, shares MERF Provincial Manager KP Dr. Abdul Basit. The impact of the PPP model is also reflected in the performance of DHQ Hospital Mishti Mela in Orakzai, another key facility managed by MERF in collaboration with the KP government and KPHF, Basit added.
For several consecutive years, the hospital has remained among the top-ranked secondary healthcare facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in IMU assessments, reflecting its performance in service delivery, healthcare standards, patient care and hospital management despite operating in a geographically challenging district. Similarly, Government General Hospital (GGH) Nishterabad, Peshawar, has emerged as another example of the PPP model's contribution to public healthcare by helping reduce the burden on tertiary-care hospitals and bringing affordable medical services closer to urban communities. The hospital continues to serve thousands of patients through expanded outpatient, emergency and specialist services, contributing to improved access to healthcare and strengthening the provincial health system. Dr. Abdul Basit said MERF remained committed to supporting the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in strengthening public healthcare facilities through innovation, improved service standards, efficient management and patient-centred care. He said the PPP model had demonstrated how effective collaboration between the public and development sectors could improve healthcare delivery while ensuring equitable access to quality medical services for communities across the province. MERF currently manages several public healthcare facilities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the PPP for Health model in partnership with the provincial government and KPHF.—**DNA**

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CDA chief visits reviews C-14 development work

He further said that after several decades CDA has not only accelerated sector development work in new sectors but has also begun the process of handing over possession of developed plots to allottees

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf visited Sector C-14 and carried out a detailed review of the ongoing development activities there.

While briefing Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf on the ongoing development activities in Sector C-14, relevant officers said that sector development work in C-14 is continuing at full pace and approximately 92 percent of the basic infrastructure work has been completed.

During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that arrangements for electricity supply in Sector C-14 have entered the final stages and the installation of light poles on the main roads has been completed. He was further informed that signboards are being installed on the main roads and streets of Sector C-14. Similarly, landscaping and horticulture work is also underway.

Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf directed that possession of plots be provided to allottees without delay. He directed that the remaining development work in Sector C-14 be completed on a priority basis.

Chairman CDA said that the development of new sectors is among the top priorities of the CDA administration. He directed that continuous monitoring of development projects in new sectors and immediate resolution of issues be ensured.

Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf said that sector development will improve the infrastructure of the federal capital Islamabad and provide citizens with the best residential facilities. He further said that after several decades CDA has not only accelerated sector development work in new sectors but has also begun the process of handing over possession of developed plots to allottees.—**DNA**



Minister directs completion of ICT hotels ahead of SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to accelerate work on Islamabad's hospitality sector ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, ensuring that all hotels under construction are completed on time and existing facilities are upgraded to meet international standards. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad, the Interior Minister reviewed progress on measures to improve the city's hospitality sector before the SCO Summit. He directed the authorities to take effective steps to ensure the early completion of all hotels currently under construction. Naqvi directed the concerned officials to remain in regular contact with hotel owners and resolve their problems without delay. He also directed them to take special measures to renovate existing hotels and improve their facilities and standards. The minister said local hotels should be connected with international hotel chains. He asked the relevant authorities to establish contacts between local hotel owners and international hotel chains and promote cooperation between them to improve hotel standards. The meeting was briefed on the plan to convert One Constitution Avenue into an international-standard hotel. It was also decided that an international-standard shopping mall would be developed in the building adjacent to One Constitution Avenue. Naqvi said a comprehensive plan for the One Constitution Avenue project was being prepared in consultation with an international hotel chain. He directed the authorities to ensure that construction work on the project starts on January 1 under all circumstances. The Interior Minister also called for special training courses in cooperation with relevant training institutions to meet the hospitality sector's workforce requirements. He directed the authorities to start preparations immediately to ensure the availability of trained staff when the new hotels become operational. He stressed the need to ensure that the sector has the required trained workforce to meet its needs. The meeting also reviewed progress on the renovation of the Convention Centre and the construction of a new hall. Naqvi said Islamabad must be fully prepared for the SCO Summit and directed the authorities to ensure arrangements that meet the requirements of the distinguished guests attending the event. Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and other relevant officials attended the meeting.—**DNA**

Virtual asset alliance launched to protect crypto investors

ISLAMABAD: The Virtual Asset Alliance of Pakistan (VAAP) has been launched to protect investors in cryptocurrency and digital assets, raise cyber-security awareness, and represent Pakistan's industry globally.

The Alliance has been formed in collaboration with Asia Web3 Alliance Japan. Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club Islamabad, Alliance representative Syed Ehtesham Hamdani, along with industry leaders Mubashir Irfan, Muhammad Ismail, Zain-ul-Abideen, Hamza Kiani, and Shafiq-ul-Hassan, said the platform aims to protect investors from fraud, cyber-attacks, and fake exchanges, and to provide a joint platform for individuals and companies associated with digital assets. He said the lack of authentic data on the number of crypto investors and investment volume in Pakistan is a major issue, which needs to be addressed through awareness and data compilation. He clarified that the Alliance is not an alternative to any government or regulatory body, but will act as a bridge between the public and relevant authorities. It will provide guidance on filing complaints, legal assistance, and protection of digital accounts. The speakers said the Alliance will also create business opportunities for youth in blockchain and digital assets, guide companies in registration and licensing, and organize awareness programs in universities. They appealed to blockchain companies, startups, investors, and stakeholders to join the Alliance, adding that Pakistan can gain a prominent position in the global digital economy through an effective strategy and investor protection.—**DNA**

Jazz, PITB to advance digital public services

ISLAMABAD: JazzWorld and the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore technology-driven solutions to improve public service delivery and accelerate digital transformation across Punjab. The partnership will bring together PITB's public-sector expertise and JazzWorld's connectivity, digital platforms and technology capabilities to identify opportunities for more accessible, efficient and citizen-centric services. The collaboration will explore digital solutions across key public-sector priorities, including citizen engagement, social protection, education, healthcare and disaster response. Potential initiatives range from digital feedback channels and public helplines to data-driven tools that can help institutions better understand community needs, improve planning and respond more effectively. The partnership will also explore how emerging technologies can support more efficient public administration and strengthen digital access to essential services. Education, digital skills, and healthcare will be among the focus areas, with both organizations examining the potential of artificial intelligence (AI), analytics, and digital platforms to support personalized learning, strengthen institutional planning, and improve access to essential services. The collaboration will also explore opportunities around technology-driven skills development, entrepreneurship and financial inclusion, including accessible insurance solutions for underserved communities. Syed Ali Naseer, Chief Strategy Officer, JazzWorld, said: "JazzWorld has the digital capabilities and expertise to develop and deliver innovative solutions that address evolving public-sector needs. By combining our ability to deliver digital services with PITB's understanding of public-sector priorities, we aim to explore solutions that widen access to essential services, improve service delivery and create meaningful value for citizens. This collaboration reflects the potential of digital technology, innovation and emerging technologies to support more accessible and efficient public services." Sajid Latif, Director General (e-Governance), PITB, said: "For public institutions, the real value of technology lies in its ability to simplify processes, improve decision-making and make services more responsive to the people who rely on them.—**DNA**

Benazir Nashonuma Programme reviewed

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad held a coordination meeting to review progress on ongoing nutrition-related activities under the Benazir Nashonuma Programme Phase 3.0. The meeting focused on assessing the implementation status of the programme, reviewing achievements and discussing challenges affecting the delivery of nutrition services in the federal capital. Participants also deliberated on strategies to strengthen coordination among the partner organizations, improve programme implementation and ensure effective delivery of nutrition interventions to beneficiaries. The meeting highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts to address nutritional challenges, particularly among pregnant and lactating women and young children, and to improve maternal and child health outcomes. —**APP**

Police recover kidnapped 8-year-old girl safely

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police successfully recovered an eight-year-old kidnapped girl and arrested two suspects involved in her abduction within a short time during a swift operation conducted by Nilore Police Station, reuniting the child safely with her parents.

An ICT Police official told APP on Tuesday that Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem took immediate notice of the kidnapping incident and directed police to ensure the girl's safe recovery and the arrest of those responsible.

Following the directions, special police teams were formed under the supervision of Superintendent of Police (SP) Rural Zeeshan Ali to trace the suspects and recover the abducted child.

The official said the Station House Officer (SHO) Nilore, along with his team, used modern technical methods and human intelligence to trace and arrest the two suspects within a short period.

During the operation, police safely recovered the eight-year-old girl from the suspects' custody and handed her over to her parents..—**APP**

Traffic advisory issued for cricket teams' movement

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Tuesday issued a fresh traffic advisory announcing diversions at different points along Islamabad Expressway and Srinagar Highway due to the movement of cricket teams, advising motorists to use alternative routes and allow an additional 20 to 25 minutes for their journeys.

According to an ITP spokesperson, traffic diversions would be imposed at various locations along Srinagar Highway to facilitate the movement of cricket teams and ensure smooth traffic management in the federal capital.

Motorists travelling on Srinagar Highway have been advised to use Suhrawardy Road, G-8 Service Road, G-9 Service Road and Zero Point as alternative routes.

Traffic heading towards Faizabad should use Faisal Avenue, while motorists travelling towards Ninth Avenue have been advised to take Service Road East.

Citizens travelling from Koral towards Islamabad may use the old airport route, Rawal Road, Rawalpindi's Murree Road, IJP Road and Faqir Aipee Road.

In case of closures on Koral Expressway, Murree Road and Club Road, motorists have been advised to use Lehtrar Road and Park Road.—**APP**

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day



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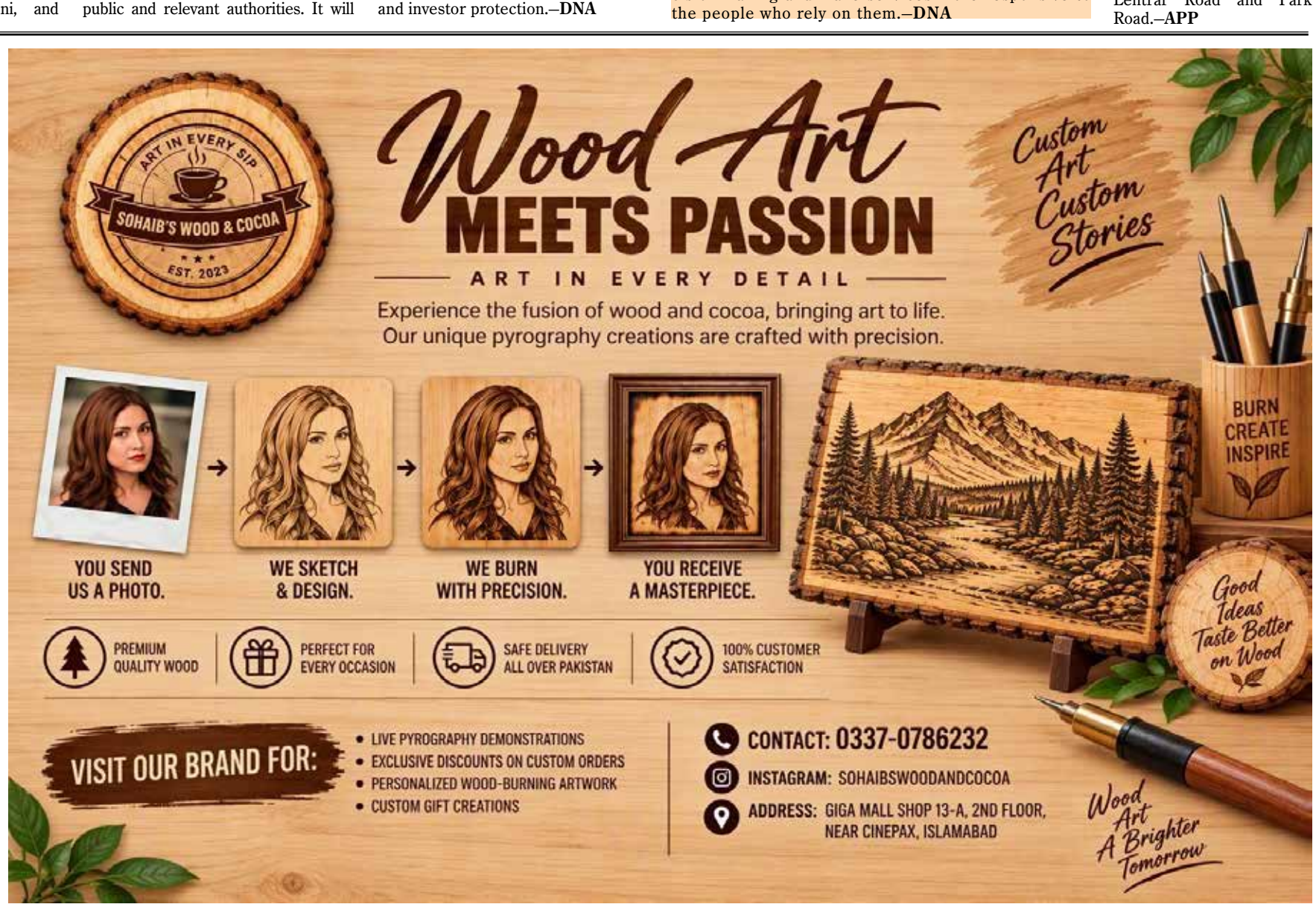


Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



Briefs

HEC announces NSCT for computing, IT students

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced the National Skill Competency Test (NSCT) 2027 for students of Computing and IT-related degree programs across Pakistan.

The test will be held on January 23-24, 2027 (Saturday and Sunday) on a tentative basis. It will be conducted as a Computer-Based Test (CBT) at more than 100 locations nationwide, making it accessible to students from all parts of the country. Participation in the test is mandatory for all 7th and 8th semester students enrolled in Computing and IT-related programs. This includes students of main campuses, sub-campuses, constituent and affiliated colleges. No eligible student will be exempted from appearing in the test, said a news release issued here on Tuesday. The NSCT has been introduced to assess the practical skills and professional competency of graduating students, and not just their theoretical knowledge. It aims to ensure that students are ready for the job market and meet the standards required by the national and international IT industry. HEC has advised universities to inform and facilitate all eligible students, while faculty members have been asked to guide and prepare students for the test. Students, on their part, have been advised to start their preparation early and take the test seriously, as participation is mandatory. –**APP**

IRSA releases 159,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 159,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 43,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1492.20 feet, which was 90.20 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 23,800 cusecs and 118,400 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1188.65 feet, which was 138.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 4,400 cusecs and 25,300 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 69,500, 46,000, 37,800, and 12,700 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 2,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.–**APP**

NUMS successfully conducts PMDC NRE Step-I exam

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) successfully conducted the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) National Registration Examination (NRE) Step-I, Cycle-II, 2026, at CMH Medical College and Institute of Dentistry. The examination commenced at 9:30 a.m. and concluded at 12:50 p.m., with 3,758 candidates appearing out of 3,837 registered candidates. Extensive arrangements were made to facilitate the large number of candidates and ensure smooth conduct of the examination. The entire process was completed without any reported glitches or disruptions. The Institutional Examination Cell (IEC) of CMH Lahore Medical College and Institute of Dentistry coordinated the examination under the leadership of Dr Khawar Bashir and the patronage of Maj Gen Nadeem Fazal (Retired), HI(M). The institution has been successfully coordinating the examination for the third consecutive year, with the NRE conducted twice annually under the auspices of NUMS._**APP**



ISLAMABAD: Advisor and National Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, with the students after the program "From Vision to Enterprise" at FAST National University

PMYP triples ceiling to Rs 25m to unlock business growth

ISLAMABAD : Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Tuesday announced a more than threefold increase in the maximum financing limit under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYBALS), raising it from Rs 7.5 million to Rs 25 million to enable young entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, establish larger enterprises and create employment opportunities across the country. Addressing a press conference, he said the newly introduced Tier-4 of the scheme had been approved by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and ratified by the Federal Cabinet, marking a significant expansion of financing opportunities for young business owners. Under the new tier, eligible entrepreneurs would be able to obtain loans exceeding Rs7.5 million and up to Rs 25 million at an eight per cent markup for a maximum period of eight years. Rana Mashhood said the enhanced financing facility would help successful youth led businesses graduate into small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly in agro processing, cold chains, mechanised farming, solar energy, manufacturing and export-oriented industries. He said the scheme is open to young Pakistanis aged 21 to 45, while individuals aged 18 and above could also apply for financing in information technology (IT) and e-commerce. Both new ventures and existing businesses in the commercial and agricultural sectors would be eligible, with Islamic financing options also available. The chairman said the government had also reduced the banks' profit margin on Tier-3 and Tier-4 loans from KIBOR plus three per cent to KIBOR plus 2.4 per cent, without changing the markup rates payable by borrowers, which would remain seven per cent and 8 per cent, respectively. The adjustment would generate savings of approximately Rs 600 million for every Rs 100 billion disbursed, enabling the government to extend financing to more young entrepreneurs within the available budget, he added. Outlining the lending targets for fiscal year 2026-27, Rana Mashhood said the government planned to disburse Rs 292.5 billion to approximately 266,700 young Pakistanis, with an estimated potential to generate 835,000 jobs. The financing would be equally distributed between agriculture and small businesses, while nearly three-fourths of the beneficiaries were expected to receive interest-free loans under Tier-1. Highlighting the scheme's performance, he said young entrepreneurs had demonstrated a repayment rate of more than 99 per cent, with non-performing loans standing at just 0.74 per cent. He said the repayment record reflected the financial credibility and entrepreneurial potential of Pakistani youth, adding that young people had established themselves as reliable beneficiaries of institutional financing. Since the Prime Minister restructured the scheme in January 2023, a total of 581,341 young entrepreneurs had received Rs 313.9 billion in financing, generating an estimated 1.82 million jobs. Annual lending had increased from fewer than 17,000 beneficiaries to approximately 170,000 young people, he said, adding that since the scheme's launch in 2013, a total of 638,081 borrowers had received Rs392.4 billion, contributing to the creation of nearly two million jobs. He said 62 per cent of beneficiaries financed since 2023 belonged to the agriculture sector, while more than 121,000 young women had received Rs 36.6 billion in financing, accounting for approximately one-fifth of the total beneficiaries. Explaining the revised financing structure, the chairman said Tier-1 offered loans of up to Rs 500,000 at zero markup, Tier-2 provided financing ranging from Rs 500,000 to Rs1.5 million at 5 per cent, and Tier-3 covered loans from Rs 1.5 million to Rs 7.5 million at 7 per cent markup. The newly introduced Tier-4 offered financing exceeding Rs 7.5 million and up to Rs 25 million at 8 per cent markup. Tier-5 provided interest free loans of up to Rs 450,000 for laptops and up to Rs one million for prospective overseas workers. Rana Mashhood said eligible applicants could submit their applications through the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub at www.pmyp.gov.pk or the PMYP mobile application, available on Google Play Store and Apple App Store. Emphasising transparency in the process, he said applicants did not require agents, personal recommendations or intermediaries, as all applications would be assessed by participating banks strictly on merit.

No public funds lost in disputed vaccine procurement

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday said that no public funds had been lost in the disputed vaccine procurement process. Addressing a press conference, the minister clarified that Rs183.055 million had been deposited in a National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) account and that the company concerned had not received any payment so far. Kamal said, "I want to present the facts before the nation amid reports and allegations circulating over the past week regarding the vaccine procurement issue involving the Ministry of National Health Services." He said the matter originated when the Border Health Services (BHS) approached the ministry regarding arrangements for people travelling abroad for Umrah. Following directions from the Prime Minister's Office, the ministry was formally approached to take necessary action. Mustafa Kamal said the ministry had constituted a procurement committee on May 9, along with a grievance committee headed by the Director General of Health, to address complaints from concerned parties. However, he alleged that BHS officials subsequently formed their own committees, including procurement and objection committees, bypassing the mechanism established by the ministry. He said the matter later reached the court, following which the Prime Minister constituted an inquiry committee. A high-powered committee subsequently examined the process and identified several irregularities. According to the minister, the inquiry found that BHS officials had bypassed the Ministry of National Health Services, violated Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules and sidelined the procurement committee constituted by the ministry. He further said NADRA had been brought into the process under a public-private partnership arrangement, with the collected amount deposited in its account. The inquiry also held the procurement committee responsible and observed that a subsequent director had endorsed the process, he added. The minister alleged that the concerned BHS officials had proceeded without informing the minister or the ministry. He said the inquiry report would be uploaded to the ministry's website to make its findings available to the public. He said the government had implemented all recommendations of the inquiry committee and would constitute a new procurement committee in accordance with the prescribed procedure.–**DNA**

UNICEF Chief of Polio visits vaccination teams, schools

ISLAMABAD: UNICEF Chief of Polio in Pakistan, Ms Melissa Corkum has visited polio vaccination teams and schools in Sindh as part of campaign catch-up activities, appreciating the efforts of frontline workers and encouraging them to continue their work towards making the province polio-free. During the visit, Ms Melissa Corkum interacted with vaccination teams and school representatives, acknowledged the dedication of frontline workers and motivated them to maintain their commitment to protecting children against the crippling disease. She appreciated the hard work of frontline health workers, emphasizing that their dedication, regular engagement with communities and commitment to reaching every child were essential to achieving the goal of polio eradication. The visit also highlighted the importance of sustained community engagement, effective coordination and collective efforts to ensure that every eligible child receives the life-saving polio vaccine. UNICEF continues to support Pakistan's polio eradication efforts in collaboration with government health authorities and partners, with a focus on strengthening vaccination campaigns and reaching children in high-risk areas.–**APP**

Railways to add 36 locomotives to operational fleet by 2027

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is planning to bring up to 36 non-operational locomotives back into service by June 2027 in a bid to improve train operations, facilitate passengers and enhance the department's revenue.

"Pakistan Railways currently has a fleet of 439 locomotives, of which 267 are operational while 172 remain non-operational," an official in the Ministry told APP.

He said the department was taking several measures to restore out-of-service locomotives to operational condition to strengthen its capacity and generate additional revenue. Giving details, the official said that 16 non-operational locomotives were expected to become operational by February 2027, while another 20 locomotives would be available for service after major overhauling by the end of 2026.

The official said that one accidental locomotive, bearing No. 9021, was also expected to be restored after necessary repairs and fitment by June 2027. Regarding the modernization of the existing fleet, he said that a PC-I for the modernization of 35 locomotives had been submitted to the MPD&SI and the Ministry of Planning; however, it had not yet been considered. Meanwhile, he said Pakistan Railways has also contacted the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to explore the restoration of 69 locomotives, with efforts underway to bring them back into operation. He said the restoration of these locomotives is expected to improve the availability of engines, strengthen train operations and help Pakistan Railways increase its passenger and freight earnings. To a question, he said to enhance on-board passenger facilitation, state-of-the-art dining cars and modern coaches have been introduced on Shalimar Express, Pak Business Express, and Islamabad Express. LED screens with preloaded programs and water dispensers have been installed, while comprehensive janitorial services are now provided on all trains, he added. He said the enhanced services are also available on outsourced trains, including Green Line, Pak Business, Shah Hussain, Subak Raftar, Subak Kharam, Rawal Express, and Islamabad Express. The premium dining cars are operational on Khyber Mail, Allama Iqbal Express, and Rehman Baba, while complimentary services such as high tea, bedding, newspapers, hygiene kits, and mineral water are being offered on seven premium trains.–**APP**

FUUAST highlights Pakistan-China research ties

ISLAMABAD : The Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Islamabad, on Tuesday observed World Science Day for Peace and Development with a focus on science diplomacy and international research cooperation, highlighting the role of joint scientific initiatives in strengthening Pakistan-China relations, promoting sustainable development and addressing global challenges. The university organised a special programme titled "Science Diplomacy and International Research Cooperation: Building Bridges for Peace and Sustainable Development" to highlight the importance of scientific collaboration, knowledge exchange and the contribution of universities to international cooperation. FUUAST Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, a Fellow Member of the International Science Council (ISC), was the special speaker, while Prof. Dr. Tianhua Hong, Executive Director General of the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences (CPJRC), delivered the keynote address. Addressing the participants, Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari said rapid advances in science and technology required universities, students and governments to continuously enhance their knowledge and skills in line with emerging developments. He emphasised the need to harness scientific research and technological innovation for national development, highlighting the importance of effective science communication and greater women's leadership in scientific fields. He also outlined FUUAST's academic vision and objectives, saying science and technology were integral to the university's identity and mission. He expressed the university's commitment to contributing to educational and research development through enhanced collaboration with Chinese institutions. In his keynote address, Prof. Dr. Tianhua Hong underscored the importance of scientific cooperation between Pakistan and China, describing joint research and science diplomacy as important instruments for strengthening bilateral relations. He said around 30,000 Pakistani students were pursuing studies in China, while the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remained an important initiative for both countries. He highlighted opportunities for expanded cooperation in earth sciences, climate research and sustainable development, saying scientific partnerships could further deepen bilateral engagement and promote shared research objectives. The programme was moderated by Dr. Faisal Javaid and organised by the university's Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC). A large number of faculty members and students from the departments of Mass Communication, Pharmacy, International Relations and other academic disciplines attended the event.–**DNA**

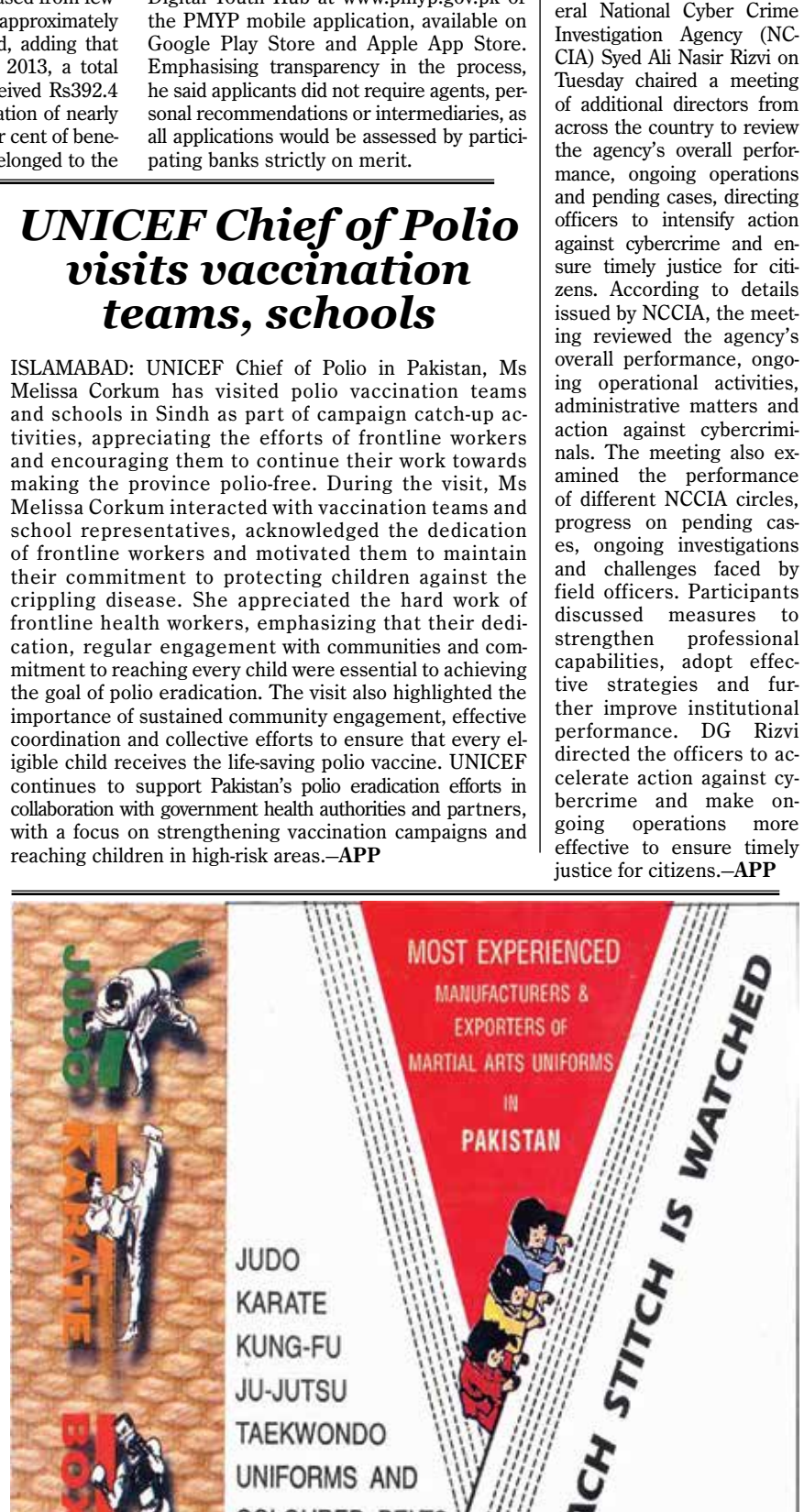
DHO Islamabad provides free vaccines against various diseases

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad is strengthening its routine immunization programme by providing free vaccines to children against dangerous and life-threatening diseases, reaffirming its commitment to protecting child health and promoting a healthier society.

In connection with World Immunization Day, the DHO highlighted the importance of timely vaccination, urging parents and caregivers to ensure that their children complete the recommended immunisation schedule. According to officials of DHO office, the health office is providing free vaccination facilities to protect children against various preventable diseases and ensure that every child has access to essential healthcare services. Health officials emphasized that timely immunization plays a vital role in preventing serious illnesses, reducing child mortality and building a healthier future for coming generations. They said vaccination was not only essential for individual protection but also contributed to community health by limiting the spread of infectious diseases.–**APP**

NCCIA DG orders intensified action against cybercrime

ISLAMABAD: Director General National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Tuesday chaired a meeting of additional directors from across the country to review the agency's overall performance, ongoing operations and pending cases, directing officers to intensify action against cybercrime and ensure timely justice for citizens. According to details issued by NCCIA, the meeting reviewed the agency's overall performance, ongoing operational activities, administrative matters and action against cybercriminals. The meeting also examined the performance of different NCCIA circles, progress on pending cases, ongoing investigations and challenges faced by field officers. Participants discussed measures to strengthen professional capabilities, adopt effective strategies and further improve institutional performance. DG Rizvi directed the officers to accelerate action against cybercrime and make ongoing operations more effective to ensure timely justice for citizens.–**APP**



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Lessons learned from the 2026 US midterms

Dr. James J. Zogby

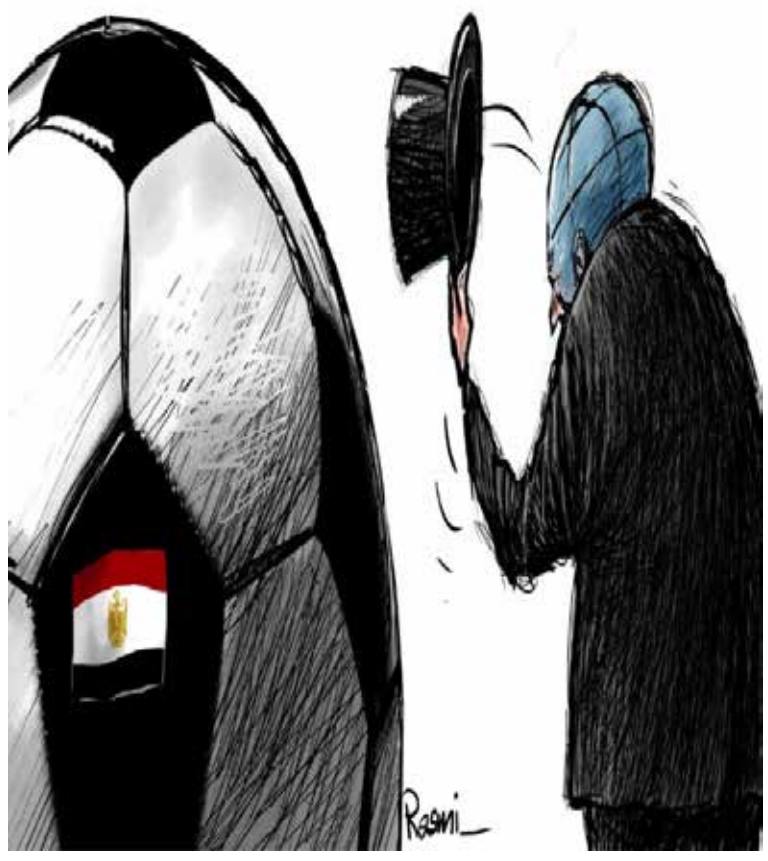
THERE were surprises and nonsurprises in this year's midterm elections in the US. Democrats were expected to win and they did. All the indicators normally considered in a midterm election pointed in that direction. And when reviewing state-by-state polling in key contests featuring vulnerable Republican senators, Democrats had the edge in all of them – Maine, Ohio, North Carolina and Texas. What was not expected was that Democrats would also beat Republicans in Iowa, Kansas and South Carolina.

In the weeks before the elections, warnings were raised that the polls were inflating the Democrats' chances in several states. This cautionary note proved to be unfounded. The polling averages suggested that, overall, Democrats would likely beat Republicans by 11 points. They ended up besting Republicans by 13 points. Maybe the biggest miscalculation of this election was made by President Donald Trump, who assumed that he would be an asset to vulnerable Republicans by holding rallies in their states. As it turned out, his events proved to be more about him and his need to be center stage. And since Trump has a 32 percent favorability rating, the outcome was not a good one for Republicans.

This election has brought to the center of our political debate the role of unregulated and unreported money in politics There was real concern that the White House might attempt to stymie the vote in some districts. Others worried there might be a "October Surprise" – renewed bombing of Iran, sending armed immigration enforcement officials to select polling places to intimidate voters or ordering the FBI to seize ballot boxes. None of this happened and so Election Day and its immediate aftermath proved uneventful.

Because Democratic candidates were raising more money than Republicans, the Grand Old Party turned to what are called super PACs (political action committees), corporate PACs and other nonreportable independent expenditure entities to give its candidates an advantage. As a result, this was the most expensive election in history. While the numbers are still being tallied, it appears that more than $14 billion was spent by both parties.

The New York Times published an early list of 20 billionaire donors to campaigns who collectively spent more than $2 billion in this election. While there were some Democrats in the group, most were Republicans. Elon Musk, for example, invested more than $450 million to support Republicans (half in Texas), while entities related to the Soros family put $100 million into Democratic campaigns. If anything, this election has brought to the center of our political debate the role of unregulated and unreported money in politics.



As expected, the issues that dominated this election were the cost of living, immigration, corruption and foreign wars. Most of these broke in favor of Democrats, which left Republicans trying to blame high prices on the Biden administration or to shift the discussion to the threat posed by immigrants. Such tactics may have worked in the 2024 election but the impact of the president's tariffs on many consumer goods and the ever-increasing costs of gasoline, diesel fuel and home heating took their toll on the GOP.

Voters want authenticity: candidates who speak hard truths and whom they feel can be trusted to address their needs The issues of US military aid to Israel and the role played by the pro-Israel lobby in intimidating and silencing politicians played a less significant role in the November election than it had in the Democratic primaries, in which support for Israel proved to be the undoing of several incumbents. In the Senate races, a number of Democrats who won this year were clear in their opposition to aid to Israel and their refusal to accept the support of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. But because they were not challenged by their Republican opponents, the issue did not become a central theme in the November election. The major exception was the Senate contest in Michigan between Democrat Abdul El-Sayed and his Republican opponent Mike Rogers. But it was not Rogers who made El-Sayed's criticism of Israel the issue. Instead, that was left to the woman he had defeated in the Democratic primary, Haley Stevens, who continued to demand that he adopt her positions on Israel. When El-Sayed refused to do so, she endorsed Rogers, an act of political suicide that ended up benefiting El-Sayed's campaign.

Policy matters aside, one meta issue helped shape this year's contests. Voters on both sides of the partisan debate are fed up with politicians – especially the blow-dried, consultant-shaped characters who have long dominated the stage. Voters want authenticity: candidates who speak hard truths and whom they feel can be trusted to address their needs. One might argue that this was Trump's appeal in 2016 and Joe Biden's in 2020. And it is the edge that Trump has lost, with his expensive vanity projects and insensitivity to the economic hardships of many voters. If anything, this year was a classic "throw the bums out" election – leading to many establishment Democratic politicians being beaten in the primaries and the GOP's establishment crowd being shown the door in the general. Lessons must be learned from this election – and it appears the establishment consultants on both sides do not appear to understand. Democrats must not assume that this year's victories will automatically repeat in 2028. The consultants who are telling Democrats that the GOP is dead and it is time to move to the center are wrong on both counts.

Voters chose Democrats willing to fight for a change in economic priorities: where healthcare is seen as a right and affordable for all; where resources are allocated away from war and weapons toward meeting domestic priorities; and where money from corporations and billionaires do not dominate our politics. If Democrats, now in charge, do not address these issues that brought them victory, they may pay a price in 2028.

Europe's Colonial Ambitions Against Russia

Qamar Bashir



When Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Europe and the United States mobilized enormous financial, military, diplomatic and economic resources behind Ukraine. Sanctions targeted Russian banks, energy exports, technology access and international financial transactions. Western governments expected sustained economic pressure, combined with Ukrainian military resistance, to weaken Moscow's ability to continue the war. Some anticipated that economic isolation would eventually undermine...

THE imperial ambitions that once propelled European powers across continents in pursuit of territory, wealth, natural resources and geopolitical supremacy have returned to haunt their architects. For centuries, Britain and other European powers accumulated enormous fortunes by exploiting weaker nations, extracting their resources and controlling their political destinies. The collapse of the Soviet Union presented Europe with another historic opportunity: to extend its influence eastward, weaken Russia, surround it strategically and ultimately gain leverage over its immense natural wealth. Yet the grand strategy intended to diminish Russia has produced a spectacular reversal. Russia remains standing, while Europe confronts economic difficulties, political instability, public resentment and the consequences of its own strategic miscalculations.

Karl Marx recognized that capitalism possessed an extraordinary capacity to create an interconnected global economy. Markets, industries, trade routes and financial systems would eventually bind distant societies into a single economic structure. What this expansion produced, however, was an international order characterized by staggering inequalities. Western Europe, North America and Japan accumulated extraordinary wealth, while much of Asia, Africa and Latin America endured colonial exploitation, economic dependency and persistent poverty. The global economy became interconnected without becoming equitable. Its prosperity was concentrated among the powerful, while its burdens were disproportionately imposed upon the powerless.

European colonialism was never merely about planting flags or establishing administrative control. Its central objective was economic extraction. Colonized territories supplied raw materials, cheap labor, captive markets and strategic routes through which imperial powers accumulated wealth. Political domination protected economic privilege, while military superiority enforced submission. The vocabulary of imperialism subsequently changed, but the pursuit of resources, markets and geopolitical advantage remained deeply embedded in international power struggles.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 fundamentally transformed Europe's strategic landscape. Russia inherited enormous territory, substantial military capabilities, vast hydrocarbon reserves, mineral deposits, agricultural resources and a geographical position connecting Europe with Asia. Its oil, natural gas, coal, precious metals, rare-earth potential and strategic transportation corridors represented extraordinary economic and geopolitical assets. For European strategists, a weakened Russia promised a more favorable balance of power, reduced resistance to Western influence and potentially greater leverage over these resources. The subsequent enlargement of NATO and the European Union steadily shifted Europe's political and security architecture eastward. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic entered NATO in 1999. Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and the Baltic states followed in 2004, alongside other countries. Several former Soviet-aligned states also joined the European Union. Western governments presented this expansion as the sovereign choice of countries seeking security and prosperity. Moscow increasingly interpreted the same process as strategic encirclement, the erosion of its regional influence and the gradual construction of a hostile military perimeter.

Ukraine eventually became the most consequential arena of this confrontation. Its geographical position, agricultural wealth, industrial infrastructure, Black Sea access and historical connections with Russia made it strategically indispensable. A Ukraine firmly integrated into Western military structures would fundamentally alter Russia's security environment. From Moscow's perspective, the possibility of NATO extending its influence across Ukraine represented a direct challenge to its strategic depth and regional security. The political upheaval of 2014 intensified these tensions. The overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovych, following mass protests and political confrontation, was celebrated in Western capitals as a democratic breakthrough. Russia characterized the change as a Western-supported coup. Western political involvement and support for Ukraine's subsequent governments reinforced Moscow's suspicions. Volodymyr Zelenskyy's election in 2019, however, occurred through a competitive presidential vote, rather than the 2014 uprising. Nevertheless, Ukraine increasingly became the principal battlefield of competing Russian and Western strategic ambitions.

When Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Europe and the United States mobilized enormous financial, military, diplomatic and economic resources behind Ukraine. Sanctions targeted Russian banks, energy exports, technology access and international financial transactions. Western governments expected sustained economic pressure, combined with Ukrainian military resistance, to weaken Moscow's ability to continue the war. Some anticipated that economic isolation would eventually undermine Russia's domestic stability and geopolitical influence. Instead, Russia demonstrated greater economic resilience than many Western policymakers anticipated. Moscow redirected substantial energy exports toward Asian markets, strengthened commercial relationships with China and India, expanded domestic military production and adapted parts of its financial system to sanctions. China became particularly important as a commercial partner and geopolitical counterweight to Western pressure. Although Russia suffered significant military losses, economic disruption and long-term technological constraints, the anticipated rapid collapse of its economy did not materialize.

Europe, meanwhile, discovered that economic warfare could inflict serious costs upon those deploying it. The reduction of Russian energy supplies forced European industries and households to adjust to a fundamentally altered energy market. Germany's energy-intensive industrial sector faced particularly severe pressures. Higher energy costs, inflation, expensive defense commitments and uncertainty over industrial competitiveness exposed vulnerabilities within economies accustomed to relatively affordable energy and stable international trade.

The political consequences extended beyond economic statistics. Farmers, industrial workers, transport operators and ordinary households across European countries expressed frustration over living costs, declining purchasing power and government priorities. Demonstrations reflected numerous domestic grievances, but energy insecurity and economic pressures associated with the confrontation with Russia intensified an already difficult environment. Resources committed to military expenditure and foreign strategic objectives increasingly competed with demands for better public services, employment security and affordable living conditions. Donald Trump's approach to Ukraine further complicated Europe's calculations. His insistence that European governments assume greater responsibility for their own security exposed the continent's longstanding dependence upon American military power. Washington's shifting commitment created uncertainty over the durability of Western support for Kyiv. Europe found itself confronting the possibility of sustaining an expensive confrontation with Russia without the same degree of dependable American leadership and assistance.

The irony is striking. European powers that once dictated the destinies of distant nations now struggle to control the consequences of their own geopolitical ambitions. A strategy intended to isolate Russia has encouraged Moscow to deepen relationships outside the Western economic system. The emergence of BRICS and the growing influence of China illustrate a broader international movement toward alternative commercial and diplomatic arrangements. The Western monopoly over global economic decision-making is increasingly contested. The lesson extends far beyond Russia and Ukraine. Britain, Europe and the United States must confront the declining effectiveness of imperial habits in a world where formerly subordinated nations possess growing economic, technological and diplomatic influence. Threatening territories, expanding military commitments and attempting to police the international system cannot indefinitely substitute for domestic prosperity and political legitimacy.

The time has arrived for Western governments to abandon the illusion that global supremacy guarantees national well-being. Their foremost responsibility is not to control Russia's resources, redraw geopolitical boundaries or perpetuate confrontations across continents. It is to improve the lives of their own citizens through affordable energy, productive industries, quality healthcare, education, housing and economic security. Europe attempted to weaken Russia through a geopolitical chess game, only to discover that the board could turn against its own players. The greatest victory now available to Europe and America is not the subjugation of another nation, but the restoration of prosperity, stability and dignity to their own people.

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

The Nuclear Shadow over Iran: Could Electoral Defeat Trigger a Global Catastrophe?

by Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The repercussions would be felt throughout the Middle East. Iran could retaliate against American military installations and allied interests, potentially drawing Israel and Gulf states into a wider confrontation. Commercial shipping would face serious risks, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial proportion...

THE greatest danger in international politics arises when political ambition overshadows the responsibilities of statecraft. The possibility of the United States using nuclear weapons against Iran, particularly amid domestic political uncertainty surrounding President Donald Trump and the midterm elections, raises a disturbing question: could an administration facing electoral difficulties resort to an extraordinary military escalation to demonstrate its strength? Although no established evidence suggests that an electoral setback would lead Washington to contemplate a nuclear strike, the possibility warrants serious examination because its consequences would extend far beyond Iran.

A distinction must be maintained between conventional military operations and nuclear warfare. The United States possesses formidable conventional military capabilities and may consider further attacks against Iranian military installations if tensions intensify. Nuclear weapons, however, represent an entirely different threshold. Their use would undermine decades of international efforts to prevent proliferation and threaten the foundations of the post-war international order. The American constitutional system places considerable authority over nuclear weapons in the hands of the president. Although military advisers have an important role in assessing the legality and consequences of an order, prior congressional approval is not required. Such concentration of authority makes presidential judgement a matter of global consequence. Nevertheless, domestic political difficulties cannot provide a rational military justification for nuclear warfare. An electoral setback may weaken a president politically, but attempting to recover authority through nuclear escalation would risk international isolation and potentially uncontrollable retaliation.

Iran is fundamentally different from Japan in 1945. It is a geographically extensive country with a substantial population, difficult terrain, considerable military capabilities and influence across the Middle East. Its position near the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz gives it particular importance to international energy security. A nuclear attack would not remain confined to its intended target. Civilian casualties, radioactive contamination and destruction of essential infrastructure could transform a bilateral confrontation into an international catastrophe.

The repercussions would be felt throughout the Middle East. Iran could retaliate against American military installations and allied interests, potentially drawing Israel and Gulf states into a wider confrontation. Commercial shipping would face serious risks, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial proportion of internationally traded petroleum passes. Even a temporary disruption could drive oil prices upwards, increase transportation costs and intensify inflation. Developing economies, already burdened by debt and financial instability, would be particularly vulnerable. For Pakistan, the implications would be especially serious. Its geographical proximity to Iran, shared border and diplomatic relationships with both Tehran and the Arab Gulf states place it in a sensitive position. Islamabad would have to maintain constructive relations with all concerned parties while resisting pressure to become involved in a conflict that would undermine its national interests. Its most prudent course would be to advocate restraint, uphold sovereignty and territorial integrity, and use diplomatic channels to encourage negotiations.

The economic consequences could be immediate. Pakistan's dependence on imported petroleum makes it vulnerable to disruptions in Gulf energy supplies. A sustained increase in oil prices would enlarge the import bill, intensify pressure on foreign exchange reserves and raise electricity, transportation and industrial costs. Inflation could increase further, reducing household purchasing power and complicating economic recovery. Agriculture, trade and investment would also suffer from uncertainty and rising operational expenses. Millions of Pakistanis working in Gulf countries add another dimension to this vulnerability. Their remittances constitute an important source of foreign exchange and sustain countless households. A prolonged regional conflict could threaten their employment, security and ability to send money home. Thus, a nuclear confrontation involving Iran would not remain a distant geopolitical development for Pakistan; its effects could reach directly into the lives of ordinary citizens.

The environmental consequences would be equally alarming. Radioactive material released by a nuclear explosion could cross national boundaries, depending upon atmospheric conditions and prevailing winds. The extent of contamination would depend on the location and nature of the explosion, but neighbouring countries could face public health and environmental challenges. Pakistan might have to prepare for potential contamination concerns involving agricultural land, water resources and food security. Such risks would require scientific preparedness and international cooperation.

The circumstances of 1945 differ profoundly from those of today. An attack on Iran would take place in a world of advanced missile technology, regional alliances, nuclear deterrence and interconnected economies. Retaliation could extend the conflict beyond geographical boundaries, while the use of nuclear weapons could encourage other states to reconsider their own nuclear ambitions. The international non-proliferation regime could suffer a severe setback.

Pakistan, as a nuclear-armed state, has an additional responsibility to defend restraint and ensure that nuclear weapons never become instruments of political intimidation. Islamabad should engage Washington, Tehran, Beijing, Riyadh and other influential capitals to encourage de-escalation. The United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency must also strengthen diplomatic engagement to prevent further deterioration.

Ultimately, the gravest danger lies in allowing domestic political considerations to diminish the consequences of nuclear warfare. Electoral victories and defeats are temporary; the destruction caused by nuclear weapons can endure for generations. Hiroshima and Nagasaki should have taught humanity that military supremacy cannot guarantee moral authority or lasting peace.

The world does not need another Hiroshima, whether in Iran or elsewhere. It needs leaders capable of distinguishing national strength from destructive adventurism. For Pakistan, the Middle East and the international community, preventing a nuclear confrontation is not merely a diplomatic preference; it is a collective responsibility towards humanity and generations yet to come.

Islamabad POST
Tuesday, November 11, 2026

Briefs

Terrorism from Afghanistan a serious threat

FROM PAGE 01

efforts to sustain engagement, restore dialogue and facilitate a return to the negotiating table. He emphasized that the Islamabad MoU provides an important foundation for further negotiations. The Deputy Prime Minister said Pakistan remains committed to an equitable international order, anchored in the UN Charter, sovereign equality, territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of disputes. He said Pakistan has leveraged the membership of the UN Security Council to translate these principles into concrete action. Ishaq Dar said Pakistan's strategic partnership with China remains a cornerstone of our foreign relations. He said Pakistan continues engagement with the US and is strengthening cooperation with Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Egypt, Iran, the Gulf, Europe, Central Asia and other partners. The Deputy Prime Minister said Makkah Joint Defense Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye reflects our commitment to collective security and credible deterrence. He said it is a defensive agreement directed against no country and intended to contribute to regional peace and security.

Pakistan reviews economic...

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benefits for the country. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting and reviewed ongoing initiatives aimed at leveraging Pakistan's diplomatic network to support trade and investment opportunities. The government has increasingly emphasized economic diplomacy as a key component of its foreign policy, seeking to expand exports, attract investment, and strengthen economic partnerships with countries around the world.

Trump nominates Natalie Baker as...

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Prior to that, she served as the deputy chief of mission at the US embassy in Doha from Aug 2021 to July 2024. Baker was also deployed as the deputy chief of mission and charge d'affaires of the US Mission to Libya, deputy director of the Iran Regional Presence Office at the US consulate in Dubai and economic counsellor at the US embassy in Kuwait. She also served as the director of the Office of North African Affairs in the US State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. "From 2009-2011, Natalie served as the political and cconomic counsellor in Libya, as the bilateral relationship was normalising after a nearly 30-year pause. She remained in Libya until the Libyan Revolution forced the embassy to evacuate in February 2011," the website says.

IHC orders PTI lawyers' meeting...

FROM PAGE 01

directed the Islamabad advocate general to arrange his meeting with Imran and Bushra. Imran's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar, also requested another meeting, saying his previous meeting with the PTI founder had provided instructions but was insufficient. He told the court that he had met Imran after seven months and Bushra Bibi after 11 months. Safdar said Imran had told him that his eyesight had improved but his blood pressure remained uncontrolled, warning of a risk of brain haemorrhage. He also expressed concern over Bushra Bibi's eyesight, saying her condition is serious and that she told him she is scheduled to undergo another operation on Nov 15. Safdar requested a medical board to examine the former first lady and said her treatment could not be properly carried out in jail.

Pakistani students win first prize at int'l culture festival

The Pakistani team prepared biryani, chana chaat, sweet kheer and Pakistani black tea, drawing a steady crowd of students and faculty eager to sample the flavors



DNA

CHENGDU: Pakistani students won first prize at the 7th International Culture and Arts Festival of Sichuan Agricultural University (SAU), held last week, as teams from 19 countries gathered to showcase their cultures through exhibition booths and a traditional costume runway show.

The festival featured food stalls from around the world, with international students presenting specialty dishes from their home countries, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

The Pakistani team prepared biryani, chana chaat, sweet kheer and Pakistani black tea, drawing a steady crowd of students and faculty eager to sample the flavors.

The Pakistani students also wore traditional attire representing the country's various regions and communities, including Punjabi, Sindhi, Gilgit and Saraiki dress, a vivid display of Pakistan's ethnic and cultural diversity. Kamran Javed, a Pakistani master's student at SAU, said he was proud to represent his country at the event and was enjoying studying in China. "The response from Chinese students and international friends has been encouraging," he said. "Events like this help people understand Pakistan and strengthen people-to-people exchanges."

Starc denies knowledge of ball-tampering plot

DNA

FAST bowler Mitchell Starc denied on Tuesday any prior knowledge of Australia's plot to tamper with the ball during the 2018 tour of South Africa, as Cricket Australia boss Todd Greenberg ruled out another investigation into 'Sandpapergate'. Starc is the first of Australia's bowlers to respond to Usman Khawaja's assertions in his autobiography and on social media that the whole team knew of a plan to manipulate the ball in order to get it to reverse swing.

Starc reiterated the bowlers' position from a 2021 statement that they did not know a "foreign substance" had been taken onto the field to alter the condition of the ball. "I haven't really paid much attention to be fair, obviously there's differing opinions of eight years ago," Starc told reporters in Sydney on Tuesday.

"We were heavily drilled through the process at the time, and since and I guess I won't speak on behalf of the bowlers, but where I stand, my opinion hasn't changed. My recollection hasn't changed from what we said in 2021."

The scandal triggered an integrity probe by Cricket Australia (CA) and led to bans and other penalties for then-captain Steve Smith and former test openers David Warner and Cameron Bancroft four days after the incident came to light during the Cape Town Test.

Khawaja said the team began tampering with the ball at the second test against South Africa in Gqeberha, not in the third at Cape Town, where they were caught. Starc said Khawaja's account was the first time he was aware of ball-tampering taking place in Gqeberha. "I'll leave said authors to explain," he said.

Warner, who retired from international cricket more than two years ago, broke his silence about the scandal on Monday to throw his support behind Khawaja.

In a video posted on social media, Warner described his former teammate's account as 100% accurate and the CA investigation as "botched" and "rushed".

Media pundits, including former captain Michael Clarke, have demanded CA re-investigate the case

However, Greenberg told local radio station SEN on Tuesday there was "no compelling reason" to reopen the investigation and could not see anything to be gained from it.

He said players had "very different views" from Khawaja's version of events.

"There are specific details in his book that contradict the versions that have been provided by others," he said. "But we have said we're comfortable with the outcome of the investigation based on the information we've received.

"That includes what we've seen from Usman, and our position hasn't changed on that." Former Cricket Australia CEO James Sutherland, who was in charge of the governing body during the incident, declined to comment on Tuesday.

Bancroft, who played his last international in 2019, declined to comment to Australian media on Monday. He said in a 2021 interview with the Guardian that it was "self-explanatory" that teammates apart from Smith and Warner were aware of the ball-tampering plan. Captain Pat Cummins said in South Africa last month that he had spoken to Khawaja before the release of the autobiography and was not concerned about any potential fallout.

"Answered every question a million times. So, yeah, it was dealt with then," he said. Some commentators have questioned why Khawaja waited eight years to speak out and accused him of trying to boost sales of his book "Sabr". Khawaja responded on social media on Tuesday, saying he had no commercial motives.

Dubai Basketball extends unbeaten ABA League run

DNA

DUBAI: Dubai Basketball have continued their impressive start to the season with an 87–98 victory over KK Mega Superbet in Belgrade, Serbia, in ABA League Round 7. The result extended Dubai's unbeaten run on the road, as the reigning champions continue to build momentum this season Xavi Pascual's side made a confident start, with McKinley Wright, Davion Mintz, Dwayne Bacon, Tornike Shengelia and Mfiondu Kabengele named in the starting lineup. Elie Okobo and Bacon led the offensive charge in the opening quarter, helping Dubai establish an early 16–26 advantage. Klemen Prepelic also made a valuable contribution off the bench as Dubai continued to build on their lead. Dubai maintained control in the second quarter, combining an effective offensive display with strong defensive work. Bacon led the scoring at half-time with 12 points, while former Mega Basket player Filip Petrusev added seven points, five rebounds and two assists against his former team. Dubai headed into the break with a commanding 33–53 lead.

The visitors continued to dictate the game after halftime, with Mintz stepping up offensively and Okobo remaining efficient from the field. Dubai entered the final quarter 20 points ahead at 61–81 and remained composed in the closing minutes to secure the 87–98 victory. Okobo led Dubai's scoring with 18 points, followed by Mintz with 16 points and a PIR of 17. Diakite also delivered a strong all-round performance with seven points, six rebounds and three assists. Petrusev was named the game's MVP, finishing with 11 points, five rebounds and a PIR of 19 in 25 minutes. Dubai's latest victory marks their sixth consecutive ABA League win, keeping their unbeaten record intact after seven rounds, with the first round being postponed to a later date.

Abbas, debutant Saqib strike early as SL trail Pak by 320 runs

Visitors reach 114-3 at stumps on day two after Pakistan declare first innings at 434-9

SRI Lanka staged a recovery after an early batting collapse to reach 114-3 in 27.1 overs at stumps on the second day of the first Test against Pakistan at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday, trailing the hosts by 320 runs. The visitors had a difficult start to their innings, losing opener Pasindu Sooriyabandara for a seven-ball duck as Mohammad Abbas struck early to give Pakistan their first breakthrough. Debutant Saqib Khan added to Sri Lanka's troubles by dismissing Dinesh Chandimal for just one off three deliveries, registering his maiden international wicket. The dismissal left the visitors reeling at 12-2 after 3.3 overs. Sri Lanka, however, managed to steady their innings and recover from the early setbacks, finishing the day at 114-3 after facing 27.1 overs. They still have a 320-run deficit to overcome against Pakistan. However, Lahiru Udara and Kamindu Mendis steadied the innings with a composed approach, gradually building a partnership to ease the pressure following the early setbacks. The duo brought up a 50-run partnership, taking Sri Lanka past the half-century mark and providing much-needed stability to innings. – **APP**

Scotland suspends cricket ties with Afghanistan

CRICKET Scotland said it would not schedule matches against Afghanistan outside International Cricket Council (ICC) events, citing concerns over the treatment of women and girls under the Taliban government and broader human rights issues.

Women's sport has effectively disappeared in Afghanistan since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021, while access to education and employment opportunities for women has been severely curtailed.

The Taliban regime says they respect women's rights in accordance with their interpretation of religious law and local customs and that internal matters should be addressed locally. Scotland's move aligns with decisions by Cricket Australia and the England and Wales Cricket Board to suspend bilateral ties with Afghanistan, which the ICC made a Full Member in 2017.

"This policy will be kept under review annually or following any significant ICC decision or material change in circumstances," Cricket Scotland said on Monday.

It added that its decision was based on its commitment to growing women's and girls' participation in the sport, as well as the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Reuters has contacted the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) for comment. Scotland have not faced Afghanistan in a full international match since the 2021 Twenty20 World Cup, but the governing body said the ACB had requested training facilities in July ahead of their men's series against Ireland. The ACB had made another request for training facilities in Scotland in September regarding the T20 Afghanistan Premier League, it added.

Cricket Scotland also said it would continue to consider its contractual obligations to players and would issue no-objection certificates (NOCs) if the ICC gives the Afghan league official approval. "If an NOC is issued, participation by that player/s must not be interpreted as an endorsement by Cricket Scotland of the current Afghan regime or its policies," the statement said. – **DNA**

Young Talent Shines at The Educators Sports Gala

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Celebrating young talent, sporting excellence and the importance of physical education, The Educators Elite Campus Annual Sports Gala 2026 was held in spectacular style at LDA Hockey Stadium in collaboration with ACTIVIT.

The colourful sporting extravaganza was graced by Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed, CEO ACTIVIT and Director, National Hospital as the chief guest. He was warmly welcomed by Moazzam Khan Klair, CEO The Educators Elite Campus and General Secretary, Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF), Wahhab Ali Klair, Executive Director and members of the school's management.

Students showcased their sporting abilities through various competitions, energetic aerobic performances, a commando display, welcome songs and entertaining presentations, while enthusiastic parents added to the festive atmosphere.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed appreciated the institution's commitment to promoting sports alongside academic education. Emphasising the importance of grassroots sports development, he observed that educational institutions could play a significant role in identifying and nurturing future sporting talent. He expressed hope that platforms such as The Educators Elite Campus would help produce future champions like Arshad Nadeem and Nooh Dastgir Butt through professional training, proper guidance and institutional support.

In his remarks, Moazzam Khan Klair reaffirmed the institution's commitment to developing well-rounded students through a balanced focus on academics, sports, character building, leadership and physical fitness. He thanked the chief guest for his encouragement and valuable support.





No threat to Tabela Dam

FROM PAGE 01

A day earlier, water entered a tunnel and the powerhouse at the dam's 5th Extension Hydropower Project (T-5) construction site after a weak section of rock fell during excavation.

PM in Türkiye to attend COP-31...

FROM PAGE 01

scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with Turkish President Recep Erdoğan and other world leaders attending COP31 to discuss matters of mutual interest and strengthen bilateral cooperation. "Pakistan Pavilion" has been established at the COP31 venue where 54 events will be hosted on various themes. Pakistan's contributions in previous COP outcomes include among others active climate diplomacy that led to the establishment of Loss and Damage Fund during COP27.

PTI ready to work with JUI-F, says Gohar Khan

FROM PAGE 01

Sources said doctors are closely monitoring his condition, although no official medical report has yet been released. Political circles are also discussing the possibility of relief for PTI in the event the party extends support to proposals related to the creation of new provinces and the proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment. Sources suggest that negotiations on constitutional and political matters could influence the broader political environment in the coming weeks. The developments come amid ongoing political tensions, with opposition parties exploring avenues for greater coordination while the government pursues its legislative agenda in parliament.

SIFC, Uzbekistan discuss expanding...

FROM PAGE 01

The discussions also focused on identifying avenues for joint ventures and investment initiatives in sectors with significant growth potential. Particular attention was given to opportunities within Special Economic Zones, which offer an attractive environment for investors through improved infrastructure and business-friendly policies. The SIFC officials highlighted Pakistan's commitment to creating a conducive investment climate and facilitating foreign investors through streamlined procedures and institutional support. They noted that enhanced cooperation with Uzbekistan could contribute to greater regional connectivity and economic integration. Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev expressed interest in expanding business-to-business contacts and strengthening economic ties between the two countries. He underscored the importance of regular engagement and collaboration in areas of common interest to achieve shared economic objectives. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening bilateral relations and exploring new opportunities for trade, investment, and industrial cooperation. They also agreed to continue consultations aimed at translating discussions into practical initiatives that would benefit the economies of both countries. The meeting reflects the growing momentum in Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations and underscores the shared desire of both nations to expand economic partnerships, increase investment flows, and promote long-term regional prosperity through closer collaboration.

Islamabad POST
Wednesday November 11 , 2026

ICCI assures full support for PWDs eco empowerment

ICCI Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Directorate for the education, training and rehabilitation of students with special needs

DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) have agreed to strengthen institutional collaboration to create greater opportunities for students with special needs through vocational training, internships and employment in the trade and industrial sectors.

This understanding was reached during the visit of a delegation from the Directorate General of Special Education, led by Muhammad Amir, Director Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (VREDP), at the Chamber House on Tuesday.

Welcoming the delegation, ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to promoting inclusive economic participation and facilitating the integration of specially-abled individuals into the mainstream workforce.

He assured the delegation that ICCI would extend its platform and institutional support to connect trained students with relevant business organisations, industrial units and market opportunities.

The ICCI President also accepted an invitation to visit the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons facility to personally observe the training programmes, vocational facilities and rehabilitation services being provided to students.

ICCI Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Directorate for the education, training and rehabilitation of students with special needs.

He assured the delegation of the Chamber's fullest cooperation in creating practical employment opportunities and strengthening linkages between vocational institutions and the private sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Amir, Director VREDP, emphasized that market-oriented skills development was essential to preparing students for meaningful employment and economic self-reliance. He sought ICCI's cooperation in identifying employment avenues and aligning vocational training programmes with the evolving requirements of trade and industry.

To ensure effective coordination and sustained engagement between the two institutions, ICCI Executive Member Abbas Hashmi and Ms. Farah Hafeez, Deputy Director NTCSP, were nominated as focal persons.

Sharing his views, ICCI Executive Member Abrar ul Haq said that the Chamber would be pleased to facilitate direct linkages between DGSE and various market associations, enabling students to utilise their technical skills in suitable business and industrial environments. He stressed that closer engagement with the private sector could help transform vocational training into sustainable employment opportunities.

The DGSE delegation also included Dr. Sajida Mehmood, Director Special Education, and Asad Ali, Deputy Director VREDP, while ICCI Executive Member Syed Imran Bukhari and former Executive Member Chaudhry Mohammad Ali also participated in the discussions.

Other participants included ICCI Executive Members Mohammad Sohail Chaudhry and Zohaib Arshad Malik, former Executive Member Waseem Chaudhry and other representatives.

Briefs

Chairman WAPDA reviews Tarbela situation

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of the tunnel incident at Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project, Chairman WAPDA Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed (Retd) visited Tarbela from 9-10 November to review the situation at the Project. Member (Water) WAPDA Asim Rauf Khan, other senior officers of WAPDA, Contractor and Consultants were also present on the occasion. The Chairman visited in detail the Intake Structure, Tunnel, Power House and other important sites of the Project. The Consultants, Contractor and WAPDA Project Management briefed him on the current situation and the measures taken so far. Later, the Chairman presided over a meeting at the Project Office. The possible causes of the incident were discussed in detail. Short-, medium-, and long-term preventive measures to handle such situations and a strategy to address the current issue were also deliberated upon. Immediate response measures were also finalised. Execution of immediate response measures has been initiated. Moreover, Consultants, Contractor and WAPDA teams were unanimous in their assessment that as of now there is no threat to the integrity of the main Tarbela dam or any of its critical structures.

The Chairman directed the Consultants to submit a detailed report covering all aspects of the incident at the earliest.

He further directed the Consultants, Contractor and WAPDA Project Team to execute remedial measures immediately and also finalise the contingency plan to minimise the delay resulting from the incident in overall completion of the Project, said a message received here on Tuesday.

He ordered a departmental inquiry to probe the incident holistically.

Ministry for Water Resources had also sought an initial assessment report of the incident from WAPDA, which has been submitted today.

Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Watto, who was following the incident all along, has also been briefed in person by Chairman WAPDA about the details of the incident.

It is pertinent to mention that the 1530 MW-Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project is being constructed on Tunnel No 5 of Tarbela Dam with financial assistance from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.–**APP**

PSX gains 5,448 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a positive trend on Tuesday, gaining 5,448.56 points, a positive change of 3.13 percent, to close at 179,335.24, points against 173,886.69 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 972.432 million shares, compared to 1,479.999 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market reached Rs50.665 billion, up from Rs22.572 billion a day earlier.

Meanwhile, total market capitalisation also increased to Rs19.397 trillion from Rs18.909 trillion recorded in the previous session.

Out of 501 companies that traded in the ready market, 363 posted gains, 107 suffered losses, while 31 remained unchanged, reflecting a mixed trend across the overall market.

Cnergyico PK led the volume chart with 70.087 million shares, followed by Tasdeeq Information with 46.846 million shares, and K-Electric Ltd. with 42.270 million shares.

Among the top gainers in the ready market, Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited surged by Rs134.90 to close at Rs8,534.89, while Sazgar Engineering Works Limited advanced by Rs96.94 to settle at Rs1,505.04.

On the losing side, Attock Refinery Limited declined by Rs33.04 to close at Rs949.12, while National Refinery Limited fell by Rs 31.53 to Rs442.92.–**APP**

Punjab makes headway in American pecan cultivation

ISLAMABAD: Punjab has made significant progress in cultivating American pecan nuts, with successful trials at the Barani Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), Chakwal, leading to the development of a locally adapted variety, DMA-2, opening prospects for commercial production in the Potohar region and parts of central Punjab as an alternative to imported nuts.

Muhammad Aqeel Feroze, senior scientist (horticulture) at BARI, Chakwal, told Wealth Pakistan that pecan cultivation is not limited to cold mountainous regions, as several districts of Punjab offer favourable conditions for growing the high-value nut crop. He identified Chakwal, Attock, Jhelum and Rawalpindi in the Potohar region, along with Lahore and Sargodha in central Punjab, as promising areas for its cultivation. He said research on pecan cultivation was initiated at BARI about a decade ago and resulted in the development of DMA-2, a local variety approved by the Punjab Seed Council, marking an important achievement in agricultural research. Individual pecan trees have also been successfully grown and are bearing fruit in Lahore and Sargodha, where some residents planted them in their home gardens, he added. Aqeel Feroze said southern Punjab districts, particularly Vehari and Bahawalpur, could also be considered for experimental cultivation, although their commercial potential requires further scientific assessment, especially in view of winter chilling requirements and high summer temperatures. Explaining the crop's climatic requirements, he said pecan is a deciduous nut tree capable of tolerating relatively high summer temperatures if adequate soil moisture is maintained. However, sufficient winter chilling, flowering synchronisation, pollination and timely nut maturity remained critical to successful production. He said internationally recognised American pecan varieties included Wichita, Pawnee, Western Schley, Stuart, Mahan and Desirable. For Punjab, preference should be given to low-chilling, early to medium maturing varieties with better heat adaptability, consistent yields and superior nut quality. The horticulture expert explained that pecan is predominantly cross-pollinated, requiring farmers to plant compatible Type I and Type II varieties to ensure effective pollination and fruit setting. He said the approval of DMA-2 was an important step towards identifying planting material suited to local conditions, but further trials across different agro-climatic zones were necessary to establish its commercial viability. Identifying the major constraints, he said limited availability of verified, true-to-type planting material, inadequate winter chilling and high summer temperatures, particularly under water-stressed conditions, could affect tree growth, bud development and flowering. Aqeel Feroze said Pakistan had considerable potential to develop pecan production as a high-value agricultural enterprise and reduce dependence on imported nuts, provided cultivation was expanded through scientific research and proper evaluation.–**DNA**

Syria, Jordan sign 11 agreements to strengthen eco ties

JEDDAH: Syria and Jordan have signed 11 agreements covering investment, agriculture, transport and other sectors, as the two countries seek to deepen economic cooperation and advance joint development projects. The deals comprise eight memorandums of understanding, two executive programs and one cooperation protocol. They cover food security, agriculture and the environment, and investment, as well as water, railway transport, and youth, in addition to public administration, civil aviation, higher education and scientific research, and education. The agreements were signed at the conclusion of the third session of the Syrian-Jordanian Higher Coordination Council, held in Damascus from Nov. 8 to 9 and co-chaired by Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani and Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, according to Syria News Agency, or SANA. The signing of the deals comes as trade between the two countries reached 334 million Jordanian dinars ($471 million) in 2025, nearly three times the 116 million dinars recorded in 2024, according to Amman Chamber of Commerce figures reported by Jordan news Agency, or Petra. Jordanian exports to Syria totaled 252 million dinars, led by construction and industrial products including cement, iron, marble and specialized chemical products. Imports from Syria reached 82 million dinars, mainly comprising agricultural commodities and raw materials. The council also "emphasized addressing technical, logistical and legislative challenges affecting trade flows and the development of joint supply chains, especially in the pharmaceutical and food industries and industries associated with reconstruction," SANA reported. The two sides discussed expanding industrial, logistical and investment activities within the Syrian-Jordanian Joint Free Zone, as well as exploring the establishment of a joint economic city along their border to accommodate industrial, production and service activities and attract investment. The council emphasized the need to activate the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Business Council and strengthen partnerships between private-sector institutions in both countries. The discussions also covered mechanisms to develop and finance priority projects, including initiatives identified by Syria for potential financing through a dedicated Syrian Investment Fund for reconstruction, in coordination with donors and financing institutions. Energy was another focus, with the two countries discussing ways to help meet Syria's natural gas requirements, including the possibility of supplying industrial facilities in southern Syria with compressed natural gas from Jordan's Risha gas field. They also examined the potential use of storage capacity in Jordan's Madouna area to supply southern Syrian regions with petroleum products, alongside the transfer of Jordanian expertise in liquefied natural gas storage and regasification. The discussions extended to coordinating Syria's gas requirements for 2027 and arrangements for transporting natural gas to Lebanon through Syrian territory, and "the possibility of using gas supplied from Jordan to generate electricity at Syrian power plants and export the resulting electricity to Lebanon," as per SANA. The council said trilateral coordination would continue to finalize the necessary technical, commercial, and contractual arrangements. In transport, the two countries discussed advancing a regional railway corridor linking Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye.–DNA

Gulf states to base joint forces in Kuwait after Iranian attacks

DUBAI: Gulf Cooperation Council defense ministers have agreed to set up a forward military command in Kuwait with forces assigned to the site, GCC Secretary-General Jassim Al-Budaiwi said on Tuesday.

A forward command is a headquarters placed closer to potential flashpoints than a military's main command. It allows more efficient coordination and faster deployment of forces. Kuwait sits at the northern tip of the Gulf, bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and facing Iran across the water. The new command will come under the GCC's Unified Military Command, the joint force that brings together the armed forces of the six member states. The decision was taken at the 23rd session of the GCC Joint Defense Council in Manama, chaired by Bahraini Minister of Defense Affairs Lt. Gen. Abdullah bin Hassan Al-Nuaimi. Al-Budaiwi said the meeting followed directives issued by GCC leaders at their extraordinary summit in Jeddah in April to strengthen joint military action and boost the bloc's ability to face common threats. He praised the level of military cooperation and coordination among member states in responding to what he described as Iranian aggression in the region, saying it showed that the security of Gulf countries was a shared responsibility. Al-Budaiwi condemned in the strongest terms the Iranian attacks that had hit GCC states and damaged civilian sites and infrastructure. He also paid tribute to the armed forces of member states and offered condolences for those killed, wishing the injured a swift recovery. He also condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the targeting of holy sites, calling them a blatant violation of the Kingdom's security and sovereignty. The GCC states stand in full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support all measures the Kingdom takes to protect its security, stability and territory, he said, adding that "the security of the Kingdom is an integral part of the security of all GCC countries." Al-Budaiwi said the council had also adopted a number of other decisions that would take Gulf military cooperation to a broader level of integration.–**DNA**



Washington:: Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh addressing a special Iqbal Day event held at the Embassy of Pakistan, to commence celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal next year.

Gold prices fall by Rs1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed a decline in the domestic market on Tuesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs1,500 to Rs430,836, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs1,286 to Rs369,372, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs1,179 to Rs338,603. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by $15 to $4,083 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola remained unchanged at Rs5,723, while the price of 10 grams of silver also stayed stable at Rs4,906. The price of silver in the international market remained unchanged at $52.45 per ounce, the association added._**APP**

Rupee gains 01 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.65, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 276.66.

According the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.50, respectively.

The Euro rose by Rs 1.45 to close at Rs 310.95, up from Rs 309.50 the previous day, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged, closing at Rs 1.75, while the British Pound surged by Rs 1.53 to Rs 372.15 from Rs 370.62 the previous day. The exchange rates of the Emirate Dirham and Saudi Riyal stood stagnant to close at Rs 75.32 and Rs73.70, respectively.–**APP**

Proposals for NESPAK, HESCO, SEPCO boards

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs), chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, on Tuesday approved proposals regarding the appointment and reconstitution of Boards of Directors of NESPAK, HESCO and Sukkur Electric Power SEPCO.

The meeting was also attended by Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Hussain Magsi, relevant federal secretaries and senior representatives of various ministries, divisions and regulatory bodies.

The committee considered two agenda items, including the appointment of Chairman/Independent Director of National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) and the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO), along with the appointment of an independent director for the Board of Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO). After detailed deliberations, the committee approved the proposals._–**APP**

Workers' remittance inflows increase by 14pc

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of overseas workers' remittances increased by 14 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year 2026-27, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Tuesday. The inflow stood at US$14.8 billion during July-October 2026-27, compared with US$13 billion during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2025-26. Similarly, on a year-on-year basis, overseas workers' remittances surged by 14 percent to US$3.9 billion in October 2026. On a month-on-month basis, remittance inflows increased by 8.5 percent as compared September 2026. The major corridors for workers' remittances during October 2026 were Saudi Arabia (US$ 981.6 million), the United Arab Emirates (US$ 815.9 million), the United Kingdom (US$ 592.2 million) and the United States of America (US$ 328.9 million), it added.–**APP**

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Briefs

Canada reimposes curbs against Iran firms

PARIS: Canada on Tuesday said it was reimposing sanctions against 11 Iranian companies in the energy and banking sectors for contributing to the Islamic republic's nuclear drive, ballistic missile program or the financing of "malign activities."
The companies, which include the National Iranian Oil Company and leading banks Mellat and Melli, were delisted from Canadian sanctions in 2016. But the measures have now been reimposed "to disrupt Iranian financial networks supporting its nuclear program," the Canadian foreign ministry said in a statement on the sidelines of the G7 meeting in Paris. – **APP**

Iraq reopens Sheeb border crossing with Iran

CAIRO: Iraq reopened the Sheeb border crossing with Iran on Tuesday morning after closing it last month amid US pressure to isolate Tehran.
The Iraqi government initially shut down the Al-Sheeb crossing in Missan province in October as part of efforts to review security and install detection equipment to stop smuggling. The reopening follows Iraq's completion of technical requirements and necessary procedures, ensuring the smooth movement of travellers and goods, according to Alaa al-Waeli, the head of Iraq's Border Ports Authority.
Meanwhile, the authority announced that the Mandali border crossing with Iran will be temporarily closed starting Friday for maintenance. The decision comes as Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein noted US demands for Baghdad to close most crossings with neighboring Iran, acknowledging ongoing discussions with Washington. Two political sources indicated that the US aims to increase economic pressure on Tehran.
The closure of the Sheeb crossing had previously sparked tensions between the central government and local authorities in Missan, leading to protests over the disruption of a key route. In September, Baghdad had temporarily closed several crossings with Iran after determining that an unclaimed drone attack on a Saudi pipeline originated from near Al-Sheeb. Pro-Iran armed groups in the region have supported Tehran, engaging in numerous attacks on US bases. – **APP**

NATO states start submarine exercises

STOCKHOLM: Eight NATO countries have started five days of anti-submarine exercises in the Baltic sea and a top commander called the ultra-silent underwater vessels a constant "threat." Based in Sweden from Monday to Friday, the submarine-hunting drills also involve Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and the Netherlands. The Baltic has become a key venue for the so-called war of "hybrid" tactics that Western nations blame on Russia. Several thousand naval forces, submarines from Germany and Sweden, surface vessels from several countries and air patrols will take part in the staged hunts for submarines, the alliance said.
NATO has stepped up its naval presence in the Baltic, where, military experts say, submarine signals – the key to tracking vessels – can be more easily hidden in its shallow waters crisscrossed by intense shipping traffic. "The submarine is the only technology at this point that can dominate that undersea consistently," Rear Admiral John Craddock, the NATO commander for submarines, told AFP.

CM Maryam Nawaz vows zero tolerance for corruption

Addressing a laptop distribution ceremony in Jhelum, Maryam Nawaz clarified that she has never claimed corruption has been completely eliminated from Punjab. However, she stressed that any allegations of wrongdoing would be taken seriously and dealt with strictly

DNA

JHELUM: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has reiterated her government's commitment to accountability, stating that she would not spare anyone found involved in corruption, including members of her own administration.
Addressing a laptop distribution ceremony in Jhelum, Maryam Nawaz clarified that she has never claimed corruption has been completely eliminated from Punjab. However, she stressed that any allegations of wrongdoing would be taken seriously and dealt with strictly.
"If I come to know that any minister or official has committed corruption, I will never spare them," she said, reaffirming her government's policy of transparency and accountability. The Punjab chief minister also criticized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government, alleging that corruption remains widespread in the province. She questioned why corruption issues in KP receive less public attention compared to criticism directed at Punjab.
Maryam Nawaz said that throughout her political career she has stood by ordinary and underprivileged citizens and remains committed to serving the people of Punjab. She highlighted various welfare and development initiatives undertaken by her government, saying these projects are aimed at improving the lives of the public.



Referring to political criticism against her administration, she claimed that attacks on the Punjab government have intensified as elections draw closer. According to her, political opponents who failed to deliver significant development in Punjab during their own tenures are now making allegations against her government. She maintained that her administration is focused on public service and development rather than political point-scoring. The chief minister said her government's performance speaks for itself and that the people of Punjab can judge the progress made in various sectors.
The laptop distribution ceremony was attended by students, government officials, and local representatives. During the event, Maryam Nawaz emphasized the importance of education and technology, describing youth empowerment as a key priority of the Punjab government.
She expressed confidence that initiatives such as the laptop scheme would help students improve their academic performance and equip them with the skills needed to compete in the modern world. The chief minister concluded by reaffirming her commitment to merit, good governance, and accountability, while pledging to continue working for the welfare and development of the people of Punjab.

Iran calls on US to meet its demands to end war

TEHRAN: Iran on Tuesday urged the United States to meet its demands in a plan to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, after President Donald Trump spoke of "positive momentum" to end their eight-month war.
"The conflict with Iran will not be resolved through military means, nor by intensifying sanctions," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Iran's IRNA news agency.
"The only solution is to adopt a language of respect, engage in diplomacy, and address Iran's demands and conditions – which were outlined in the two-day proposal and remain on the table." Tehran has proposed reopening Hormuz, which it has blockaded since the start of the war, within two days in return for Washington meeting a raft of conditions.
These include ending the war on all fronts, unfreezing Iranian assets, lifting oil sanctions and ending the US counter-blockade of Iranian ports. Trump, whose Republican party last week lost midterm elections in part due to the war, said on Monday that there was "positive momentum" toward ending the conflict after meeting Qatar's prime minister at the White House.
In a post on social media, Trump reiterated that the US was "locked and loaded" but said further strikes were "quite unlikely" given that key US allies in the Gulf "would prefer the status quo."
"We are seeing positive momentum toward an end to this conflict, and will ensure that America's interests are at all times protected," Trump said. Diplomatic efforts, led by Qatar and Pakistan, are underway to find a resolution to the war, which broke out in late February when US-Israeli strikes killed Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. On Tuesday, Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei urged Washington to "surrender" to the Iranian demands.
"The war on Iran has already wrecked the US government. But Washington flails like a desperate gambler. FOLD YOUR HAND. STOP manufacturing FAKE NEWS about imaginary talks," said Rezaei, the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, in a post on X. – **APP**

Govt collects Rs220bn through petroleum levy

Authorities aim to increase petroleum levy collections by Rs109bn to Rs1.676tr by June 30, 2027

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government generated Rs220 billion through the petroleum levy during the first two months of fiscal year 2026-27, as it holds talks with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) over measures to reduce the levy. However, the budgetary framework for 2026-27, agreed with the IMF under the $7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF), leaves little fiscal space for reducing the levy at this stage, according to The News.
It remains unclear how the government intends to address JI's demand for rationalising the petroleum levy burden. Higher fuel prices have contributed to CPI-based inflation, which has hovered close to double digits during the current fiscal year.
The Climate Support Levy, also referred to as the Carbon Levy, generated Rs27.5 billion during the first two months of the fiscal year, while the New Energy Vehicle (NEV) Adoption Levy yielded Rs7.225 billion.
According to official data, the government has set a petroleum levy collection target of Rs1.676 trillion for 2026-27, against the initial budget estimate of Rs1.468 trillion for the previous fiscal year. However, actual collections during 2025-26, which ended on June 30, 2026, exceeded the initial target by nearly Rs100 billion, reaching Rs1.567 trillion. Under the current budgetary framework, the government aims to increase petroleum levy collections by Rs109 billion to Rs1.676 trillion by June 30, 2027, compared with Rs1.567 trillion collected in the preceding fiscal year.
The government is currently charging a Petroleum Levy of Rs80 per litre on both petrol and diesel. Parliament has empowered the federal government to adjust the levy, allowing it to increase the rate without seeking further parliamentary approval.

LPG strike postponed after talks

The Sindh governor emphasised that ensuring an uninterrupted supply of LPG was essential given the current energy challenges, a press release from the Governor House said

News Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan LPG Marketers Association has postponed its planned strike after a meeting with Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi on Monday. The PLPGMA had announced a strike for Nov 16 over the lack of consultation on the LPG policy. The meeting discussed LPG supply and related policy matters in the context of the evolving Middle East situation and prevailing energy challenges.
The Sindh governor emphasised that ensuring an uninterrupted supply of LPG was essential given the current energy challenges, a press release from the Governor House said.
PLPGMA Senior Vice President Ali Haider stressed the importance of consulting all stakeholders in formulating the LPG policy, saying their input could help make the policy more effective and practical.
The governor assured the delegation that their concerns would be conveyed to the relevant ministry and that necessary coordination would be facilitated.
The delegation was led by Mirza Ishtiaq Baig. Minister of State Kheal Das Kohistani and National Assembly Member Shahbaz Babar were also present.
Consumers have been paying Rs500-550 per kg for LPG for the last few months.
The gas is extensively used by the transport sector, households and outdoor dining outlets. As a result, consumers are paying high fares, especially in public transport such as big buses, minibuses and three-wheeler rickshaws. Food outlets using LPG have already raised prices of various dishes. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data, the country imported LPG worth $285 million in 1QFY27, up 22pc from $235m in the same period last fiscal year.
Mr Haider said stakeholders had not been consulted and that the government had announced an LPG policy aimed at lowering gas prices, while prices remained high.
He said the association had given a formula that could bring down prices, while the government had to cut duties and taxes on gas imports to provide relief to the public.

Pentagon chief Hegseth expected to face House impeachment vote this week

Congressman Massie files 8 impeachment articles against defence secy, triggering potential House vote within two days

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pete Hegseth, the US defence secretary, calls himself the secretary of war, part of his effort to rebrand a military he said was too weak and "woke" when he took office last year. Now, with an expected House impeachment vote this week, he could soon share something in common with an actual secretary of war. William Belknap, who held that title in 1876, became the first, and to date the only, civilian leader of the US military to be impeached by Congress. US Representative Thomas Massie, a Kentucky Republican, introduced eight articles of impeachment on Monday, setting off a two-day clock for a potential House vote on charges including waging war against Iran without congressional approval and other abuses of power.
Massie, addressing reporters, cautioned that Republican leadership could try to avoid a straight vote on impeachment by trying to dismiss it with a procedural motion. "They may try to get out of an actual vote on the substance of this. We should have a vote and a rigorous debate on these eight articles of impeachment," he told a press conference.
Congressional sources say the resolution may have the votes to pass even with President Donald Trump's Republicans still controlling the House until Democrats take over on January 3. Conviction appears unlikely in the Senate, however, where a two-thirds majority is required and Republicans hold 53 of 100 seats.
President Donald Trump, in an interview with Reuters on Monday, strongly defended Hegseth, pointing to the US military's performance in Iran and Venezuela: "Well, he won two wars. I don't know how you can impeach him." House Speaker Mike Johnson opposed the effort, saying impeachment "in the middle of hostilities abroad" would be "a terrible thing for our allies and our enemies to see."
Voter anger over the war helped Democrats win control of Congress in last week's midterm elections, intensifying Republican divisions over a conflict that Vice President JD Vance has publicly questioned and Hegseth has defended as "courageous and historic."
Accused of taking huge kickbacks, Belknap handed President Ulysses Grant his resignation ahead of his scheduled impeachment vote and, according to a Senate history, "burst into tears." The House impeached him anyway, but the Senate later acquitted him after falling short of the required two-thirds majority.

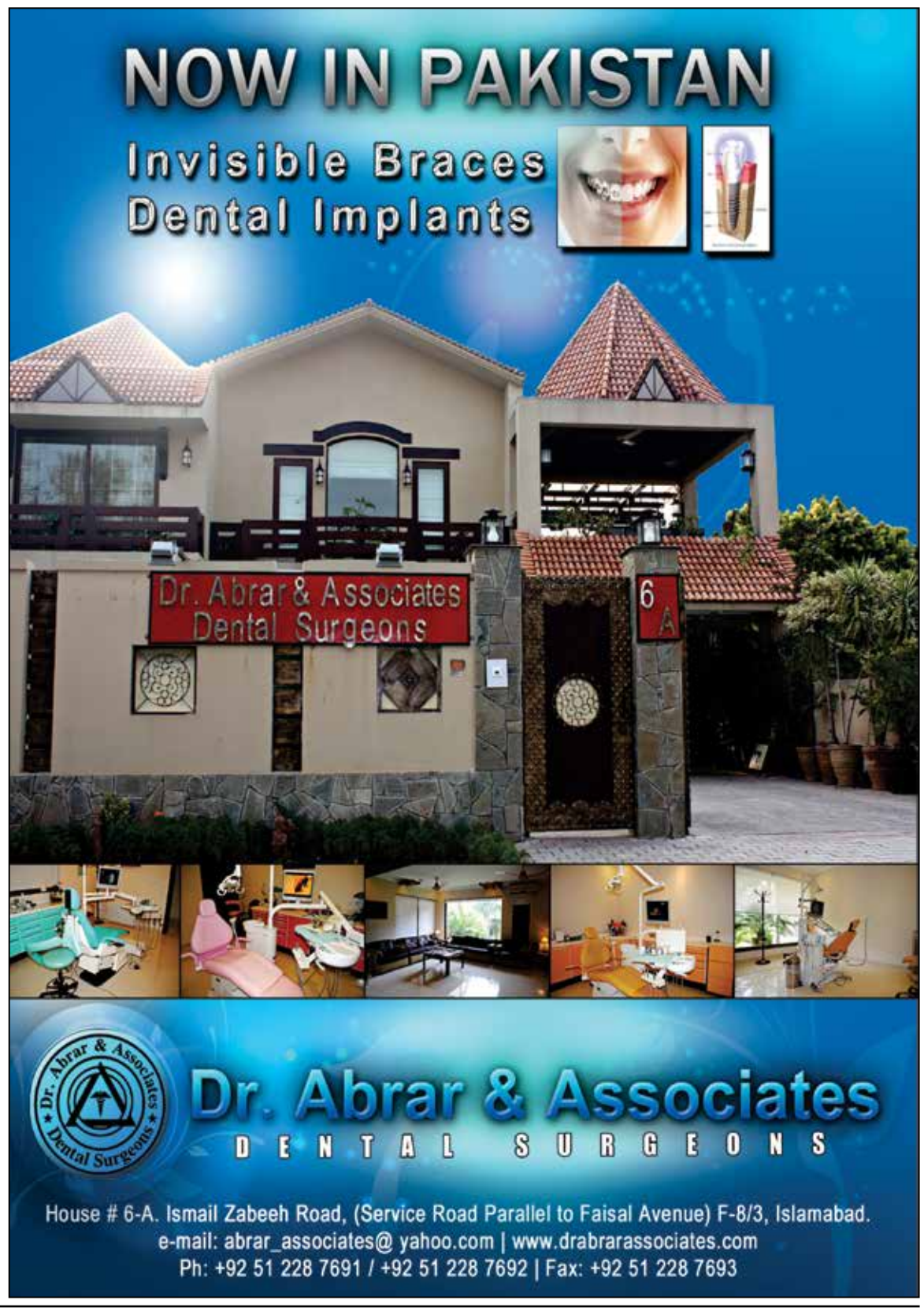
BHC hands ex-MPA Achakzai 10-year sentence

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court on Tuesday handed former MPA Abdul Majeed Achakzai a ten-year sentence in a case regarding the death of a traffic policeman in a hit-and-run incident. A division bench comprising Justice Muhammad Amir Nawaz Rana and Justice Abdul Qayyum Lehr allowed an appeal filed by the provincial government against Achakzai's acquittal and set aside the local court decision dated September 4, 2020.
Achakzai was convicted under Section 320 (punishment for qatl-i-khata by rash or negligent driving) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) for causing the death of Traffic Sub-Inspector Haji Attaullah. He was also ordered to pay diyat to the legal heirs of the deceased. Furthermore, the court directed the learned Additional Sessions Judge-VI, Quetta, to issue non-bailable warrants for Achakzai's immediate arrest.
Traffic sergeant Ataullah was killed when a fast-moving vehicle hit him at GPO Chowk in Quetta in June 2017. The ex-lawmaker was returning from the Balochistan Assem¬¬bly after attending a session when the vehicle hit the traffic policeman, who was performing his duty at the place.

Zelensky holds energy security talks with Nordic leaders

COPENHAGEN: Denmark said Tuesday it was hosting talks between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Nordic leaders to discuss military support, air defense and energy infrastructure security.
The meetings came as direct Ukraine-Russia talks, under US mediation, began in Abu Dhabi.
Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said his country was planning to donate 4.8 billion kroner ($720 million) in military aid to Ukraine. Another 150 million kroner would be donated to Ukraine's energy sector, Rasmussen told reporters. – **APP**



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