LAHORE - KARACHI - ISLAMABAD

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Türkiye wants a lasting peace in the Middle East

Detailed News On Page-08

Interior minister slams minister for his tirade



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Russian envoy lauds Pakistan leadership



Detailed News On Page-04

FM Paulo Rangel in Islamabad

Portugal and Pakistan pledge stronger ties

The Portuguese foreign minister underlined the significance of expanding economic cooperation and announced that an economic forum would be held during his visit to explore new business opportunities between the two countries

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Portuguese Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel has emphasized the importance of strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties between Portugal and Pakistan while addressing the inauguration of an exhibition and cultural event at Islamabad Serena Hotel, marking 77 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Speaking at the ceremony, Rangel expressed his pleasure at visiting Pakistan and highlighted ongoing cooperation between the two nations on international and bilateral issues. He noted that discussions with Pakistani leadership have focused on regional and global affairs, including collaboration in multilateral forums and future diplomatic engagement. The Portuguese foreign minister underlined the significance of expanding economic cooperation and announced that an economic forum would be held during his visit to explore new business

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar presenting a souvenir to the Foreign Minister of Portugal, Paulo Rangel while Ambassador of Portugal Paulo Miguel Guedes and CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani look on. – DNA

Attaullah Tarar says Pakistan to expand ties with Portugal

The minister emphasized the role of culture, arts, and heritage in bringing people together, noting that cultural connections between Pakistan and Portugal predate formal diplomatic relations

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar lauded the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Portugal while addressing the inauguration of an exhibition and concert at Islamabad Serena Hotel, held to commemorate 77 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Welcoming Portuguese Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel, Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan, and senior Foreign Office officials, Tarar described the visit as a significant milestone in bilateral relations. He said the presence of the Portuguese delegation reflected the strong ties and mutual respect shared by the two nations. The minister emphasized the role of culture, arts, and heritage in

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UN climate talks end in fiasco

NEWS DESK

ANTALYA: Chaotic United Nations climate talks in Turkiye could not reach an overarching agreement amid disagreements over whether to mention the fossil fuels that cause global warming.

Expectations had already been low heading into the two-week negotiations, but discussions about explicitly including fossil fuels — the chief cause of global warming — and other issues, including money, proved irreconcilable.

The talks, called COP31, continued without a main agreement known as a cover decision. The meeting had already made progress on smaller issues. Any pact approved at the talks, called COP31, has to be by a near-unanimous consensus. Several countries and

Continued on Page 06

Naqvi fires warning at 'minister' over criticism amid provinces debate

"The day I comment on this minister, he will not be able to show his face," says Naqvi in hard-hitting statement

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday issued a stern warning to a "minister" over what he said was repeated criticism, saying he had been patiently listening to the latter's remarks for the past two-and-a-half years. Speaking informally to private TV channel Naqvi, without naming the politician, said he had been commenting on him on television almost every day to "gain attention". "The day I comment on this minister, he will not be able to show his face," he said in a hard-hitting statement.

Defending the businessmen at the economic forum criticised by the said minister, the interior minister remarked that they were respectable citizens who had served as presidents and office-bearers of chambers of commerce at the federal and city levels. He said the businessmen were also among the country's highest taxpayers. "If these businessmen are so bad, why do you take billions of rupees from them in the name of

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Karachi placed on 'high alert'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Police have placed security on high alert across various parts of the port city ahead of planned protest demonstrations and rallies, officials said on Sunday. Authorities have issued district-level instructions to maintain law and order and ensure preparedness for any emergency situation. Heavy police contingents have been deployed in the Red Zone, while security arrangements have also been strengthened at Karachi Press Club and its surrounding areas. Jeay Sindh Leader Committee has announced holding a rally in the port city today, while Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party (STP) has planned a rally on November 29, The News reported on Saturday.

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Briefs

PM vows to end terrorism

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has commended the security forces for their successful joint operation against Fitna al-Khawarij in the Matani area of Peshawar. He said the timely and decisive action by the security forces thwarted a major terrorist threat and ensured the protection of the lives and property of the people. The Prime Minister said the sacrifices and achievements of the security forces in the war against terrorism are highly commendable. Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed that the government remains committed to completely eradicating terrorism from the country.

Russian cargo ship on fire

NEWS DESK

HELSINKI: A fire onboard a Russian cargo ship that was struck by drones in the Baltic Sea continued to burn through the night even as efforts were made to douse the flames, Finland's coast guard said on Sunday. The Finnish military has said the strike on the Sparta II on Saturday was likely carried out by Ukraine and that the vessel later drifted into Finnish waters where it remains at anchor. The 16 crew members were evacuated onto a nearby Russian ship. Pictures and video released by the coast guard showed several vessels spraying the Sparta II with water cannons during the night in a bid to put out the flames and cool down containers stacked on its deck. Ukraine has sent waves of military drones toward Russia's northwest coastal Leningrad region this year, including some that strayed into the airspace of nearby Baltic countries.

Pakistani among two injured in Iranian attacks, Bahrain says

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said that "during the operation, US military positions at the Al-Riffa and Awali bases in Bahrain were targeted with missile and drone strikes"

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani citizen was among two injured in last night's Iranian attacks on Bahrain, authorities in the kingdom said on Sunday. The Gulf kingdom has suffered several attacks this week, ending a weeks-long lull in the conflict that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

In a statement late on Saturday night, Bahrain's interior ministry accused Tehran of striking a "civilian industrial facility", without specifying the location. It said the incident caused fire and material damage, but no injuries were reported. The ministry later issued another alert of a "potential threat", giving an all-clear after midnight local time.

In a subsequent statement on Sunday, the interior ministry said: "As a result of the heinous Iranian attacks on Bahrain yesterday, a Bahraini citizen with disabilities sustained injuries and is in stable condition, while a Pakistani resident was also injured and is in critical condition. "Both are receiving treatment in the hospital," it added.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said that "during the operation, US military positions at the Al-Riffa and Awali bases in Bahrain were targeted with missile and drone strikes". "Two radars belonging to the US Army's Patriot air defence systems... were struck," it said, adding that any violation of Iranian airspace will be met with a "harsh and decisive response".

The attacks came as two tankers were struck in the Strait of Hormuz, which has become the focus of the stalemated conflict, with Iran continuing its efforts to blockade the strategic shipping lane.

The US military, meanwhile, has been escorting ships through the strategic strait, which carried about one-fifth of the world's oil before the war, and maintains its own counterblockade of Iranian ports. British maritime agency UKMTO said on Saturday one tanker was struck by an "unknown projectile" while transiting Hormuz. "There are no reported casualties at this time," it said, adding another tanker was hit in its engine room. Tehran has repeatedly reported ships catching fire in the strait in recent weeks, often claiming they struck mines.

Oman to supply petroleum products, $200m credit

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Oman on Sunday signed an agreement under which the Gulf country's state-owned OQ Trading would supply petroleum products, as well as a $200 million credit line, to the Pakistan State Oil (PSO). This could provide Pakistan with a means to strategically diversify its sourcing of petroleum products as the Strait of Hormuz continues to be choked by the US-Iran conflict into its ninth month.

According to an announcement from the Petroleum Division, the agreement between the two state-owned entities was signed during Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik's visit to Muscat, where he met with Oman's

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Security forces kill 15 terrorists in Balochistan's Mastung: sources

Several terrorist hideouts destroyed, large cache of weapons and ammunition recovered in operations, say sources

DNA

QUETTA: Security forces have killed 15 terrorists in two separate operations conducted under "Operation Rad-ul-Fitna-3" against "Fitna al-Hindustan" in Mastung district of Balochistan, security sources said on Saturday. According to the security sources, five terrorists were killed in the first operation, while 10 others were eliminated in the second in different areas of Mastung.

Several terrorist hideouts were destroyed during the operations, while a large cache of weapons and ammunition was also recovered, the sources added. Security forces also cleared the areas of Killi Pasand Khan, Musa Khan, Khorasani, and Kaftari of terrorists. They said the security forces remain committed to eradicating terrorism from Balochistan, and operations will continue until the last terrorist is eliminated.

Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. According to a report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), the two provinces remained the country's main hotspots for violence during the second quarter of 2026, with

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GSP+: A cornerstone of Pakistan's export success

ANALYSIS

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



PAKISTAN'S Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) arrangement with the European Union stands as one of the most successful trade partnerships of the past decade. Since securing preferential access in 2014, the scheme has transformed Pakistan's export landscape, delivering duty-free or preferential entry into the world's largest single market. This has significantly expanded exports, supported millions of jobs, strengthened foreign-exchange earnings and integrated Pakistani businesses more deeply into global value chains.

The results speak for themselves. Pakistan's exports to the EU rose from €3.56 billion in 2013 to €8.33 billion in 2024. Roughly €7.5 billion of these were GSP+-eligible, generating an estimated €732 million in tariff exemptions that year alone, with utilisation rates exceeding 95 percent. Textiles and garments have been the primary drivers, but leather goods, sports equipment and other sectors have also gained. These gains have reached beyond large firms: small and medium-sized enterprises in Faisalabad, Sialkot, Karachi and other industrial centres have secured more orders, joined international supply chains and created employment that supports thousands of households across the country.

GSP+ is linked to the effective implementation of a set of international conventions on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, climate commitments and good governance (originally 27, expanding to 32 under the revised framework). Pakistan has remained fully committed to these obligations. It has maintained all required ratifications, introduced legislative reforms, strengthened labour inspection frameworks, adopted provincial action plans against child labour, ratified the 2014 Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention in 2025, and continued active engagement with EU monitoring processes. While implementation in a large, developing economy with complex governance structures is necessarily gradual, successive governments have pursued measurable progress and remain engaged in constructive dialogue with European institutions.

Pakistan views compliance not merely as a condition for market access but as an integral part of sustainable development. Officials have consistently highlighted ongoing legal reforms, social-protection initiatives and efforts to eliminate exploitative labour practices. Structural challenges common to emerging economies cannot be resolved overnight; the emphasis has been on steady, practical improvements rather than overnight transformation. European assessments have recognised legislative and administrative advances even while calling for stronger on-the-ground results an invitation that Pakistani authorities have treated as a basis for further cooperation rather than confrontation.

Pakistan's foreign policy remains balanced and interest-driven. Engagement with multiple partners, including in energy and regional diplomacy, reflects legitimate national needs and does not diminish the country's longstanding constructive relations with the European Union and other Western partners. Trade preferences and broader diplomatic ties can and should advance together on the basis of mutual benefit and continuous dialogue.

Competitive dynamics are a normal feature of international trade. Pakistani policymakers and business leaders note that rival interests occasionally lobby against the country's preferences. Such efforts are monitored, yet the EU's decisions have historically rested on the demonstrated economic and reform record of beneficiaries. Pakistan's position as the largest GSP+ beneficiary, its high utilisation rates and its sustained engagement provide a strong foundation for continued partnership.

Looking ahead, the revised GSP framework taking effect from 2027 introduces an expanded set of conventions and requires reapplication accompanied by a forward-looking action plan. Existing preferences continue through a transition period until the end of 2028. Pakistan has already ratified the additional conventions and is preparing the necessary institutional and enforcement steps. This phase offers an opportunity to deepen reforms, improve enforcement capacity, diversify the export basket beyond textiles, and further integrate SMEs and women-led enterprises into European markets.

The partnership has already delivered substantial gains for Pakistani exporters, workers and the broader economy while supplying European consumers with competitive goods. Continued cooperation rooted in Pakistan's demonstrated commitment, practical progress and recognition of development realities will allow both sides to build on this success. Preferential access carries responsibilities, and Pakistan is addressing them through ongoing reforms and dialogue. Sustaining and strengthening GSP+ remains firmly in the interest of shared prosperity.

– The writer is the newspaper editor

Islamabad POST
Monday, November 23 , 2026

Tahir says Germany one of Europe's leading business hub

Pakistani investors to explore business and investment opportunities in Germany in January 2027



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Euro Asia Ventures hosted a business networking and investment session at Islamabad Club to promote Pakistan-Germany economic cooperation and introduce Pakistani business leaders to investment opportunities in Germany. The event was hosted by Muhammad Shahzad Zia, CEO of Euro Asia Ventures, and attended by prominent Pakistani business personalities. Sardar Tahir Mahmood, former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, Sardar Tahir Mahmood highlighted Germany's position as one of Europe's leading economic powers and a major global business hub. He said investment in Germany could enable Pakistani entrepreneurs to expand their businesses internationally, access European markets and strengthen commercial ties between the two friendly countries. He also emphasized the role of the private sector in turning longstanding Pakistan-Germany relations into stronger economic partnerships. During the session, Euro Asia Ventures presented investment opportunities in Germany across several sectors, including retail and supermarkets, hotels and hospitality, residential and commercial real estate, solar energy, logistics and warehousing. According to the company's investment portfolio, projects range from 500,000 to 20 million, with options for full ownership or business partnerships. The proposed investment opportunities offer potential monthly income in euros, rental-based returns and support for company establishment, legal and tax matters. The programme also outlines possible residence permit options for company owners and their families, subject to German immigration laws and approval by the relevant authorities. A key announcement at the event was that Euro Asia Ventures is preparing to take a delegation of Pakistani investors to Germany in January 2027. The delegation will meet local investors and business partners, visit investment projects and explore opportunities for business expansion and joint ventures.

German-based investors and legal experts also joined the session through video link, briefed participants on investment procedures and legal requirements, and invited Pakistani entrepreneurs to explore business opportunities in Germany. They assured prospective investors of their cooperation and support.

The session concluded with an interactive question-and-answer discussion covering investment procedures, business partnerships, legal protection, potential returns and residency-related matters.

Speakers expressed hope that such initiatives would strengthen private-sector engagement, promote bilateral trade and investment, and create new avenues of economic cooperation between Pakistan and Germany.

Kundi vows improved healthcare across KP

SWABI: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said the health sector was among the provincial government's top priorities, stressing that people of the province should not be compelled to seek medical treatment in other provinces due to inadequate healthcare facilities.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of a newly-constructed 113-bed block at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Swabi as chief guest, the Governor said the government was focusing on constructing new hospitals and upgrading existing health facilities with modern medical equipment and services.

Health Adviser Lt Gen (Retd) Nigar Johar and senior officials of the Health Department attended the ceremony. Governor Kundi formally inaugurated the new hospital block and termed it a significant milestone for the people of Swabi.

He said the new block had been completed after a gap of ten years and expressed pleasure over its inauguration. He added that the government was taking practical steps to revive and complete stalled development projects while ensuring the completion of beneficial public welfare initiatives launched by previous governments.

The Governor said all necessary measures would be taken to provide modern healthcare facilities across the province. He said that the Health Adviser possessed extensive professional experience and expertise, which would be fully utilised to improve the healthcare system. He also congratulated the people of Swabi on the completion of the new hospital block.

Governor Kundi directed the hospital administration to immediately begin construction of a mosque within the hospital premises.

He said the provincial government was committed to putting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the path of sustainable development and prosperity by creating better opportunities for the youth. He announced that efforts would also be made to establish an international-standard sports ground in Swabi to promote healthy activities among young people.—**APP**

Call for stitch to success strategy to boost exports

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has said Pakistan can turn its textile, fashion, and handicraft sectors into a driver of economic growth by adopting a comprehensive "Stitch to Success" strategy focused on value-added exports, innovation, and skill development.

Chairing a meeting of the PFC Board of Directors here on Sunday, he said Pakistan's workforce, particularly women and youth, could be integrated into modern production chains through targeted vocational training and skill development programmes.

He stressed shifting from raw material exports to high-value finished goods, home textiles, and furniture upholstery under the "Made in Pakistan" identity to raise export earnings and strengthen the country's standing in international markets.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq emphasized building stronger links among manufacturers, designers, and international buyers so that Pakistani products meet evolving global trends and quality standards. He said digital platforms and e-commerce offer artisans and micro-entrepreneurs opportunities to reach international markets directly and grow their businesses. He added that giving small and medium enterprises (SMEs) access to modern machinery, design technology, quality certification facilities, and financing would improve their productivity and competitiveness.—**APP**

Presidential ordinance for madrassa registration hailed

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Sunday welcomed the issuance of a presidential ordinance concerning the registration of religious seminaries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, describing it as a landmark step towards resolving longstanding administrative and financial difficulties faced by seminaries across the country.

In a video statement, Ashrafi said following similar measures in Islamabad and Punjab, the issuance of the ordinance for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had further advanced efforts to address registration-related complications and banking issues that had persisted for approximately 26 years.

He expressed gratitude to President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their leadership and personal attention towards resolving the longstanding concerns of religious seminaries.

Ashrafi particularly acknowledged the role of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying he had taken a personal interest in facilitating the process, while the prime minister and the president had also played important roles in bringing the matter to this stage. He said addressing the problems and difficulties of religious seminaries was among the government's foremost priorities and appreciated the collective efforts of the country's political and military leadership, religious scholars and madrassa representatives. Highlighting the contribution of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Ashrafi said the committee had played a pivotal role not only in promoting interfaith harmony, social tolerance and countering extremism and terrorism but also in facilitating communication and coordination between religious seminaries and the government. He said the committee had made significant contributions during the past year by bringing stakeholders together and helping create an environment of mutual understanding to resolve longstanding issues confronting religious institutions. Ashrafi also appreciated the efforts of the Mutahidda Madaris Council, the Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris leadership, representatives of different madrassa boards and religious scholars for their cooperation in advancing the process.

He reaffirmed that the Pakistan Ulema Council and the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee would continue their efforts to resolve the remaining challenges facing religious seminaries and strengthen institutional coordination between the government and religious education institutions.

Clarifying the role of religious seminaries, Ashrafi said these institutions were dedicated to teaching and promoting the Quran and Sunnah and had no connection with political activities, extremism or terrorism.

He said the unanimous Paigham-e-Pakistan national narrative was clear evidence that the country's religious leadership, including scholars, Ulema, Mashaikh, Imams, preachers, Khateebs and religious speakers, stood united against terrorism and extremism. He emphasised that religious scholars and seminaries remained committed to peace, national unity and the protection of Pakistan's stability. Reiterating his appreciation, Ashrafi thanked the president, prime minister, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Mutahidda Madaris Council, Pakistan Ulema Council and other madrassa boards for their collective contributions.

He expressed optimism that the remaining administrative and institutional challenges confronting religious seminaries would also be addressed through continued consultation and cooperation. Ashrafi said the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee would continue playing its role as a bridge between the government and religious institutions to promote mutual understanding, resolve outstanding concerns.—**APP**

PM&DC clarifies role in foreign graduates' NRE

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has clarified that the National Registration Examination (NRE) for foreign medical graduates is conducted exclusively by the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS), Rawalpindi. In a clarification issued on Sunday, the PM&DC stated that NUMS was solely responsible for the entire examination process, including paper setting, printing, invigilation and evaluation.—**APP**

Equestrian sports showcase country soft image

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Sunday said that horse riding is a cherished part of the country's history, civilization, culture and traditions, and that such sporting events help introduce the younger generation to their cultural heritage while projecting Pakistan's positive image, talent and hospitality internationally.

He was speaking as chief guest at the closing ceremony of a three-day Riding Gala and Tent Pegging competitions organized by the local Riding Club in Rawalpindi.

The governor congratulated the club's management on holding the gala in a grand and well-organized manner. He described the youth as the nation's most valuable asset, adding that developing sports grounds is an urgent need of the hour to hone their abilities and steer them toward positive activities.

"Promoting healthy and traditional sports preserves our cultural identity while nurturing a passion for sports and a spirit of positive competition among the new generation," he said.

The three-day event drew enthusiastic participation from riders, equestrian enthusiasts, children and families.

Speaking on political matters, the governor said all political parties should rise above personal and party differences and work together in the national interest to resolve the challenges facing the country and achieve national development.—**APP**

KP boosts emergency response for disease outbreaks

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department has strengthened the capacity of public health spokespersons and frontline communicators to ensure timely, accurate and coordinated information sharing during infectious disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.

The Directorate General Health Services KP organised a two-day Capacity Building Workshop on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) for Public Health Spokespersons on November 19–20, with support from the National Institute of Health (NIH) Pakistan and the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office Pakistan.

According to a statement issued here, the workshop brought together representatives from health, livestock, environment and other relevant departments to promote a coordinated One Health approach to emergency communication.

Addressing the participants, Director General Health Services KP Dr. Naeem said clear and coordinated communication was essential to saving lives and maintaining public trust during health emergencies.

He said the workshop would enable public health spokespersons to deliver consistent messages and strengthen coordination among different sectors.

The participants received practical training in media interviews, emergency press briefings, community engagement and management of misinformation through simulated outbreak scenarios.

The exercises focused on communicating complex health information in simple language, responding to misinformation, addressing public concerns and maintaining public confidence during emergencies.—**APP**

Balochistan's water future hinges on revival of Karez system

ISLAMABAD: The future of Balochistan is closely linked to the rehabilitation, management, operation and maintenance of its traditional Karez water system, said Muhammad Ashraf, Country Representative of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in Pakistan. He said reliance on tubewells without adequate groundwater recharge would ultimately deplete vital water resources in the province. Talking to APP, Ashraf said groundwater levels in many areas had already fallen to between 1,000 and 1,300 feet, while deeper extraction was leading to increasingly poor water quality. He emphasised that the future of water security in Balochistan lay in nature-based solutions, including rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and, most importantly, the rehabilitation and revitalisation of the Karez system. "It does not merely bring water. It revives an entire civilisation," he added.—**APP**

German embassy brings Jazzy vibes to Islamabad

DNA

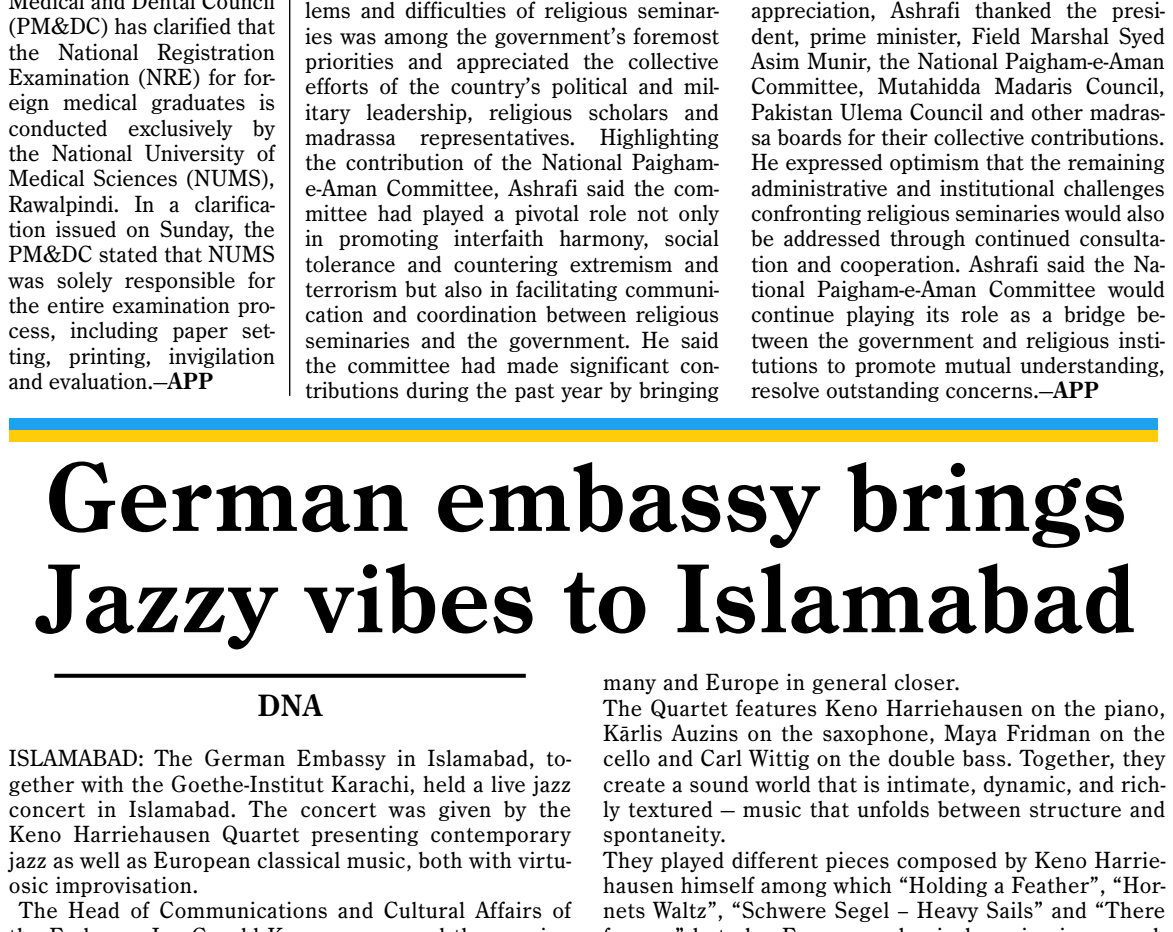
ISLAMABAD: The German Embassy in Islamabad, together with the Goethe-Institut Karachi, held a live jazz concert in Islamabad. The concert was given by the Keno Harriehausen Quartet presenting contemporary jazz as well as European classical music, both with virtuosic improvisation.

The Head of Communications and Cultural Affairs of the Embassy, Jan Gerald Krausser, opened the evening by welcoming the guests. H. E. Ina Lepel, German Ambassador to Pakistan, highlighted the fruitful 75 years of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Germany and the role of cultural diplomacy in bringing Pakistan, Germany and Europe in general closer.

The Quartet features Keno Harriehausen on the piano, Kārlis Auzins on the saxophone, Maya Fridman on the cello and Carl Wittig on the double bass. Together, they create a sound world that is intimate, dynamic, and richly textured – music that unfolds between structure and spontaneity.

They played different pieces composed by Keno Harriehausen himself among which "Holding a Feather", "Hornets Waltz", "Schwere Segel – Heavy Sails" and "There for you" but also European classical music pieces such as "A la mani re de Borodine" of Maurice Ravel.

The evening brought together music lovers from all walks of life, predominantly young Pakistani music fans but also members of the international community.



ECO has vast potential to boost regional trade

LAHORE: Former SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday said the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) had enormous potential to promote regional economic cooperation, trade, and investment among its 10 member states.

According to a spokesperson, he said the organization had, however, made limited progress towards achieving its objectives due to various challenges, including tariff and non-tariff barriers, inadequate regional connectivity, and slow progress in economic integration. He stressed that all ECO member states, particularly Pakistan, should play a proactive role in making the organization an effective platform for regional economic growth and prosperity. He said the region was endowed with abundant natural resources, a large consumer market, skilled human resources, and strategically important trade routes. Enhanced cooperation in transport, energy, agriculture, information technology, tourism, and industrial development could create new employment opportunities and accelerate sustainable economic growth.—**APP**



Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Monday , November 23, 2026

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day



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MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
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Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Right to play's annual report spotlights play as essential infrastructure

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Right To Play Pakistan today launched its Annual Report at a high-level stakeholder gathering in Islamabad, demonstrating how structured, play-based learning is driving measurable systems change across Pakistan's education, child protection, and youth employability landscape. Featuring keynote remarks by Jessie Thomson, Global President and CEO of Right To Play International, alongside a comprehensive impact overview by Ali Khayam, Country Director of Right To Play Pakistan, the event convened senior government officials, diplomatic missions, civil society leaders, and private-sector partners to celebrate 25 years of global impact and chart the future of child-centered education in Pakistan. Addressing an education emergency where 26 million children remain out of school and 77% experience learning poverty, Right To Play's report proves that play is not a luxury—it is essential educational infrastructure. Over the past year, Right To Play Pakistan's direct and partner-led interventions reached 150,000+ children across 500+ government partner schools and 130 non-formal education centres, supported by 1,800+ trained educators and youth coaches delivering more than 10,000 play-based learning sessions.

Speaking at the launch, Global President and CEO Jessie Thomson underscored Pakistan's leadership as a global hub of evidence and innovation for Right To Play's worldwide mission across 47 countries:

"Across the world, we see that when children are given safe spaces to play, learn, and lead, entire communities transform. Pakistan stands at the forefront of this movement—proving that integrating play-based pedagogy into public education systems doesn't just keep children in classrooms; it builds resilience, reduces violence, and equips young people—especially girls—with the agency to shape their own futures."

Presenting the strategic highlights of the Annual Report, Country Director Ali Khayam emphasized how Right To Play Pakistan has transitioned from isolated classroom interventions to scalable, government-led institutional reforms:

"Behind every statistic in this report is a child who found their voice, a teacher who replaced rote memorization with joyful active learning, and a community that opened its doors to girls' leadership. Through deep partnerships with federal and provincial governments, donors, and local civil society organizations, we are embedding play into the DNA of Pakistan's public schools so that no child is left behind." Key Impact Highlights from the Report • Public Education Systems Reform: In partnership with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) and the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), Right To Play is integrating play-based learning across all 347 government primary schools in Islamabad, reaching 103,800 students and training 700+ teachers. In Sindh, RTP's evidence directly informed the provincial Physical Education curriculum now rolling out across 60,000+ public schools. • Safer, Violence-Free Schools: Under the UK International Development-supported What Works to Prevent Violence – Phase II initiative with Aahung, 90% of intervention schools took concrete action to strengthen child protection, while 88% of learners demonstrated improved violence-recognition knowledge. • Breaking Barriers for Young Women: Through the GOAL Accelerator programme—supported by Women Win and Standard Chartered Bank—255 young women across Sindh, Punjab, and Islamabad achieved a 100% retention rate, with 195 young women now earning sustainable incomes through formal job placements and youth-led startups. • Community Infrastructure & Crisis Resilience: Working with local partners like the Indus Resource Centre (IRC) and community champions, Right To Play inaugurated the Parveen Elahi Girls Sports Centre in Sialkot before 500+ community members and formalized a SELD- and UNICEF-endorsed Psychosocial Support (PSS) framework for Education in Emergencies.

Russian envoy lauds Pakistan's leadership

ISLAMABAD: A meeting between Honorary Advisor to the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Usman Tahir and Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev was held here on Sunday .

The meeting focused on strengthening cultural relations between Pakistan and Russia, promoting cultural diplomacy, and exploring new opportunities for bilateral cooperation through cultural exchange programmes, joint activities, educational initiatives and creative industry partnerships.

During the discussion, Ambassador Albert P. Khorev appreciated the visionary leadership of Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi and acknowledged the positive role being played by the Ministry in promoting cultural activities and strengthening international relations.

The Ambassador particularly highlighted the importance of the Ministry's initiatives, noting that its vision and ongoing efforts to promote cultural exchange and bilateral engagement are making a positive contribution to strengthening relations between Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

Syed Usman Tahir emphasized that culture can serve as a powerful bridge between nations, bringing people closer through shared traditions, artistic collaborations, educational exchanges, and people-to-people connections.

Both sides discussed the importance of expanding Pakistan–Russia cultural cooperation and exploring further opportunities for joint cultural programmes, festivals, exhibitions, and creative economy initiatives.—**APP**

Army personnel trained in cyber safety

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has conducted a special cybercrime awareness session for Pakistan Army officers and personnel at the Baloch Regiment Centre (BRC) in Abbottabad, besides expanding its digital safety campaign to schools, colleges and other institutions. According to details compiled by APP from NCCIA awareness activities, the Abbottabad team briefed army officers and personnel on online fraud, cyber threats, fake links, protection of personal information and safe use of digital platforms. During the session at the Baloch Regiment Centre, participants were guided on creating strong passwords, using two-factor authentication and identifying suspicious online activities. They were also informed about the importance of protecting sensitive personal information and promptly reporting suspected cybercrime incidents. The initiative formed part of NCCIA's wider awareness activities aimed at promoting digital security and responsible internet use among different sections of society. In Islamabad, NCCIA Assistant Director Tanveer Hussain Awan conducted an awareness session at The Thinkers College, where students were educated about online financial fraud, cyber harassment, fake links, identity theft and misuse of personal information.

He advised students to remain cautious about suspicious messages and unknown contacts and explained how to report cybercrime complaints to the relevant authorities.

Similarly, NCCIA Lahore Assistant Director Muhammad Wasif Jawad addressed students at Chand Bagh Higher Secondary School in Muridke.

He highlighted the importance of protecting personal information, using social media responsibly and reporting online fraud or harassment without delay.Meanwhile, NCCIA Abbottabad participated in an awareness seminar at District Council Hall Abbottabad, organised by the Child Protection Unit to mark the district launch of a provincial campaign against child sexual abuse on Universal Children's Day. NCCIA representatives briefed participants about online child sexual exploitation, cyber harassment and other digital threats faced by children.

They emphasized that parents, teachers and relevant institutions must work together to protect children from online exploitation and encourage them to report suspicious or inappropriate online contact. Director General NCCIA Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, in a special message to parents, urged them to monitor their children's online activities and guide them on the safe and positive use of social media.

He said parental guidance played an important role in protecting children from cyber threats and helping them use digital platforms responsibly.—**APP**

AIOU to hold seminar on entrepreneurship

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organize a special seminar on "Entrepreneurship: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" on Thursday, November 26, 2026, to give students a realistic picture of building a business. The seminar is jointly organized by the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) and the Department of Computer Science, AIOU. The session will be held from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Department of Computer Science, AIOU. The seminar will be conducted by Ms. Zunaira Omar, Founder & CEO – The Square Peg, Member of P@SHA and IWCCI. She will share the real talk behind building a business, moving beyond textbook theories to the practical realities faced by young entrepreneurs. During the insightful session, she will discuss the opportunities, challenges, failures, risks and rewards of entrepreneurship, and guide students on how to turn ideas into sustainable ventures. University officials said the purpose of the seminar is to promote entrepreneurial mindset, innovation and self-employment among students, especially in the fields of computer science and information technology._**APP**

Soup, Gajar Ka Halwa take centre stage

ISLAMABAD: As cold winds sweep through the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the aroma of hot Soup, Gajar ka Halwa, Kashmiri Chai and Doodh Jalebi has once again filled the streets, drawing food lovers to roadside stalls and famous winter points. With the temperature dropping in the evening, popular spots including Melody Food Street, G-9 Markaz, F-10, Saddar, Commercial Market Rawalpindi and Raja Bazaar are witnessing a rush of families, students and office workers eager to enjoy traditional winter delicacies. For many residents, winter is incomplete without a steaming bowl of chicken corn soup or hot and sour soup. Ayesha Khan,a student enjoying soup with her friends at Melody said "I wait for winter the whole year just for this soup. It is hot, fresh and affordable. After a long day, one bowl is enough to beat the cold". She said winter food has become a family tradition. Javed Sikander said "Every weekend we come to Saddar for Gajar ka Halwa and Kashmiri chai. It is not just food, it is a get-together for our family". Prices are reasonable and taste is excellent adding that winter is the best season for food lovers in the twin cities,he stated. Sana Fatima from G9 Market said "I have been eating doodh jalebi here for 15 years. The jalebi is crispy and the milk is thick and hot. Winter without it feels incomplete." She commented that they come as a whole family every Sunday saying that her kids love the combination of hot milk and crispy jalebi with dry fruits on top. Food stall holders say business has increased significantly with the onset of winter. They start preparations in the afternoon, with large pots of halwa, freshly made soup and milk simmering for hours. Haji Muhammad Rafiq, who has been running a halwa stall in Raja Bazaar for over 25 years said "Our Gajar ka Halwa is made with pure desi ghee, fresh carrots, milk and dry fruits. People come from far-off areas to taste it. In winter, our sale doubles". Similarly, soup vendor Imran Ahmed at G-9 Markaz said he sells more than 300 bowls daily in peak winter.—**DNA**

Call for clear front-of-pack food labelling

ISLAMABAD: Public health advocates have stressed the need for clear and transparent front-of-pack warning labels (FOPWL) to help consumers make informed food choices and identify products containing excessive sugar, sodium and unhealthy fats.

They said promotional claims displayed on food packaging could influence purchasing decisions but might not provide a complete picture of a product's nutritional value.

They emphasized that consumers should receive clear warnings about excessive levels of sugar, sodium and unhealthy fats, along with appropriate information about non-sugar sweeteners.

Advocates called for transparency in food labelling to become a standard practice, enabling people to better understand nutritional risks and make healthier choices.—**APP**

ITP mobile facilitation vans to offer driving licence

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has issued a weekly schedule for its two mobile facilitation vans and Police Station on Wheels to provide driving licence and other police services at educational institutions and public places across the federal capital from November 23 to 29.

An ITP official told APP on Sunday that the mobile units would operate from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, offering learner permits, driving licence renewals, duplicate licences, character certificates and missing document reports. Monday, November 23: Police Station on Wheels will be stationed at COMSATS University, Van-I at Sihala Pind Malkan and Van-II at Naka G-14. Tuesday, November 24: Police Station on Wheels will be available at Allama Iqbal Open University, Van-I at B-17 Multi Gardens and Van-II at DHA Phase 5, Gate 1. Wednesday, November 25: Police Station on Wheels will visit Iqra University, Van-I will be stationed at F-8 Markaz and Van-II at Ali Pur, near Bank Alfalah. _**APP**



Islamabad POST
Monday , November 23, 2026

Briefs

PCP inspects federal capital's pharmacy institutions

ISLAMABAD: The Pharmacy Council of Pakistan (PCP) has intensified regulatory oversight of pharmacy education in the federal capital through inspections of three educational institutions. The objective to visit these institutions was to assess academic facilities, faculty strength, laboratories and compliance with prescribed standards. A special inspection panel, constituted on the directions of the PCP President, visited the National Excellence Institute (NEI), Iqra University (H-9 Campus) and Bashir Institute of Medical Sciences. During the inspections, the panel assessed the available academic facilities against the Council's regulatory requirements and identified areas needing improvement. The institutions were directed to upgrade their laboratories, arrange missing equipment and address the identified deficiencies within the prescribed timeframe. The inspection team emphasized that maintaining quality standards in pharmacy education was the responsibility of every institution offering pharmacy programmes. The PCP President reiterated the Council's commitment to strengthening regulatory oversight through regular and surprise inspections to ensure strict compliance with established standards. The Council reaffirmed its resolve to safeguard academic quality and promote excellence in Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) education across the country.–**APP**

Pakistan Railways reclaims 443 acres

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has reclaimed 443 acres of encroached land worth Rs2.9 billion in Sukkur Division between 2024 and the first four months of fiscal year 2026-27, as the department steps up its anti-encroachment drive with a comprehensive recovery plan targeting illegally occupied railway properties across the division by December 2026.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the department recovered 283 acres during 2024-25, another 131 acres in 2025-26 and 29.1 acres in the first four months of the current fiscal year, bringing the total recovered area to 443 acres. The reclaimed land has an estimated value of Rs2,902.903 million.

Agricultural property accounted for the overwhelming majority of the recovery, with 406.36 acres, or 91.7 per cent of the total.

The remaining recovered land comprised 26.64 acres of commercial property and 10 acres of residential land.

Separately, Pakistan Railways auctioned 244.02 acres of agricultural land during 2025-26 at an indicated rate of Rs35,000 per acre, generating approximately Rs8.54 million.

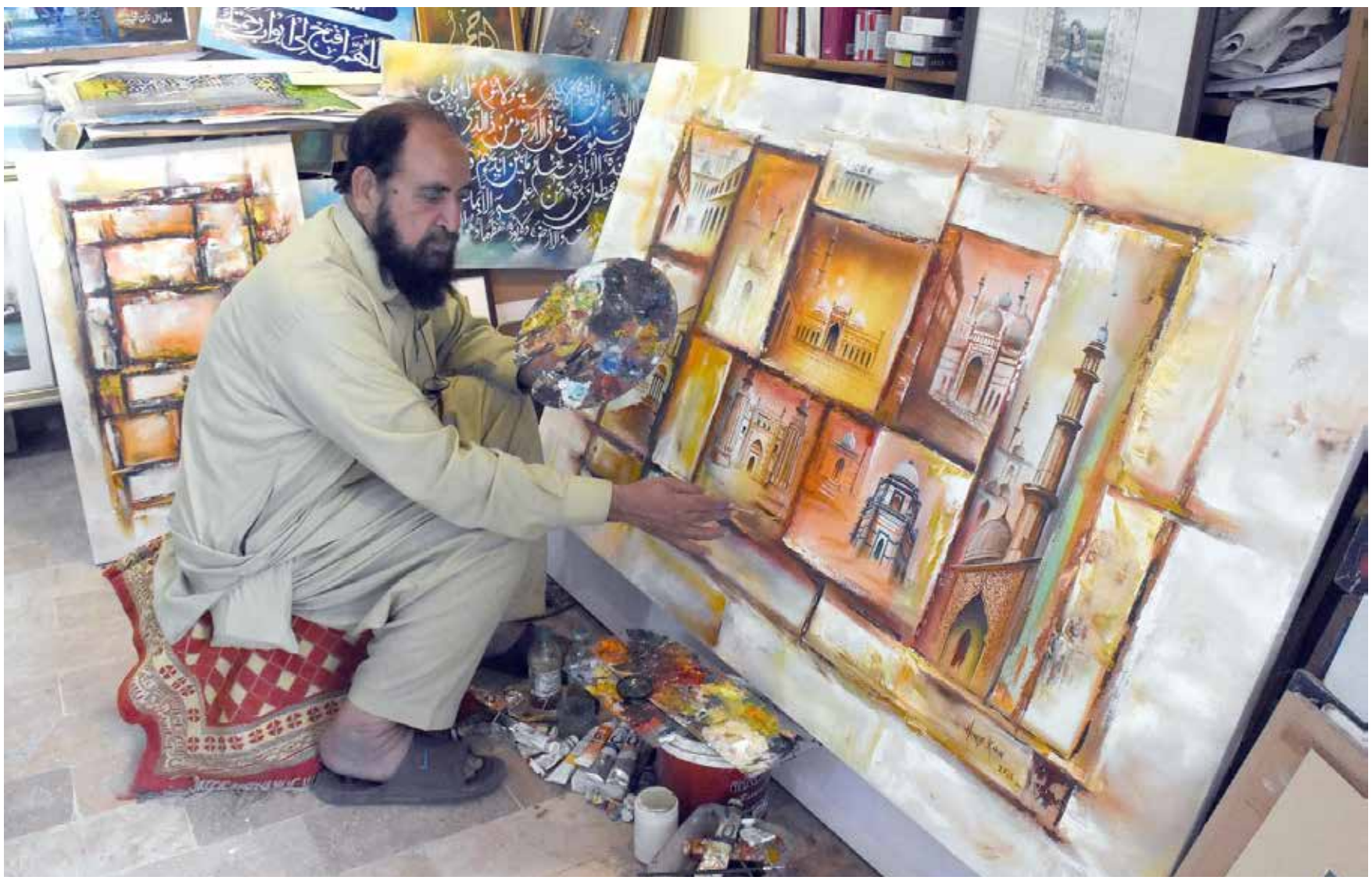
Despite the recovery, a substantial portion of railway land in Sukkur Division remains under different forms of occupation or awaits proper utilisation.

The division has a total railway landholding of 26,068 acres, of which 18,913.74 acres are under operational use and other regularised arrangements, including staff colonies, leased properties and regularised katchi abadis.

The remaining 7,154.26 acres comprise land encroached upon by private individuals, unauthorised occupation by government departments, and open or balance land. The latter category alone accounts for 3,618.735 acres.

To intensify the recovery campaign, Pakistan Railways has drawn up an extensive programme extending until December 2026, identifying specific dates, railway jurisdictions, locations and categories of encroachments for removal across Sukkur Division.

The planned operations target agricultural encroachments along railway sections, commercial establishments at station yards, residential occupations, unauthorised occupation of railway quarters and temporary structures.–**APP**



ISLAMABAD: An artist busy in making paintings at his shop at Lok Virsa.

DG NCCIA vows crackdown on cybercrime

IISLAMABAD: Director General National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi has directed officers to submit performance reports every 24 hours to monitor public complaints, investigations and relief provided to cybercrime victims across the country.

According to details compiled by APP on Sunday from information released by NCCIA, the reports cover complaints received, action taken, progress in investigations and assistance provided to affected citizens. The DG Rizvi also chaired a meeting with Additional Directors of different circles and reviewed the performance of Lahore, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad. He directed officers to take timely action on public complaints, ensure proper follow-up and provide effective relief to citizens. During the meeting, Rizvi appreciated Additional Director NCCIA Karachi Shehzad Akbar for his professional performance and effective operations against cybercrime. The DG Rizvi said NCCIA had taken action against 78 illegal call centres across the country and seized thousands of laptops and mobile phones. He warned that illegal call centres would not be allowed to operate and said the crackdown on online fraud networks would continue

Meanwhile, NCCIA Karachi Additional Director Shehzad Akbar disclosed that the agency had taken action against an alleged online betting network suspected of generating Rs 240 billion through different betting applications.

He said 40 suspects, including foreign nationals, had been nominated in the case, while funds had also been seized during the operation.

In another case, NCCIA Karachi uncovered an alleged network using WhatsApp groups to contact university and college students and arrange the supply of drugs.

Separately, NCCIA Karachi arrested Danish Parvez on November 11 for allegedly obtaining and selling sensitive data belonging to foreign government institutions, law enforcement agencies and private companies. According to NCCIA, the suspect was allegedly using the online platforms LeakBase and Telegram under the name DP BRUCE to sell stolen information in exchange for cryptocurrency, including Bitcoin. A laptop seized during the operation reportedly contained databases and files linked to foreign institutions and organisations. In Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Additional Director NCCIA Muhammad Shoaib Khan also held an open Kachehri to hear citizens' complaints. He directed officers to carefully examine every complaint, take immediate action and ensure regular follow-up. DG NCCIA Rizvi said complaints received during previous E-Kachehri sessions had resulted in action against suspects and recovery of money for fraud victims.–**DNA**

MoU inked to expand employment opportunities

ISLAMABAD: The Health Services Academy (HSA) and Sehat-e-Pakistan Research Foundation (SPRF) have signed an international agreement with ICS AI University to expand educational and employment opportunities for Pakistani youth through internationally recognized programmes in emerging technologies. The agreement was signed by Dr. Adil Naseer, Chief Executive Officer of SPRF, in collaboration with HSA, with a focus on equipping young people with modern digital, technological and healthcare-related skills. Under the partnership, the organizations plan to introduce internationally recognized courses, short diploma programmes and degree programmes in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, digital health and other emerging technologies. The proposed programmes will include NOCN-endorsed learning hours and globally benchmarked certifications aimed at providing international recognition and strengthening the professional capabilities of Pakistani youth. The initiative is aligned with the vision of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and seeks to connect Pakistan's skilled workforce with international employment markets.–APP

Pakistan, Sweden hold talks to modernise investment treaty

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Sweden held negotiations here to modernise their 1981 Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), aiming to update the framework for bilateral investment cooperation and strengthen economic ties between the two countries.

According to a SIFC press release, the development marked an important step towards updating the framework governing bilateral investment relations. Senior officials from both countries participated in the opening session, reflecting their shared commitment to promoting economic cooperation and facilitating greater investment linkages.

Secretary SIFC, Jamil Ahmed Qureshi, on the occasion, underscored the significance of the negotiations in promoting mutually beneficial economic relations. He highlighted the importance of developing a contemporary investment framework that responds to evolving economic priorities and provides an enabling environment for bilateral investment.

The Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, who led the Swedish delegation, appreciated Pakistan's constructive engagement and reaffirmed Sweden's interest in expanding economic linkages with Pakistan, particularly in areas of sustainable investment, innovation and job creation.

Technical teams from both countries have made significant progress on key provisions of the draft treaty, reflecting the constructive engagement and continued cooperation between the negotiating sides. The ongoing negotiations represent an important milestone in Pakistan–Sweden economic relations, with the modernisation of the treaty expected to provide an updated framework for investment cooperation, encourage private-sector participation and create further opportunities for mutually beneficial economic engagement.–**DNA**

Workshop promotes bat diversity, conservation awareness

ISLAMABAD: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) organized a one-day workshop on urban bat diversity and conservation to raise awareness about the ecological importance of bats and strengthen research skills among postgraduate students.

Organized by the Department of Zoology, Wildlife and Fisheries, Faculty of Sciences at the university's KOICA Building, the workshop featured technical sessions and practical training on bat identification, ecology, research methods and conservation, an area that remains relatively underexplored in Pakistan.

Dr. Muhammad Saleem from the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, University of Haripur, served as the resource person and delivered a lecture on bat species, their ecological role and ongoing research in Pakistan. He also demonstrated scientific body-measurement techniques using bat specimens, providing participants with practical exposure to wildlife research methods.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Muhammad Sajid Nadeem, Chairman of the Department of Zoology, Wildlife and Fisheries, highlighted the ecological significance of bats and discussed the challenges confronting their conservation in Pakistan.

Dr. Tariq Mahmood, Associate Professor at the department, welcomed the participants and emphasized the need to promote research and awareness about biodiversity and wildlife conservation. He stressed the importance of strengthening students' academic knowledge and practical skills to support the protection of neglected wildlife species, particularly bats.

Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Rahmatullah Qureshi, faculty members and postgraduate students from the departments of Zoology and Biology also attended the workshop.

The event was organized by the department's Mammalian Ecology and Conservation Lab (MECL), with financial support from the Royal Society of Biology, United Kingdom, secured by lab member Ms. Muqaddas Javed. She also briefed participants on the objectives and significance of the workshop. The proceedings began with an introduction to the workshop's objectives by Syed Arif Hussain. Following the technical sessions, participants visited a bat colony at a study site in Islamabad, where they received hands-on training in the use of mist nets for capturing bats and learned field techniques for collecting data on different bat species.–**APP**

Can AI transform Pakistani farming?

ISLAMABAD: Across the fertile plains of Punjab, the rhythm of agriculture has remained largely unchanged for generations. Yet today, Pakistan's farmers are fighting an uphill battle on multiple fronts: erratic weather, dwindling water reserves, degraded soil and soaring input costs. Amid these mounting pressures, artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as an unlikely ally. The pressing question, however, is whether high-tech innovation can truly reach the smallholders who form the backbone of the nation's food security. For Anila Usmani, who independently manages roughly 50 acres in Mauza Paka, Bahalwalpur, technology is already offering a quiet helping hand. Cultivating cotton, wheat, onions and seasonal vegetables, Usmani has nearly a decade of hands-on experience. While AI has yet to boost her bottom line directly, she regularly turns to digital tools to diagnose crop diseases. "I haven't seen an increase in income through AI so far, but I use it to seek guidance on crop diseases, and it has proved helpful," she explained while talking to APP. Her day-to-day reality underscores both the promise and the limits of digital farming. Usmani's yields, around 50 maunds per acre for wheat and up to 40 for cotton, are respectable, yet she faces stubborn structural hurdles. Finding labour during the cotton-picking season is a constant headache, and the escalating cost of diesel and DAP fertiliser eats heavily into her margins. Switching to solar-powered irrigation has eased her energy bills, proving that practical technology pays off. Still, she insists that algorithms alone cannot fix farm economics without government intervention to curb input prices and improve access to modern harvesting machinery. In the laboratories of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), researchers are working to bridge that gap between screen and soil. Prof Dr Saqib Ali, who leads the Precision Agriculture Lab, believes AI can shift Pakistani farming from guesswork to precision. By analysing vast streams of data, AI can spot crop stress early, optimise water and fertiliser use, and even advise growers on what to plant based on market demand. UAF has already put this into practice with Kisan360, a mobile app backed by the World Bank and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. Combining satellite imagery, remote sensing and a localised chatbot, the platform delivers near-real-time updates on soil moisture, nutrients and weather, vital intelligence in regions where expert agricultural advice is scarce.

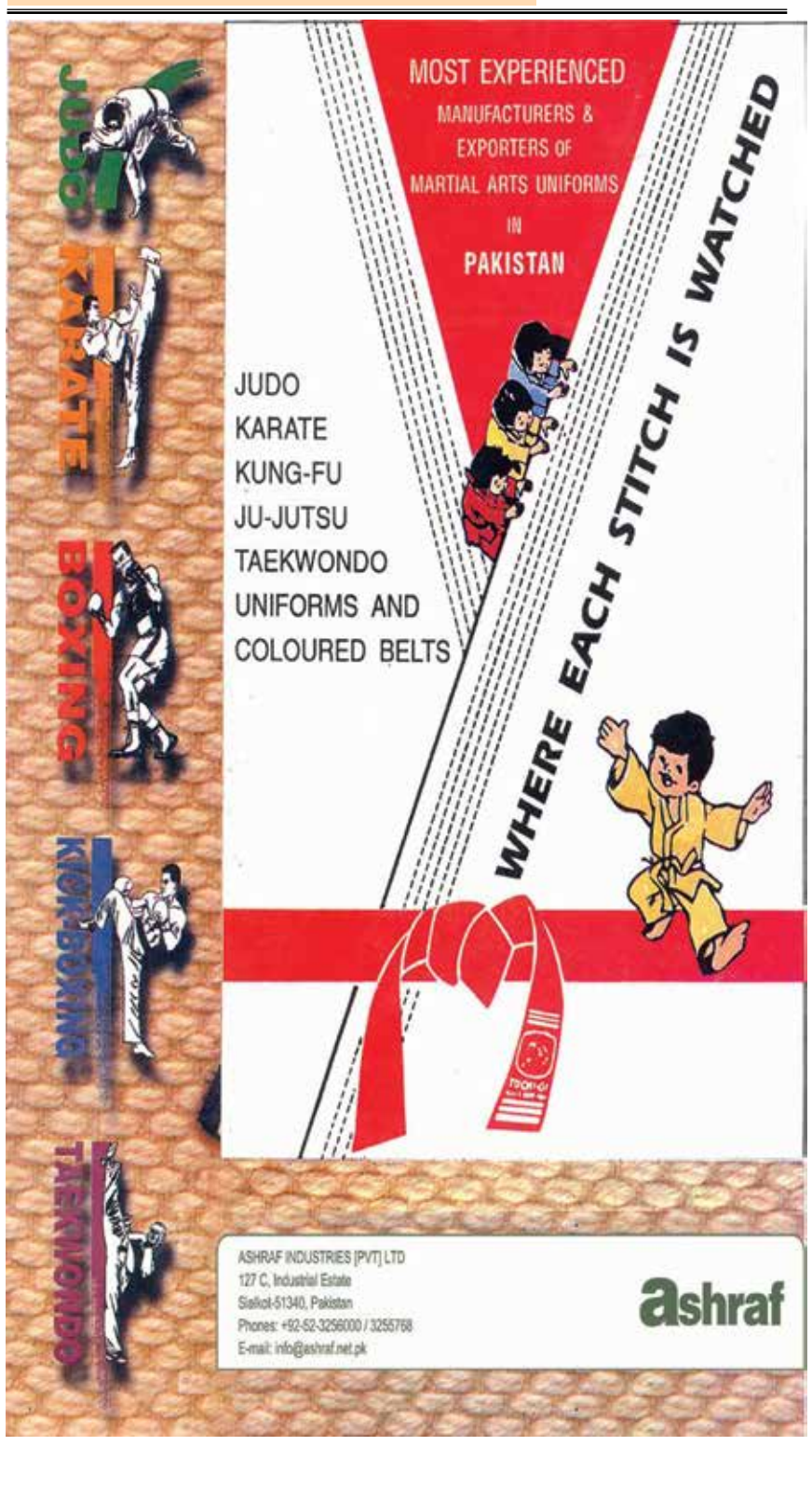
Beyond boosting yields, AI offers a vital shield against climate volatility. Muhammad Khalid Jameel, a programme leader at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) in Islamabad talking to APP, points out that merging drone imagery, soil tests and meteorological forecasts allows farmers to treat only the affected patches of a field rather than blanket-spraying entire crops. This targeted approach cuts chemical bills while protecting the environment. Over the longer term, AI could even guide scientists in breeding climate-resilient seed varieties.–DNA

Be someone's deliberate choice

Aayra Eshmaal

ISLAMABAD: Often it happens that we like someone and wish to spend our entire life with him or her, but as it turns up, the eventual possibility of this gradually dims and then ultimately fades away, getting completely abolished. However, we still stand there and cannot give that pedestal to some other potential candidate. And even in some cases if a match happens even after that, getting out of the emotional connection seems difficult. In still some other extreme cases people prefer to remain single throughout their life as they are unable to forget. In such scenarios, it would be better to ask some questions before wasting your life and waiting unending for someone about whom you are just waiting nonstop simply because no one else can take his or her place. 1. Why the opinion of someone, currently out of contact, got so much importance over how you see yourself? 2. Did those opinions really began influencing how you viewed yourself. 3. Sometimes we remember someone so intensely that we start feeling even the body scent of that person. Is it possible that you miss someone's fragrance, and do not take your happiness as wholly solely dependent on the return of that person? 4. Is the intensity of your longing really evidence of the depth of his feelings. 5. Have you emotionally attached yourself with someone whose presence in your life is few and far between and with intervals, but whose presence in your thoughts is all the time? 6. Have you ever thought that you deserve more than rare moments of affection and do not have to torture yourself by a by prolonged uncertainty. 7. If you are not being able to forget someone then it essentially by no means is leading to the conclusion that your destiny is written with him. Submitting to the will of Allah also does not bind you that you have to erase all the longings and fondness for that in one night. Of course, it takes some time. 8. Your emotional well-being is precious, more than your feelings. 9. Why you have to keep yourself and your precious life, which is only once, on hold indefinitely.

10 Have you realized that human beings need a relationship that is actual, not the one that merely relates to possibilities. 10. Always remember that you have to be someone's willful choice, not an indeterminate possibility.



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The Outages America Must Have the Courage to Investigate

FIVE hours of grounded departures cost air travelers in the United States more than $1.9 billion. Within days, Americans had also seen disruptions at Microsoft, Apple, JPMorgan Chase and the National Security Agency. Washington treated these as separate incidents. Even if every technical finding holds, one question survives them all. After years of inviting foreign partners, particularly Israel, into the work of securing American finance, defense and critical infrastructure, can the United States identify every permission it granted and withdraw any one of them without interrupting the service itself? That is the audit of November's failure demand.

Benjamin Netanyahu supplied the reason to take that question seriously. At a cybersecurity conference in Tel Aviv, he described a world in which "with the click of a button, you can bring nations to their knees very rapidly". He identified aircraft, hospitals, cars and banks as vulnerable, then singled out the databases on which they depend. In the same speech, he urged closer cooperation between Israel and the United States in government and industry. Washington heard the invitation. Did anyone in Congress ask what safeguards America would need in light of the warning that preceded it?

The extent of that cooperation can be traced through America's own public records. In 2021, the U.S. Treasury established a partnership with Israel to protect critical financial infrastructure. A formal cybersecurity agreement followed in 2022. That same year, the Department of Homeland Security signed an arrangement with Israel's National Cyber Directorate for joint work on cybersecurity and emerging technologies. Congress has also authorized bilateral cooperation in energy, water and homeland security. These records establish how widely the partnership extends. They leave unanswered the operational question that matters to a bank customer or an electricity consumer. Who can see the data, authorize a change or restore service when something fails?

Tucker Carlson returned Netanyahu's speech to public attention in a podcast released on November 19. He expressly declined to accuse the Israeli government of causing the outages, adding, "though obviously they have motive." The motive he proposed was Netanyahu's desire for deeper American military engagement in Iran. Trump had announced that roughly $4 billion in annual American assistance to Israel would end after 2026 under an arrangement he said he had reached with Netanyahu. He had also reportedly told advisers he might withhold further strikes on Iran absent fresh provocation. An American president must be free to make those decisions, just as he must be free to oppose Israeli actions in Gaza, Lebanon or the West Bank.

Britain illustrates both the importance of asking hard questions and the value of publishing answers. On September 8, London announced plans to prohibit imports from illegal Israeli settlements. On that same day, a flight-data failure disrupted British aviation, leading to more than 2,000 cancellations. Investigators traced the failure to a software defect. The Cyber Monitoring Centre estimated losses to British organizations at £33 million, approximately $45 million. Including overseas airlines raised the estimate to roughly $65 million–$103 million. Airlines absorbed more than three-quarters of the domestic impact. The organization responsible for the failed system bore only a fraction of the bill.

In America, the bill followed passengers home. Anderson Economic Group counted lost time, extra hotel nights, meals, transportation and journeys abandoned after the November 13 ground stop. Bernstein separately estimated a $345 million reduction in pretax earnings at American, Delta, United and Southwest. Together, the passenger estimate and the four airlines' estimated earnings loss put the burden at roughly $2.25 billion. Morningstar DBRS placed worldwide insured losses from the Microsoft outage alone at another $300 million–$500 million. The available accounts offer no comparable dollar figure for the interruptions at Apple, Workday, JPMorgan Chase or the NSA. The agency said its essential capabilities remained operational. Washington also faces a cost that an insurance adjuster cannot price. On November 19, YouGov found that 59 percent of Americans had little or no confidence in the federal government's ability to prevent a major cyberattack. Asked what Washington would do if one occurred, 62 percent expected concealment and only 15 percent expected disclosure.

Congress should commission an independent audit of foreign involvement across the systems that sustain American life. It should begin with the arrangements Washington acknowledges with Israel and apply the same standard to every foreign government and every contractor acting under foreign direction. Defense and intelligence, aviation, banking, electricity, telecommunications, hospitals and the data centers serving them belong within its scope. For each essential service, the responsible American official should be able to tell Congress who holds privileged access, who granted it, what authority it confers and when anyone last verified that it was still necessary. Then comes the test that gives the audit meaning. Can American personnel operate and restore each service independently if a foreign partner withdraws its cooperation tomorrow? Wherever the answer is uncertain, Congress should require a demonstration. Wherever a foreign government or its agent holds continuing authority to inspect protected American records, alter an essential service or determine whether it can recover, that authority should be removed and the function brought under accountable domestic control. Inspectors general can examine sensitive details in confidence and publish what citizens need to know about the dependencies found, the authority withdrawn and the work still outstanding. Netanyahu understood that a nation could be brought to its knees while its missiles remained in their silos and its carriers remained at sea. America should take him seriously enough to examine the arrangements made in the name of friendship, including those with Israel. The inquiry is warranted whatever caused November's outages. A future president deciding whether to go to war should never have to ask whether an ally whose wishes he refuses can still influence the systems that move American aircraft, carry American payments or keep American hospitals running. Until Washington can answer that question from an independently verified record, the sovereignty it proclaims abroad remains an open question at home.



America's Economy: From Wealth Creation to Wealth Extraction

Qamar Bashir



I currently work in an American retail establishment, where I have witnessed people undertaking as many as four jobs simply to make ends meet. Entire families, including fathers, mothers and their working-age children, are compelled to work. Yet, despite their combined earnings and exhausting schedules, many struggle to save anything at the end of the month. A healthy economy must ensure that those contributing their labour can afford a dignified existence. Healthcare, groceries, housing, utilities, insurance and govt taxes...

AMERICA'S economic paradox exposes a fundamental weakness in its economic model. Despite possessing a GDP exceeding $30 trillion, millions of Americans struggle to afford healthcare, housing, groceries, transportation and utilities. While financial institutions and corporate intermediaries accumulate enormous profits, those who generate wealth through their labour struggle to make ends meet. An economy that disproportionately rewards rent-seekers while impoverishing its productive workforce is neither fundamentally strong nor sustainable. It is an economy gradually consuming the foundations upon which its prosperity was built.

Approximately 2.23 million Americans work in agriculture, forestry and fishing, while 15.13 million work in manufacturing. Together, these sectors employ roughly 10.6 percent of the workforce and constitute barely 5.1 percent of the population. Even when construction, mining, oil and gas extraction are included, physical goods-producing industries employ only around 18.4 percent of American workers. By comparison, China employs approximately half its workforce in agriculture and industry, while India employs around two-thirds. Even Germany, despite advanced automation, retains a proportionately larger industrial employment base. America, meanwhile, has developed an enormous network of financial, insurance and commercial intermediaries deriving income from virtually every aspect of human existence. The distribution of wealth exposes the inherent injustice of this economic structure. America's richest 10 percent control approximately 68 percent of household wealth, while the bottom 50 percent collectively own barely 2.4 percent. Depending on the definition employed, between 24 and 63 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Millions spend their working lives generating income without accumulating meaningful financial security.

Consider the extraordinary profitability of America's financial intermediaries. According to 2025 industry figures, commercial banks generated approximately $295.6 billion in net profits, property and casualty insurers $150.6 billion, life and annuity insurers $30.5 billion, and regulated health insurers $6 billion. Automobile protection and extended warranty companies potentially generated another $4 billion. Adding estimated profits from pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment manufacturers, hospitals, mortgage companies, home services and pet insurers brings the combined figure to roughly $847 billion annually, before accounting for potential industry overlaps. This enormous profit pool illustrates the extent to which essential human necessities have become commercial opportunities.

Insurance was originally conceived as a mechanism for collectively sharing risk. Yet this cooperative concept has evolved into an extraordinarily profitable enterprise. Property and casualty insurers reportedly generated $111.6 billion in investment income during 2025, alongside substantial underwriting profits. Policyholders finance these investments through premiums but have no automatic entitlement to investment gains, while rising costs are routinely passed back to them. Governments legally compel citizens to purchase automobile insurance, effectively creating captive markets for private corporations without guaranteeing affordability. Even mutual insurance companies, theoretically owned by policyholders, offer subscribers limited practical influence over executive compensation, administrative expenditure and surplus distribution.

Nowhere is this disproportionate wealth extraction more disturbing than in healthcare. America spends nearly $15,000 per person annually, approximately two and a half times the OECD average, yet its life expectancy remains below that of numerous countries providing universal healthcare. A physician with 35 years of medical experience, himself a member of Congress, revealed during a congressional hearing that obtaining essential medication required overcoming eight insurance denials over eighteen months. If a physician and federal lawmaker encounters such obstacles, what chance does an ordinary worker possess?

His condemnation of the weaponization of prior authorization, excessive executive compensation and vertical integration exposed a system increasingly driven by commercial interests. Insurance conglomerates owning pharmacies, pharmacy benefit managers and physician groups can capture profits at multiple stages of a patient's treatment. When Senator Bernie Sanders repeatedly asked during another congressional hearing whether healthcare was a fundamental human right, the reluctance to provide an unequivocal answer exposed the philosophical divide separating America from countries that guarantee universal healthcare. The rent-seeking economy extends its tentacles through relentless commercial solicitation. Purchasing a house or automobile can trigger a barrage of unsolicited telephone calls, emails and intimidating correspondence offering insurance, refinancing and protection plans. Citizens must expend their time and energy registering complaints, blocking telephone numbers and protecting their privacy against corporations aggressively pursuing their income.

The very institutions entrusted with protecting citizens have effectively transferred much of the burden of consumer protection onto citizens themselves. This raises serious questions about regulatory capture, corporate lobbying and the influence of financial conglomerates over public policymaking. The consequences of this economic distortion are increasingly visible in America's infrastructure. President Donald Trump's reported observations about Shenzhen's cleanliness, modernity and advanced urban infrastructure, contrasted with deteriorating American cities, capture a reality that economic statistics frequently obscure.

China's transformation demonstrates what sustained investment in productive capacity, infrastructure and technological development can accomplish. America's deteriorating roads, bridges and public infrastructure, meanwhile, expose the inadequacy of measuring national strength through corporate profitability and stock market valuations alone. Recent disruptions affecting aviation, banking and digital infrastructure further expose vulnerabilities extending beyond physical deterioration. Information and communication networks constitute the backbone of modern economies, connecting production facilities, financial transactions, transportation networks and supply chains. Their recurring failures raise disturbing questions about the integrity and resilience of America's economic infrastructure. America's enormous financial wealth must translate into stronger infrastructure, affordable necessities and greater household prosperity. Otherwise, the accumulation of corporate wealth merely conceals the deterioration of the economic foundations beneath it.

What America requires is a surgical transformation of its economic model. Financial institutions must serve productive enterprises rather than overwhelm them. Mandatory insurance must be subjected to effective affordability safeguards. Healthcare must prioritize patients, while corporate consolidation, disproportionate executive compensation and predatory commercial practices demand rigorous scrutiny. Canada's public automobile insurance models, Europe's universal healthcare systems and China's emphasis on productive investment offer valuable lessons. Capitalism need not be dismantled; its priorities must be fundamentally reordered. Those who cultivate the land, manufacture goods, construct infrastructure and provide genuinely productive services must become the principal beneficiaries of economic growth, rather than its increasingly indebted participants. An economy that protects those extracting wealth more effectively than those creating it is inherently unfair, unjust and structurally weakened. No nation can indefinitely sustain prosperity by exhausting its workers, impoverishing its households and allowing its infrastructure to deteriorate while celebrating corporate profits. America must protect its wealth creators, restrain excessive rent-seeking and restore proportionality between labour, contribution and reward. Otherwise, its extraordinary financial wealth may ultimately become a monument to its economic decline.

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

Brexit battles flare again with EU-UK reset

Andrew Hammond

This underlines the continued UK political sensitivity of Brexit. One of the paradoxes of the last UK general election campaign, in 2024, was the absence of discussion of this issue. One reason Labour has tended not to talk too much publicly about Brexit is concern about this issue which led to its 2019 landslide defeat when Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a mandate to formally take the UK out of the EU in 2020. Johnson secured the largest parliamentary majority for the Conservatives since Margaret Thatcher...

WINSTON Churchill famously declared in 1939 that Russia "is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." Fast forward to today and many argue much the same about the often puzzled, complex, and unpredictable debate about Brexit. At the EU-UK reset summit on Nov. 20, the biggest set of changes were announced since London left the Brussels-based club and signed a new post-Brexit cooperation agreement in 2020. To be sure, this is not a fundamental realignment of the UK's relationship with the EU given the Labour government's current "red lines" on joining the Customs Union, single market, let alone full EU membership.

Nonetheless, critics argue it is a dilution of Brexit freedoms. Moreover, Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch has accused Prime Minister Andy Burnham of "reopening the divisions" of the 2016 Brexit referendum, while Reform UK leader Nigel Farage claimed that the prime minister has no mandate for the package. Example measures announced include the scrapping of checks on UK food exports, which have fallen since Brexit, in return for the UK following some EU laws, plus also aligning each side's emissions trading schemes.

Meanwhile, a youth mobility scheme will allow 100,000 young people from the EU to travel, work, and study in the UK. The same number of young UK citizens will be permitted to head in the opposite direction. More than a half decade after leaving the EU, Burnham is thinking through an even bigger realignment of ties, possibly including joining the Customs Union, single market, or even full EU membership. Farage flagged this on Friday, saying "I'm afraid that the great Brexit debate has just started again ... it's perfectly clear that this very, very soon becomes a debate about: Do we rejoin or do we stay out?" A more constructive UK-EU partnership, even if London remains outside the bloc, may bring benefits for both at a time of significant economic and geopolitical flux. Despite Farage's characterization, there is a significant possibility that Burnham may decide it is not politically possible for the UK to rejoin the EU, and seek instead a closer relationship outside the bloc, as some key Conservatives like former Prime Minister David Cameron have advocated. Come what may, no further big actions would formally take place until at least after the next UK election, which must happen no later than 2029.

This underlines the continued UK political sensitivity of Brexit. One of the paradoxes of the last UK general election campaign, in 2024, was the absence of discussion of this issue. One reason Labour has tended not to talk too much publicly about Brexit is concern about this issue which led to its 2019 landslide defeat when Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a mandate to formally take the UK out of the EU in 2020. Johnson secured the largest parliamentary majority for the Conservatives since Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

However, Brexit has also divided the political right in the 2020s given the widespread perception that the UK has not prospered since leaving the EU. Even Farage, who co-led the Leave campaign in the 2016 referendum, declared "Brexit has failed."

Farage's argument is that Conservative and Labour prime ministers after 2016, including Johnson, have failed to take advantage of what they perceive as the significant freedoms of Brexit. This includes the opportunity to diverge economically from the EU to seek to drive UK competitive advantage.

While a significant number of opinion polls now indicate that the UK public would support rejoining the EU, a key challenge is that the terms of reentry would probably be different from those on which the UK exited the club in 2020. London negotiated a series of opt-outs, including of the eurozone single currency, that may no longer be collectively available.

It is unclear that a majority could be secured for such revised terms of membership in any referendum that might be required to ratify potential UK membership in the future. Growing support for the EU since 2016 appears wide but may be shallow.

So Burnham's predecessor as Labour leader and UK prime minister, Keir Starmer, sought to reshape the center of debate away from "Leave versus Remain" toward how best to try to make Brexit work. What is clear is that the 2020 deal created significant EU-UK trade problems that do not appear to be improving. The EU got much of what it wanted from the 2020 deal, including a zero-tariff, zero-quota deal for goods, in which it runs a surplus with the UK. Meanwhile, Brussels gave away little on services which is the UK's strength.

Burnham has continued down this path, arguing that "the Brexit we were given has not worked. We have lost more than we gained." Much will now depend on what his exact policy prescription is to remedy this, and whether he can mobilize popular support for it. Amid all the uncertainty, the stakes remain high. A more constructive UK-EU partnership, even if London remains outside the bloc, may bring benefits for both at a time of significant economic and geopolitical flux, from Ukraine to the Middle East.

– Andrew Hammond is an associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics

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Briefs

Attaullah Tarar says Pakistan to expand...

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bringing people together, noting that cultural connections between Pakistan and Portugal predate formal diplomatic relations. Tarar praised the depiction of the subcontinent's culture, music, nature, and especially the Indus River, which he described as an integral part of Pakistan's identity. Expressing optimism about future cooperation, Tarar said the Portuguese foreign minister's visit would further strengthen bilateral friendship and open new avenues for collaboration. He also conveyed gratitude on behalf of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan for Portugal's continued engagement. The minister thanked the Portuguese Embassy and event organizers for arranging the exhibition and concert, calling them a fitting tribute to the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Portugal.

Naqvi fires warning at 'minister' over...

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party funds at every election?" Naqvi questioned. The debate over the creation of new provinces has intensified in recent days, with political leaders from the ruling coalition expressing differing views on the proposal. The issue has also triggered an exchange of statements between PML-N and Pakistan Peoples Party leaders, with discussions focusing on the need for political consensus and the constitutional process for creating new provinces.

Karachi placed on 'high alert'

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The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) was also scheduled to hold a rally in the city on November 29; however, it later postponed the procession, citing concerns over the law and order situation. Meanwhile, officials said that personnel from the police and other law enforcement agencies have been stationed at several key locations across the city. In view of the planned protest rallies, containers have also been moved to FTC bridge, while security has been tightened at Numaish Chowrangi, Sharea Quaideen and Gurumandir, police officials said. Police personnel have also been deployed in large numbers in Saddar, around Empress Market and along Sharea Faisal. Karachi traffic police also announced traffic diversions and road closures in several parts of the city ahead of planned protest demonstrations and rallies. According to traffic police, the road at Gurumandir will remain closed due to a protest by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F).

Security forces kill 15 terrorists...

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KP emerging as the worst-affected region. The report stated that KP and Balochistan together accounted for nearly 96% of all violence-related fatalities recorded during the quarter. Of the total deaths, more than 61% (475) were reported in KP, while Balochistan accounted for 34% (265). KP also recorded the highest number of violent incidents, with 151 cases, representing 57% of the nationwide total. Balochistan followed with 94 incidents, or 35%, underscoring the concentration of militant activity in the two provinces.

MOFA and ICCI co-host golf tournament in Islamabad

MOFA and ICCI co-host golf tournament in Islamabad







SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), successfully hosted the ICCI-MOFA Golf Tournament 2026 at the Islamabad Golf Club, bringing together members of the diplomatic community, business leaders, government officials, and distinguished guests for a day of sports, networking, and friendship.

The tournament served as a unique platform to strengthen relationships between the diplomatic corps and Pakistan's business community while promoting the country's public and economic diplomacy objectives. Ambassadors and other representatives of foreign missions participated alongside ICCI members, officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, senior government officials, and invited guests from diverse professional backgrounds.

Held in a spirit of camaraderie and healthy competition, the event offered participants an opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions beyond formal settings. Through a round of golf, attendees exchanged ideas, explored avenues for cooperation, and fostered stronger people-to-people and business-to-business connections.

Adding to the occasion, the programme included a special putting competition for spouses, which generated enthusiastic participation and contributed to the inclusive and family-friendly atmosphere of the event. A networking reception held afterward further enhanced opportunities for dialogue and relationship-building among participants. Addressing the prize distribution ceremony, Foreign Secretary Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad highlighted the role of sports, particularly golf, in bringing people together across cultures and professions. He described golf as a powerful connector that encourages friendship, mutual understanding, and collaboration.

The Foreign Secretary also emphasized Pakistan's growing reputation as an attractive destination for golf enthusiasts, noting that the country offers world-class golf courses set against diverse and scenic landscapes. Referring to Pakistan as a "real golfing paradise," he underscored the potential of sports diplomacy in strengthening international engagement and showcasing the country's positive image.

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad commended both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the successful organization of the tournament. He noted that such initiatives complement broader public and economic diplomacy efforts by creating informal yet meaningful opportunities for interaction among key stakeholders from diplomatic, business, and government circles. Participants appreciated the well-organized event and welcomed the opportunity to connect with colleagues and counterparts in a relaxed environment. The ICCI-MOFA Golf Tournament 2026 concluded on a high note, reaffirming the shared commitment of MOFA and ICCI to promoting international friendship, business linkages, and constructive engagement through sports and community-focused initiatives.

PMAA, TEDDS Unite to Promote Karate in Schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Martial Arts Association (PMAA) and The Trust for Education and Development for Deserving Students (TEDDS) have launched a joint initiative to promote karate at the grassroots level, with more than 2,000 students already receiving training across TEDDS campuses. The programme aims to go beyond conventional sports activities by combining physical fitness, practical self-defence, personal discipline and character development. Its early success has generated an encouraging response from students and parents, particularly families of female students, who see karate as an effective way to enhance confidence and equip young girls with essential personal safety skills.

TEDDS CEO Sarmad Yousaf said the initiative reflected the organisation's commitment to providing students with a comprehensive educational experience that extends beyond academic excellence. He emphasised that modern education should also prepare children to face real-life challenges, develop strong personalities and become confident individuals. He added that empowering girls with practical self-defence skills was among the key motivations behind introducing regular karate classes throughout the Trust's school network.

As part of the partnership, PMAA and TEDDS also arranged a special self-defence workshop for female students and faculty members to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Pilot Officer Marium Mukhtiar. The event also featured the first phase of Red Belt promotions, involving more than 300 students. The workshop focused on practical defensive techniques, personal safety awareness and responding confidently to potentially threatening situations.

TEDDS General Secretary Tahir Yousaf and Founder Trustee Saira Tahir appreciated the initiative, highlighting the importance of preparing young girls to protect themselves. School Medical Officer Dr Sohail Mumtaz and his medical team remained on hand to provide medical assistance throughout the activity. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, The Trust School (ATH) Principal Asim Ishaq said karate training offered benefits far beyond self-defence.

Portugal and Pakistan...

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opportunities between the two countries. Rangel described culture as a vital bridge connecting nations and said the exhibition and accompanying concert reflected the deep potential for people-to-people relations. He highlighted the exhibition dedicated to renowned Portuguese poet Luís de Camões, whose literary works and travels across the Indian Ocean region symbolize dialogue among civilizations and mutual understanding between cultures.

He said Camões' writings offer a humanistic perspective on history, emphasizing cultural exchange, coexistence, and respect for diverse societies. Rangel praised Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations and expressed confidence that cultural, political, and economic cooperation between the two countries would continue to grow in the years ahead.

On 23 November, the Portugal–Pakistan Business Forum will be held at the Serena Hotel, Islamabad, in collaboration with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The Forum will bring together Portuguese and Pakistani business leaders, investors, government representatives and institutional stakeholders to explore trade and investment opportunities, facilitate business-to-business (B2B) matchmaking, and promote partnerships, joint ventures and long-term economic cooperation.

Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Paulo Miguel Guedes said Portugal and Pakistan established diplomatic relations on 7th November 1949 and have since maintained friendly relations based on mutual respect and cooperation. Over the years, both countries have continued to explore opportunities for closer engagement in political dialogue, trade, investment, education, culture and other areas of shared interest.

The visit of Minister Paulo Rangel, accompanied by a substantial business delegation, represents an important opportunity to translate the longstanding friendship between Portugal and Pakistan into stronger economic partnerships, enhanced institutional cooperation and renewed political engagement. It underscores the shared commitment of both countries to further deepening bilateral relations and opening new avenues of cooperation for the mutual benefit of their peoples.

Oman to supply petroleum products, $200m credit

FROM PAGE 01

Minister of Energy and Minerals Eng. Salim Al Aufi. The two sides discussed opportunities for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the oil, gas and minerals sectors. During the meeting, both ministers discussed avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation and welcomed the establishment of the Pakistan-Oman Joint Working Group on Oil and Gas. They agreed to make optimal use of this institutional mechanism to further strengthen bilateral engagement and advance cooperation in the energy and mining sector.

Following the meeting, the two ministers witnessed the signing of a Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) for petroleum products between PSO and OQ Trading (OQT), Oman's global commodity trading company. OQT has also agreed to extend a $200m credit line to PSO to facilitate petroleum purchases. Welcoming the agreement, both ministers expressed confidence that its implementation would further strengthen Pakistan-Oman energy ties and support Pakistan's efforts to enhance energy security through diversification of energy imports.

"The agreement marks an important milestone in the commercial relationship between the two companies and provides a structured arrangement for petroleum product supplies from OQT to PSO, supporting supply reliability amid continued volatility in regional energy markets," the Petroleum Division's statement said.

It noted that OQT has already established itself as a major supplier of gasoline to PSO, supplying more than 1m tonnes during 2026. The newly signed agreement builds on this established trading relationship and provides a framework for expanding commercial cooperation, the statement added.

Nigeria defeat Media Warriors 7-4 in diplomatic league encounter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an exciting football encounter held in connection with the Diplomatic League, the Nigerian team defeated Media Warriors 7-4, delivering an entertaining performance and showcasing the growing enthusiasm for sports among members of the diplomatic and media communities.

The match witnessed an impressive display of teamwork, competitive spirit and sportsmanship, with both sides putting up a strong fight throughout the game. While Nigeria managed to secure victory by scoring seven goals, Media Warriors also demonstrated determination and attacking strength, finding the net four times.

One of the major highlights of the match was the participation of Nigeria's Head of Mission, who took on the role of goalkeeper for the Nigerian team. His active involvement added a special dimension to the encounter and reflected the spirit of participation, friendship and camaraderie that the Diplomatic League seeks to promote.

The match provided an opportunity for players from different professional backgrounds to come together beyond their routine responsibilities and engage in healthy sporting competition. Both teams were appreciated for their performances and the positive spirit they brought to the field.

Speaking on the occasion, Mubashir Sanjrani, Tournament Director of the Diplomatic League, lauded the players for their impressive performances, enthusiasm and keen interest in the tournament. He appreciated the commitment shown by both teams and highlighted the importance of sports in strengthening relationships, promoting teamwork and bringing communities closer. The Diplomatic League tournament is part of an ongoing initiative aimed at encouraging interaction and friendly competition among diplomats, media professionals and other participants through sports.

According to the organisers, the tournament will continue until the holy month of Ramzan, with further matches expected to provide players an opportunity to demonstrate their sporting abilities and strengthen mutual ties.

The organisers expressed satisfaction over the participation and enthusiasm witnessed so far, hoping that the remaining fixtures would maintain the same level of excitement, sportsmanship and friendly competition. The 7-4 victory gave Nigeria a memorable result, while the spirited performance by Media Warriors ensured that the encounter remained an entertaining contest for everyone involved.



UN climate talks end in fiasco

FROM PAGE 01

the 27-nation European Union said they could not accept the final proposal from the joint Turkish-Australian leadership that didn't mention fossil fuels. A considerably larger number of nations said consensus on something was more important and accepted the decision, often reluctantly. Several nations and blocs, including the European Union, the Marshall Islands and Panama, objected to a draft of the final agreement at United Nations climate talks because it failed to mention fossil fuels, the chief cause of global warming, or specifically call for a move away from climate-polluting coal, oil and gas. Delegates said the current draft falls far short of what is needed to deal with the worsening impacts of climate change. "It's unconscionable that we would have a climate act that makes no reference to fossil fuels," Darragh O'Brien, Ireland's climate minister, speaking on behalf of the EU, said at the climate talks running more than 44 hours overtime at the Turkish resort town of Antalya. This is the longest any climate talks have run overtime. Russia, however, supported the decision to leave the explicit mention of "fossil fuels" out of the final deal. The draft from Turkish Environment Minister Murat Kurum, co-president of the two-week conference in Antalya, Turkiye, called COP31, was released before a final meeting was called on Sunday afternoon. Earlier Sunday, Kurum gave negotiators only about three hours to make objections or request changes before the draft was to be presented to what may be the summit's final meeting, where countries will either accept, reject or express their reservations about the agreement. Several nations have raised serious objections to the draft, which needs near-unanimous consensus for approval. Speaking at the meeting, Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, chair of the African Group of Negotiators, said, "With all due respect Mr. President, you have not shown respect to a group of 54 countries (from Africa) and my country (Ghana) for that matter." Confusion ensued at the meeting Kurum was caught on a hot mic telling UN climate chief Simon Stiell, "to sit down," as Stiell tried to advise him on proceedings onstage. The proposal includes a specific goal for supporting technology that captures carbon pollution and stores it, which is hotly debated and backed by the oil industry. Activist groups have asked negotiators to reject the final decision, saying it falls far short of what the world needs now to deal with global warming. The conference, scheduled to end Friday, is now in double overtime.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Lauds CTD

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has commended the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and security forces for conducting a successful intelligence-based operation against terrorists (Khawarij) in the Mattani area of Peshawar. In an official statement, the Interior Minister praised the professional capabilities of the CTD and security personnel for neutralizing three terrorists during the operation.

"I pay rich tribute to the brave sons of the soil for foiling the nefarious designs of the Khawarij," Naqvi stated. He emphasized that ongoing actions against the enemies of peace reflect the state's unwavering resolve to safeguard national security. Reaffirming public support, the minister added that the entire nation stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the security forces in the war against terrorism. – **APP**

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Briefs

S Korea edu chief resigns amid AI cheating scandal

SEOUL: South Korea's education minister resigned Sunday over an AI-assisted cheating scandal that erupted ahead of the country's key college entrance exams last week.

The country has been gripped by fears of AI-assisted exam cheating since last Sunday, when the top scorer in a national tax accountant exam confessed to using a miniature camera and smartphone to achieve a near-perfect score, just four days before the crucial college entrance exam known as the Suneung. The annual nine-hour Suneung is widely seen as a ticket to prestigious universities, well-paid jobs and even better marriage prospects in the highly competitive country. The confession sent officials scrambling to roll out a slew of preventive measures — including blocking public Wi-Fi in testing areas and placing stickers over clothing buttons — but Education Minister Choi Kyo-jin struggled to reassure the public, particularly after remarks he made three days before the exam.

"The exam concluded without any major incidents... However, as the minister in charge, I do not believe I am immune from public criticism that we failed to prepare adequately in advance," Choi wrote on X.

"Now that the exam is over, I take full responsibility and hereby offer my resignation," he added.–**APP**

COP31 climate talks close to final deal, says summit president

ANTALYA, Turkiye: Climate talks in Antalya, Turkiye, approached a final deal on Sunday with the announcement of a new package that COP31 presidents Australia and Turkiye hope will achieve consensus on how to advance the fight against global warming. "We believe that we have put forward a text which all the parties can agree upon," COP31 President Murat Kurum told a late-night plenary session. He said the conference would reconvene later on Sunday morning to approve the deal. Negotiators ran past a Friday deadline, straight through Saturday and into the early hours of Sunday. Their new version of the deal text refined an earlier draft, which had been heavily criticized by some for lacking ambition because it contained no reference to ending the use of fossil fuels. Kurum said he believed concerns around fossil fuels had been addressed, as had those around helping developing countries finance their adaptations to climate change. The new text followed intensive consultations between Australia, which is leading the talks, Turkiye, which is hosting the meeting, and nearly 200 delegations from many of the world's richest, poorest, largest and smallest nations._**APP**

Saudi main index slips to close at 9,960

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index slipped on Sunday, losing 198.46 points, or 1.95 percent, to close at 9,960.44.

The total trading turnover of the benchmark index was SR2.4 billion ($640 million), as 29 stocks advanced and 238 retreated.

Similarly, the Kingdom's parallel market Nomu lost 85.85 points, or 0.40 percent, to close at 21,630.53. This comes as 12 of the stocks advanced while 52 retreated. The MSCI Tadawul Index lost 14.30 points, or 1.05 percent, to close at 1,350.18.

The best-performing stock of the day was Saudi Printing and Packaging Co., whose share price surged 9.99 percent to SR42.70. Other top performers included Saudi Vitrified Clay Pipes Co., whose share price rose 9.84 percent to SR44.00, as well as Saudi Darb Investment Co., whose share price surged 9.71 percent to SR1.92.–APP

Pak-China researchers to cooperate in technologies

China has been actively advancing research in this field. Researchers from Chinese institutions, including Tsinghua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have published work on RRAM-based computing-in-memory architectures, with applications in artificial intelligence, high-performance computing and cryptographic operations

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Researchers from Pakistan and China explored opportunities for collaboration in advanced semiconductor technologies at an international symposium hosted by the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST).

According to an announcement, its BIOMISA Laboratory at the School of Interdisciplinary Engineering and Sciences (SINES) hosted the "International Symposium on Secure Computing and Emerging Microelectronics 2026", bringing together Pakistani researchers and a nine-member delegation from China's Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (NUAA), Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

Jointly funded by the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and China's National Natural Science Foundation (NSFC), the symposium focused on developing faster, energy-efficient computer chips using advanced Resistive Random Access Memory (RRAM) technology. RRAM is an emerging memory technology that can retain information without continuous power and offers potential for combining data storage and processing within the same hardware. This approach, known as computing-in-memory, can reduce the movement of data between separate memory and processing units, helping lower energy consumption and improve computing efficiency.

China has been actively advancing research in this field. Researchers from Chinese institutions, including Tsinghua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have published work on RRAM-based computing-in-memory architectures, with applications in artificial intelligence, high-performance computing and cryptographic operations. Recent research has also explored the use of RRAM architectures to efficiently process mathematical operations required by post-quantum cryptography systems. The technology is particularly relevant as the development of quantum computers raises concerns about the long-term security of conventional encryption systems. While RRAM can provide efficient hardware for complex computing operations, quantum-resistant algorithms are separately required to protect sensitive digital information against potential future quantum attacks. The NUST announcement said technical presentations enabled both institutions to combine their expertise in security algorithms, digital systems, chip manufacturing and hardware reliability testing. Participants were also introduced to Pakistan University's Chip Design Centre (NCDC), providing an opportunity to explore the university's facilities and research capabilities in semiconductor design and development. The symposium aimed to strengthen local capabilities in advanced semiconductor technology through research exchange and closer academic cooperation between Pakistan and China.

The engagement reflects opportunities for Pakistan to benefit from China's growing semiconductor research ecosystem through academic partnerships, technical knowledge exchange and collaboration in emerging computing technologies.

Pakistan, Oman boost energy coop

MUSCAT: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals, His Excellency Eng. Salim Al Aufi, in Muscat today to discuss opportunities for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the oil, gas and minerals sectors. During the meeting, both Ministers discussed avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation and welcomed the establishment of the Pakistan-Oman Joint Working Group on Oil and Gas. They agreed to make optimal use of this institutional mechanism to further strengthen bilateral engagement and advance cooperation in the energy & mining sector. Following the meeting, both Ministers witnessed the signing of a Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) for petroleum products between Pakistan State Oil Company Limited (PSO) and OQ Trading (OQT), Oman's global commodity trading company. OQT has also agreed to extend USD 200 mln credit limit to PSO to facilitate petroleum purchases. Welcoming the agreement, both Ministers expressed confidence that its implementation would further strengthen Pakistan-Oman energy ties and support Pakistan's efforts to enhance energy security through diversification of energy imports. The agreement marks an important milestone in the commercial relationship between the two companies and provides a structured arrangement for petroleum product supplies from OQT to PSO, supporting supply reliability amid continued volatility in regional energy markets. OQT has already established itself as a major supplier of gasoline to PSO, supplying more than one million tonnes during 2026. The newly signed agreement builds on this established trading relationship and provides a framework for expanding commercial cooperation. Beyond gasoline, OQT has also strengthened its presence in Pakistan's LPG market, supplying both state-owned and private sector buyers. Its LPG supplies to Pakistan are expected to exceed 120,000 metric tonnes by the end of 2026.–DNA

UN climate talks break down without overarching agreement

ANTALYA: Chaotic United Nations climate talks in Turkiye could not reach an overarching agreement amid disagreements over whether to mention the fossil fuels that cause global warming. Expectations had already been low heading into the two-week negotiations, but discussions about explicitly including fossil fuels — the chief cause of global warming — and other issues, including money, proved irreconcilable. The talks, called COP31, continued without a main agreement known as a cover decision. The meeting had already made progress on smaller issues. Any pact approved at the talks, called COP31, has to be by a near-unanimous consensus. Several countries and the 27-nation European Union said they could not accept the final proposal from the joint Turkish-Australian leadership that didn't mention fossil fuels. A considerably larger number of nations said consensus on something was more important and accepted the decision, often reluctantly. Several nations and blocs, including the European Union, the Marshall Islands and Panama, objected to a draft of the final agreement at United Nations climate talks because it failed to mention fossil fuels, the chief cause of global warming, or specifically call for a move away from climate-polluting coal, oil and gas. Delegates said the current draft falls far short of what is needed to deal with the worsening impacts of climate change. "It's unconscionable that we would have a climate act that makes no reference to fossil fuels," Darragh O'Brien, Ireland's climate minister, speaking on behalf of the EU, said at the climate talks running more than 44 hours overtime at the Turkish resort town of Antalya. This is the longest any climate talks have run overtime. Russia, however, supported the decision to leave the explicit mention of "fossil fuels" out of the final deal. The draft from Turkish Environment Minister Murat Kurum, co-president of the two-week conference in Antalya, Turkiye, called COP31, was released before a final meeting was called on Sunday afternoon.

Earlier Sunday, Kurum gave negotiators only about three hours to make objections or request changes before the draft was to be presented to what may be the summit's final meeting, where countries will either accept, reject or express their reservations about the agreement. Several nations have raised serious objections to the draft, which needs near-unanimous consensus for approval. Speaking at the meeting, Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, chair of the African Group of Negotiators, said, "With all due respect Mr. President, you have not shown respect to a group of 54 countries (from Africa) and my country (Ghana) for that matter." Confusion ensued at the meeting Kurum was caught on a hot mic telling UN climate chief Simon Stiell, "to sit down," as Stiell tried to advise him on proceedings onstage. The proposal includes a specific goal for supporting technology that captures carbon pollution and stores it, which is hotly debated and backed by the oil industry. Activist groups have asked negotiators to reject the final decision, saying it falls far short of what the world needs now to deal with global warming. The conference, scheduled to end Friday, is now in double overtime. Organizers worry that as negotiators depart Antalya there may not be enough delegates left in the room to pass the draft. Earlier this week, Panamanian Environment Minister Juan Carlos Navarro said the talks were being held hostage by a "petroleum mafia" and needed to be reformed. Fossil fuels went unmentioned in COP final decisions for more than 25 years, said Alden Meyer, with the think tank E3G. However, the "transition away from fossil fuels" was agreed to in Dubai in 2023, he added. "It would be a real setback if we come out of here with no signal that we were serious about what we agreed to do three years ago," Meyer said. The proposed COP31 final agreement references the Dubai agreement, but key words and phrases — fossil, oil, coal or phase out — do not appear anywhere in the 10-page text. The draft supports the highly-debated process of carbon capture and storage, with a specific goal of capturing, reusing and storing 1 billion metric tons of carbon. The proposal is intended to help industrial polluters who can't easily switch to renewables capture the carbon dioxide in their emissions and bury it.–**DNA**

Dr Hamid receives another award from Pakistan High Commission UK

DNA



BOLTON (UK): Dr Hamid Khan Al-Mashriqi has received another award from the Pakistan High Commission in recognition of his services to Pakistanis and Muslims across the world.

Special thanks were extended to Imtiaz Feroz Gondal for nominating him for this honour. The award was received by Pakistan High Commission UK representative Usman Tipu in the presence of Afzal Khan and Lord Wajid Khan at Excellency Centre, Bolton.

Dr Hamid Khan Al-Mashriqi is an international strategic affairs expert, foreign policy analyst and his various services for the objectives of Muslims worldwide.

He is a well-known Pakistani analyst contributed to various media, as the spokesman of Pakistan.

Dr Hamid is a fellow at Chatham House and has represented Pakistan and the United Kingdom at the World Economic Forum, the United Nations General Assembly, and other international forums too.

FBR introduces online complaint management system for taxpayers

LAHORE: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has introduced an online Complaint Management System through its IRIS portal, enabling taxpayers to register and track complaints without visiting government offices.

According to the FBR, taxpayers can now submit complaints directly through the IRIS portal. The department has also outlined the procedure for filing complaints to facilitate users.

Through the 'Load Data' option on the portal, taxpayers can check the latest status of their complaints, which are categorised into four types: Open, Overdue, Resolved and Feedback Pending.

The system also allows taxpayers to independently monitor the progress of their complaints and check their current status online.

Complaints related to delayed tax refunds, jurisdiction matters and departmental services can also be submitted through the platform. The FBR said the initiative was aimed at improving transparency and efficiency in complaint registration, tracking and timely resolution, while facilitating taxpayers through an online mechanism.–**APP**

Syria, Lebanon seize weapons, explosives

LONDON: Lebanon's army said on Sunday it had seized about 264 kilograms of explosives smuggled from Syria and arrested three people suspected of involvement.

The army said in a statement on X that the seizure followed surveillance and monitoring operations along Lebanon's northern and eastern borders. It did not identify the suspects or say who owned the explosives or where they were headed.

A Lebanese source told Al-Arabiya that investigators were working to determine the shipment's owner and destination. The source said those arrested were from the Lebanese border town of Arsal. The seizure follows another smuggling attempt the Lebanese army said it thwarted on Oct. 2. After tracking smugglers' movements along the border, troops seized about 245 kilograms of TNT, four explosive devices, eight detonators and electrical wires intended for use in detonations. Separately, Syrian internal security forces said on Sunday they seized assorted weapons in the Damascus countryside intended for smuggling into Lebanon and arrested one person in coordination with the General Intelligence Service. –**APP**

Russian cargo ship still on fire off Finland after attack

HELSINKI: A fire onboard a Russian cargo ship that was struck by drones in the Baltic Sea continued to burn through the night even as efforts were made to douse the flames, Finland's coast guard said on Sunday.

The Finnish military has said the strike on the Sparta II on Saturday was likely carried out by Ukraine and that the vessel later drifted into Finnish waters where it remains at anchor. The 16 crew members were evacuated onto a nearby Russian ship. Pictures and video released by the coast guard showed several vessels spraying the Sparta II with water cannons during the night in a bid to put out the flames and cool down containers stacked on its deck. Ukraine has sent waves of military drones toward Russia's northwest coastal Leningrad region this year, including some that strayed into the airspace of nearby Baltic countries, leading to fears that the war was spilling onto NATO territory. The ship, bound for Russian exclave Kaliningrad, was damaged in international waters west of Russia's Gogland island, Finland's Defense Forces have said, corroborating an account by Russian officials. The risk of further attacks in the Gulf of Finland, a narrow arm of the Baltic Sea, cannot be ruled out, Estonian Navy Commander Ivo Vark told public broadcaster ERR on Sunday. Finland's military said last week it had detected a strike on a Russian warship in the same area during Ukrainian drone attacks.–**APP**

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Briefs

Belgium faces air traffic shut down

BRUSSELS: Almost all flights are set to be canceled in Belgium on Monday after the country's air traffic controller said its staff will take part in a national strike against government austerity measures. Skeyes, the company responsible for air traffic control in the country, said Saturday it will be unable to provide regular services at Belgian airports and in the airspace between 7:00 am (0600 GMT) and 9:00 p.m. (2000 GMT) on November 23.

"The anticipated staffing levels will not allow the safe handling of regular air traffic to be guaranteed during this period. Skeyes is therefore obliged to temporarily suspend the services concerned," the company said.

Belgium has seen repeated rounds of strikes in recent months against efforts by Prime Minister Bart De Wever to save 10 billion euros over the next few years in a bid to reduce the country's high deficit. Skeyes said essential minimum services required for emergencies and other safety-critical flights will remain available. But Charleroi Airport, a major European hub for low-cost airline Ryanair, said the controllers' strike will result "in the complete shutdown of all the country's airports for an entire day," affecting thousands of passengers. "Without air traffic control, no flights can take off or land," the airport said, condemning what it described as a "last-minute decision" with "disastrous consequences."

Brussels airport – the country's largest – said that the majority of departing and arriving flights "will have to be canceled." De Wever, a Flemish conservative, has been locked in protracted talks with his governing partners to try to find a deal on a new cost-cutting budget by Monday. – **APP**

Turkish FM says US-Iran deal essential to global economy

Meanwhile, The Saudi-led coalition said it had intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's Houthis towards the kingdom's western region, amid escalating hostilities between Saudi Arabia and the Iran-aligned group

Web Desk

ANKARA: Turkiye Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has said that a ceasefire deal between the US and Iran was essential to reverse "global financial crises somewhat", Aljazeera reported, citing Turkish broadcaster TGRT Haber. "The economic burden brought by this war and lack of resolution is getting harder every day for many countries. It is heading towards having very destructive effects," he said, expressing hope for an agreement between Washington and Tehran. Meanwhile,

The Saudi-led coalition said it had intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's Houthis towards the kingdom's western region, amid escalating hostilities between Saudi Arabia and the Iran-aligned group. Saudi Arabia's western coastline is home to strategic energy infrastructure, including the Yanbu South Terminal, a major crude-export facility connected to the East-West Pipeline, and the Jazan refinery in the kingdom's far southwest.

The East-West Pipeline allows Saudi Arabia to transport crude from its eastern oil-producing fields to the Red Sea coast, providing an export route that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz. The latest interception came amid a series of Houthi attacks and threats against Saudi targets following Saudi-led coalition strikes on Houthi positions in Yemen, including the Red Sea port of Hodeidah.



The Houthis have threatened Saudi Red Sea ports and warned airlines against using Saudi airspace as tensions between the two sides continue to rise.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said it had attacked two US Patriot air defence radar systems at military bases in Bahrain, according to a report by Iranian state news agency IRNA. The Guards did not identify the bases or provide details of the weapons used, the extent of damage or possible casualties.

The claim came as Bahrain's Interior Ministry reported that an Iranian attack had struck and damaged a civilian industrial facility, sparking a fire but causing no injuries. Bahrain said its Civil Defence teams were working to extinguish the blaze but did not disclose the facility's location or nature. The IRGC's claim of attacks on US military radar installations has not been independently verified.

Fire at Indonesian candy factory leaves 3 dead

Dwianto said rescue workers were sweeping different sections of the factory, focusing on areas where victims might be trapped, along with local fire department personnel and the Indonesian Red Cross

JAKARTA: A fire swept through a candy factory in Indonesia 's Banten province Saturday, leaving three people dead and rescue teams searching for 36 workers who remained unaccounted for, officials said.

The blaze broke out at the PT Fonusa Agung Mulia factory in Serang district, in Banten province, which borders Jakarta. The factory produces Milkita, an Indonesian brand of milk-based candies and snack products. The National Search and Rescue Agency released a statement saying that 15 people were rescued alive, including four injured workers. Rescue teams were still searching for the 36 unaccounted-for workers.

"The fire is still burning in several locations, and firefighting teams are continuing extinguishing and cooling operations," said Rizky Dwianto, an operations official at the Banten Search and Rescue Agency.

He said firefighters from Serang district and Banten province were battling flames in several parts of the facility more than 12 hours after the fire began.

Television reports showed flames engulfing the three-story factory, sending thick black smoke into the sky, and causing panic among nearby residents and workers. The floor of the burned-out structure was littered with twisted metal, blackened corrugated iron roofing and other debris.

Outside the factory, anxious relatives waited for news of family members who could not be contacted. The cause of the fire was not immediately known, and authorities have not said whether all of the missing workers were believed to have been inside the factory when the blaze erupted.

Survivors said the fire originated from a cooling unit on the third floor. Dwianto said rescue workers were sweeping different sections of the factory, focusing on areas where victims might be trapped, along with local fire department personnel and the Indonesian Red Cross. – **APP**

Libya loses $30.8 million

TRIPOLI: Libya has lost more than $30.8 million in oil revenue after an armed group forcibly shut the Hamada oil pipeline for more than 20 days, disrupting the transportation of more than 302,000 barrels of crude, the National Oil Corporation said Saturday.

The NOC said the shutdown had reduced crude output by an average of 14,418 barrels per day, resulting in daily revenue losses of approximately $1.47 million. Total losses reached 302,778 barrels, valued at $30.79 million based on average crude prices. The losses also include fixed operating costs at affected Arabian Gulf Oil Company fields, including Hamada, NC5, NC8 and Tahara (NC4), the corporation said. The NOC condemned attacks on oil infrastructure, warning that they were causing material and reputational damage to Libya's energy sector, undermining efforts to restore international energy companies' confidence and increase production capacity.

It said the disruptions were also damaging the country's economy, hindering development efforts and threatening the operation of state institutions. The corporation called on relevant authorities to intensify efforts to reopen the pipeline valve and prevent further attacks on oil facilities, stressing the need to safeguard national resources and ensure uninterrupted production. The Hamada pipeline is a key link in Libya's oil transportation network, connecting the Hamada oilfields to the Zawiya refinery, the country's largest, which has a processing capacity of 120,000 barrels per day. The pipeline shutdown comes amid recurring disruptions to Libya's oil infrastructure. On Oct. 31, an armed group shut a valve on the main Hamada crude pipeline, halting flows to Zawiya and marking the second interruption of oil supplies to the refinery that month. At the time, the NOC warned that the closure could result in the loss of about 15,000 barrels of crude daily and urged the Petroleum Facilities Guard, responsible for securing oil installations, to help reopen the valve. – **DNA**

Lahore again tops global pollution ranking

News Desk

LAHORE: Lahore has once again topped the list of the world's most polluted major cities, recording a particulate matter reading of 538 between 9am and 10am on Sunday, according to the figures from the Swiss air quality monitoring platform IQAir.

The Swiss air quality platform categorises readings above 300 as "hazardous", indicating extremely polluted air that poses serious health risks to residents. India's Delhi ranked second among the world's major cities, with a particulate matter reading of 207. Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab reported a high reading of 463, while Sargodha recorded 382. Multan registered a particulate matter reading of 255, according to IQAir. The toxic haze has left Punjab's capital city shrouded for days, reducing visibility and causing widespread health complaints, including throat irritation, breathing difficulties and itchy eyes.

Over recent years, Pakistan and India have each accused the other of worsening the air. Earlier this month, Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb linked the worsening smog across the province to large-scale fireworks during Diwali celebrations in India. In a post on X, she said that polluted winds entering through the eastern corridor from Indian cities contributed to the increase in the provincial capital's AQI. Silwat Saeed, chief of the Environment Protection and Climate Change Department in Punjab, previously said.

President promulgates five ordinances

Monitoring Report

PESHAWAR: President Asif Ali Zardari has promulgated five ordinances, doing away with most of the "privileges" of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lawmakers, including protection against "preventive detention" and providing a legal framework for special initiatives in the designated 12 districts and other districts in the province.

With the imposition of emergency in KP on Oct 11, an Area Representative and Development Council (ARDC) was formed to oversee 12 districts that were deemed to face intense security challenges, including the merged districts.

Two of the ordinances envisage setting up an executive committee with wide-ranging powers to oversee special initiatives, including developmental schemes, in the 12 designated districts and the rest of the province, respectively. The committee will have powers to identify and recommend the executing agency for special initiatives in the designated and other districts, including military formations.

Indian Congress warns of more protests

NEW DELHI: The youth wing of India's main opposition Congress party on Saturday warned of more protests against Meta's removal of some accounts and posts of its members, a day after clashing with police outside the US firm's India offices.

Meta declined to comment on Friday's unprecedented protests, which marked an escalation by the influential political group in the company's biggest market by users. Debate is growing in India about potential risks to free speech from the increasingly strict efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to remove social media content it objects to.

Modi's government says it orders content to be taken down only if it breaches local laws or can harm public safety or national security. Congress has long accused Meta and other social media platforms of curbing dissent online by removing party accounts, favouring Modi's government. – **APP**



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Paulo Rangel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic arrived in Pakistan on an official visit. – DNA

US immigration officers make arrests at Seattle airport

Alaska Airlines said ICE officers gave no advance notice of the enforcement action, which occurred during a busy travel weekend ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday

DNA

NEW YORK: Masked immigration officers detained two people on a crowded airport jet bridge in Seattle as people were boarding Saturday, causing what the airline called a "distressing" scene for passengers and employees and delaying the Los Angeles-bound flight. Video of the incident showed officers dragging away at least one person at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport as a woman screams that her daughter is being taken and she has a work permit.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement said in a statement that its officers conducted a targeted enforcement operation to arrest Ricardo Larrondo Mendoza, an immigrant from Mexico who "overstayed his visa in violation of our nation's laws." During the confrontation, another passenger "hurled hot coffee on the officers," the ICE statement said. That woman, Sofia Hernandez Mejia, was determined to be in the US illegally from Mexico and to have also overstayed her visa, ICE said. She could be charged with assaulting a federal officer.

Online flight data showed that Alaska flight 1306, which had been scheduled to depart at 8:10 a.m., was delayed.

Alaska Airlines said ICE officers gave no advance notice of the enforcement action, which occurred during a busy travel weekend ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

"We are concerned by this morning's law enforcement action during the boarding of Alaska Flight 1306," the airline said. "We recognize how distressing this incident has been for affected employees and guests." It added that the airline is committed to "treating every guest with dignity and respect." The arresting officers wore unmarked jackets and khaki pants. The video showed them struggling with someone on the ground as passengers surrounded by rolling suitcases look on. ICE has stepped up arrests at airports since the summer, especially targeting people who overstayed visas in the past. Alaska Airlines said it was working with the Port of Seattle, which manages the airport, to see if protocols were followed, and also that it has raised concerns "directly with the appropriate authorities."

The Port of Seattle said in a statement that the arrest was distressing not only for the affected family but for other passengers, and that local authorities would "engage federal officials to understand more about what occurred." Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, said ICE's tactics were "deeply un-American" and called for the agency's abolition. "The video is horrific and it is chilling," Ferguson said at an afternoon news conference with labor leaders and local elected officials. "We need a system of immigration enforcement and border security that is effective, ethical and humane. And ICE is not it. It is beyond reform." Ferguson also said he was looking into how ICE agents accessed the jet bridge and he believes they violated a state law he signed in March limiting facial coverings on law enforcement officers.



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