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Chinese President for resolving regional conflcits for peace
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German-Pak trade relations need a boost
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Planning minister for continuity of govt policy
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Cross-border terrorism

Security forces target Afghan Taliban posts

Afghan Taliban personnel abandon their border posts following Pakistani military's retaliation, says DC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces responded to unprovoked firing from Afghan Taliban border posts targeting Pakistani positions in South Waziristan, a deputy commissioner said on Sunday. In a post on X, the South Waziristan Lower DC said Afghan border posts continued firing on Pakistani posts in the Angoor Adda area. He said security forces launched an immediate and effective response, targeting multiple Afghan border posts, mortar positions and defensive installations. The deputy commissioner added that Afghan Taliban personnel were forced to abandon their posts and flee following the strong response by the security forces. He said no casualties were reported in the Pakistani border areas so far, adding that the security forces remained prepared to respond to any form of aggression.

The latest exchange comes days after Afghan Taliban forces opened unprovoked fire on civilian houses and Angoor Adda Bazaar on the night of October 27. One civilian was killed, and five others were injured when a mortar shell struck a house in a residential area. Several shops in the bazaar were also damaged in the shelling, according to the deputy commissioner and security sources. In response, security forces launched a retaliatory operation, destroying multiple Afghan Taliban checkposts across the border. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting subsequently said Pakistani forces had destroyed seven Afghan Taliban posts during the operation. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Afghan Taliban regime to prevent militant groups, particularly the banned TTP, from using Afghan territory to launch attacks inside Pakistan.

Pakistan,China to jointly fight challenges

Mehtab Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar co-chaired the "Symposium on Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building and Seminar on China-Pakistan Governance" with Mr. Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC), in Islamabad. Addressing the event, the DPM/FM underscored the role of political parties in governance, institution-building and national development.

He highlighted the broad-based political consensus underpinning Pakistan-China friendship and called for closer party-to-party exchanges and mutual learning to further strengthen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. In his keynote address, Minister Liu thanked Pakistan's leadership for promoting party-to-party exchanges to deepen bilateral cooperation. The event brought together representatives of Pakistan's political parties.

After 11 months PTI lawyer meets Imran, Bushra

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Barrister Salman Safdar, counsel for incarcerated former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan, met Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi at Adiala Jail on Monday. According to Safdar's statement posted on X, jail authorities facilitated a 40-minute meeting at 4:30 pm. He said the meeting took place after repeated applications and requests, marking his first meeting with Khan in about seven months and with Bushra Bibi in about 11 months.

Safdar stated that the session was insufficient to cover all cases and legal matters. He added that both Khan and Bushra briefed him on their health conditions and living conditions in jail and gave him fresh instructions on some legal matters and cases. The development comes amid ongoing restrictions on legal and family access to the couple, who have been held in Adiala Jail for years facing multiple cases. Previous meetings involving Safdar (including court-ordered ones earlier in 2026) have been limited in duration and scope, with complaints from the legal team about access.

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PTI leader rejects Saif claims

Staff Report

PESHAWAR: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday rejected party leader Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif's claims, saying the party had made every possible effort to secure a meeting with incarcerated founder Imran Khan.

Speaking to the media in Peshawar, Gohar termed as "baseless" Saif's assertion that PTI leaders had failed to meet Imran despite being offered an opportunity to do so. "We made every possible effort to meet the PTI founder through the courts and negotiations, but despite all our efforts, we were not allowed even a single meeting," he said.

Gohar said access to Imran had also been one of the party's conditions during the negotiation process. He rejected the assertions made by Saif during his interview, saying: "All of Barrister Saif's claims are false. I reject them." Saif, during an interview on Geo News programme Jirga, had said

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RAWALPINDI: Mr Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (IDCPC), called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. – DNA

Sino-Pak friendship

Shehbaz stresses to further strengthen Pakistan-China ties

Welcoming Liu Haixing and his delegation, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan and China enjoy an iron-clad, time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the importance of sustained political engagement and party-to-party exchanges in further strengthening Pak-China relations. He was talking to Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (IDCPC), who called on him in Islamabad today. Welcoming Liu Haixing and his delegation, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan and China enjoy an iron-clad, time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. He underscored that Pakistan-China friendship is anchored in mutual trust, respect and deep-rooted

Continued on Page 06

CDF Munir received Chinese minister

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on Monday discussed "evolving regional and international security dynamics and bilateral relations" with a visiting dignitary from China, the military's media wing said. According to a statement by

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Briefs

PIA gets new CEO

Nazir Siyal

KARACHI: The board of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Monday announced the appointment of Adrian Hamilton-Manns as its chief executive officer (CEO). In a press release, PIA said Hamilton-Manns "brings a wealth of leadership and strategic experience within the global aviation sector", adding that his appointment "marks a pivotal chapter" in the airline's ongoing transformation. It said that he had managed three airlines as CEO and was considered a "world expert" in transforming and reviving airlines, with over 30 years of experience. "As Hamilton-Manns assumes the role of CEO, the consortium and the entire management board extend their deepest gratitude to the outgoing CEO, Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Amir Hayat, for his outstanding service and dedication to this vital national role," the statement said.

Cyber attack hits EU supermarkets

News Desk

LONDON: Grocery stores in at least five European countries saw temperatures in their cold cases soar on Monday, with several confirming they had been hit by a cyberattack similar to one three weeks ago in France. Supermarkets in Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg and Sweden were among those affected in the latest hacker attack. Major French retailers said on Oct 12 that hundreds of store refrigeration systems were hit by a cyberattack, which forced them to throw out spoiled food and raised concerns about food security. No one has claimed responsibility for either attack. Carrefour Belgium on Monday reported disruption in about 15 of its 700 stores. "It's a cyberattack; there is no other reason," said spokesman Mich Vergauwen.

Supreme leader on board on talks

Iran says it did not target Gulf states

Amid fears the conflict could reignite after Tuesday's midterm elections in the United States, China and Russia both spoke out on Monday against the possibility of renewed military action in a war that has hit the global economy

Web Desk

IRANIAN Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has denied that Tehran deliberately targeted Gulf countries during the recent conflict, saying its strikes were directed at US military bases and assets in the region.

In an interview with Al Jazeera aired on Sunday, Araghchi said some Iranian missiles may have deviated from their intended course or gone out of control, but insisted Iran had no intention of attacking friendly countries.

He said regional states had come to realise that hosting US military bases did not guarantee their security, arguing that the bases had proved unable to protect even themselves. Araghchi urged Gulf countries to discourage Washington and Israel from launching another war against Iran, saying they should work to reduce tensions rather than encourage military confrontation.

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Oil prices sink on US-Iran detente hopes

News Desk

LONDON: Oil prices sank more than 6% on Monday, the eve of crucial midterm elections in the United States, as signals that Tehran and Washington were ready to resume talks boosted hopes of ending the Middle East war. Brent North Sea crude fell 6% to $106.60 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) dropped 6.4% to $97.49 per barrel. The Axios news outlet reported that US Vice President JD Vance had sent a letter to Iranian national security chief Mohsen Rezaei about possible new talks,

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'New mechanism allowed govt to keep petrol price cheaper'

Ali Pervaiz says refineries absorbed increase as fuel import premiums surged

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Monday that the government's revised pricing mechanism and cooperation from local refineries enabled it to keep petrol around Rs15 per litre cheaper than international market rates amid the US-Iran war.

Speaking about the recent changes to the petrol pricing mechanism, Malik said the regional conflict had sharply increased costs associated with fuel imports, including freight, insurance and other logistics expenses. He said the premium on petrol stood at around $5 per barrel before the war but subsequently surged to $20 per barrel. The minister said subsequent PSO tenders showed premiums climbing further to around $25-$30 per barrel and even higher as regional conditions

Continued on Page 06

Germany, Pakistan trade stagnant, needs boost: envoy

Discussing the situation in Ukraine, the German ambassador strongly criticized Russia's military actions and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people. She stated that Germany and the wider European community firmly stand behind Ukraine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, Dr. Ina Lepel, visited the National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad under the club's international outreach initiative, "Meet the Press", where she held an interactive session with journalists and emphasized the need for strengthening economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Germany.

The German envoy was warmly received by National Press Club President Abdur Razzaq Sial and Secretary Furqan Rao, along with members of the governing body and senior journalists. During her visit, Ambassador Lepel toured various sections of the National Press Club and later planted a saplings in the club premises as a symbol of friendship and environmental sustainability.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Lepel highlighted the longstanding relations between Pakistan and Germany and stressed the need to significantly enhance bilateral trade. She noted that despite the passage of several years, trade figures between the two countries had not witnessed the desired growth.

"I served in Pakistan in 2017 and have now returned as ambassador, but unfortunately there has not been significant improvement in bilateral trade volume," she said. The ambassador stressed that both countries possess immense economic potential and should work closely to expand trade, investment and commercial cooperation for mutual benefit. Speaking on regional issues, Ambassador Lepel appreciated Pakistan's efforts aimed at reducing tensions in the region, particularly regarding the recent US-Iran standoff. She commended Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives and efforts to promote peace and dialogue. "I salute Pakistan's efforts to help achieve peaceful solutions and prevent instability in the region," she remarked, adding that diplomacy remains the best path to resolving conflicts and avoiding further tensions.

Discussing the situation in Ukraine, the German ambassador strongly criticized Russia's military actions and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people. She stated that Germany and the wider European community firmly stand behind Ukraine.

"Russia must stop the killing of innocent people in Ukraine," she said, emphasizing that peace, sovereignty and international law must be respected.

She added that European countries continue to support Ukraine politically, economically and humanitarianly. The ambassador also spoke about educational opportunities in Germany for Pakistani students. She said Germany remains one of the most preferred destinations for higher education due to its quality institutions, research opportunities and welcoming academic environment.

She informed participants that Germany has increased the number of visas being issued to Pakistani students. However, because of the growing number of applications, processing delays occasionally occur. "There is a huge demand from Pakistani students seeking education in Germany. Sometimes applications take longer because of the volume, but we are working to simplify procedures and make the process more efficient," she explained.

During the interactive session, journalists asked questions on bilateral relations, education, regional security and international developments. Ambassador Lepel responded in detail and emphasized the importance of media, people-to-people contacts and academic exchanges in strengthening ties between Pakistan and Germany.

At the conclusion of the visit, NPC President thanked the German ambassador for engaging with the media community and expressed hope that Pakistan-Germany relations would continue to deepen in the years ahead. He also reiterated the National Press Club's commitment to providing a platform for meaningful dialogue between diplomats, policymakers and journalists.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany Ina Lepel addressing Meet the Press program at the National Press Club. – DNA

Ahsan stresses continuity of policies for sustainable uplift

Emphasizing the growing link between geopolitics and economic stability, Ahsan Iqbal said conflicts and geopolitical rivalries, including the Russia-Ukraine war, were having far-reaching consequences for the global economy, affecting energy markets, food security, international trade and global supply chains. He observed that international tensions were no longer confined to diplomatic and strategic arenas but were increasingly affecting household budgets and the cost of living

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said continuity in sustainable development policies, institutional preparedness and long-term strategic planning was essential for countries to navigate global uncertainty arising from emerging technologies, climate change, geopolitical tensions and economic challenges.

Addressing the 29th Sustainable Development Conference and 4th Sustainability Investment Expo, organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, the minister said rapidly evolving technologies and growing climate challenges were fundamentally transforming economies and societies, requiring countries to adopt proactive and forward-looking strategies. He said nations had two choices in the face of inevitable change: either remain apprehensive and suffer its consequences or develop proactive strategies to transform emerging challenges into opportunities.Highlighting Pakistan's commitment to technological advancement, he said the government had established national centres of excellence in Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Big Data and Cloud Computing to equip the country's youth with skills required to compete in the rapidly evolving global economy. Emphasizing the growing link between geopolitics and economic stability, Ahsan Iqbal said conflicts and geopolitical rivalries, including the Russia-Ukraine war, were having



far-reaching consequences for the global economy, affecting energy markets, food security, international trade and global supply chains. He observed that international tensions were no longer confined to diplomatic and strategic arenas but were increasingly affecting household budgets and the cost of living. A conflict thousands of kilometres away, he said, could increase fertilizer prices for a Pakistani farmer or raise food costs for an ordinary household, reflecting the growing interconnectedness of the global economy. The minister said global political and economic realignments were reshaping development priorities, while international supply chains were increasingly being reorganized not only on the basis of cost and efficiency but also strategic and political considerations. He stressed that developing countries needed to strengthen economic resilience, diversify international partnerships and expand regional connectivity to remain competitive in the changing global environment. Drawing attention to challenges facing the international financial system, Ahsan Iqbal said billions of people worldwide were living in countries where debt-servicing obligations exceeded public expenditure on health and education. He said the growing debt burden was severely constraining the fiscal space available to developing countries for investment in human development, infrastructure and sustainable economic growth. The minister underscored that the impact of external shocks and international crises depended not merely on their magnitude but also on a country's preparedness, export diversification and the skills and capabilities of its workforce. Countries with diversified economies, strong institutions, technological capacity and skilled human resources were better positioned to withstand global disruptions and turn challenges into opportunities, he added.—**DNA**

KP depts face Rs 3.58b audit objections

PESHAWAR: An audit of various Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government departments identified financial irregularities and questionable expenditures exceeding Rs 3.58 billion during the PTI-led provincial government's tenure.

The audit report highlighted questionable and non-transparent approval of contracts worth over Rs1.205 billion, excess payments of more than Rs908.1 million on development and construction projects, and unauthorized expenditures exceeding Rs600 million.

It also pointed out financial losses of over Rs378.5 million due to the failure to take action against contractors despite violations of contractual obligations. During the first phase of the compliance audit for the financial year 2024-25, auditors examined 14 administrative departments out of 28 Principal Accounting Officers (PAOs) selected for audit. According to the report, auditors recovered Rs 117.009 million between January and December 2025, a figure also verified by the audit authorities—**APP**

HEC capacity building program for health professionals

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) under the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has announced a Five-Day Capacity Building Program for Health Professionals.

According to the announcement, the training titled "Enhancing Research Skills Among Health Professionals: A Foundational Program" will be held from November 30 to December 4, 2026. The timing will be 08:30 AM to 04:00 PM at Jinnah Lecture Hall, NAHE, HEC, H-8 Premises, Islamabad. The program aims to strengthen research skills among health professionals with a focus on foundation of health research, research ethics, research design, literature review, and scientific writing and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence. **APP**

Legal matters reviewed to streamline agency operations

ISLAMABAD : Director General, National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, on Monday chaired a meeting to review ongoing recruitment matters and internal legal affairs aimed at improving administrative coordination and ensuring smooth functioning of the agency. According to an NCCIA official, Director Administration Ehsan Ullah Chohan and the agency's law officers attended the meeting. He said the participants discussed ongoing recruitment matters, relevant legal requirements and administrative issues requiring coordination among different sections of the agency. The DG Rizvi emphasised the importance of effective coordination between the administration and legal teams to ensure that recruitment-related and other official matters were handled in accordance with applicable rules and procedures. The meeting also reviewed measures to address administrative and legal requirements._**APP**

KP governor for digital reforms to facilitate businesses

The Governor directed the authorities to introduce a single-window system to provide all business-related services under one roof and further simplify the online registration process to encourage investment and improve public convenience

PESHAWAR :Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday stressed the need to promote business activities in the province through a transparent, efficient and digital governance system, saying that providing maximum facilities to the business community should remain a key government priority.

Chairing a meeting on ease of doing business and proposed reforms in relevant laws and regulations, the Governor said unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles should be eliminated through the introduction of modern digital systems, enabling entrepreneurs to access government services without making repeated visits to public offices.

The meeting was attended by Adviser to the Governor on Finance Tariq Mahmood Pasha, Adviser on Industries Irshad Ahmad, Adviser on Planning and Development Usman Saifullah Khan, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhare Alam Irfan, Secretary Industries and other senior officials.

The participants briefed the Governor on measures aimed at facilitating businesses, issuance of no-objection certificates (NoCs), implementation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Asaan Karobar Act 2025, the Asaan Karobar Live Portal, digitization of regulatory licensing and certification offices, and steps taken to address existing challenges. The meeting was also informed about reform proposals prepared in consultation with 19 government departments.

The Governor directed the authorities to introduce a single-window system to provide all business-related services under one roof and further simplify the online registration process to encourage investment and improve public convenience.

He said an effective mechanism should be developed to ensure that citizens are not required to visit government offices for routine matters. He also instructed the authorities to activate, at the earliest, the online complaints portal for Asaan Karobar to ensure prompt resolution of issues faced by the business community.

Governor Kundi further directed the appointment of a focal person for effective coordination with the federal government and called for an immediate meeting with the Information Technology Department to expedite the implementation of digital reforms.

He also ordered that the meeting of the committee formed for Asaan Karobar be convened soon to begin practical implementation of the proposed reforms.—**DNA**

Digital service delivery key to public service provision

QUETTA: Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Women Development, Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi, on Monday underscored the importance of digital service delivery, describing it as a fundamental requirement of modern governance that can enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public service provision while strengthening citizens' trust in government institutions. Addressing the inaugural workshop on digital service delivery at the Balochistan Civil Services Academy, Dr Rubaba Buledi said the promotion of modern technology and digital systems was particularly important for a vast province like Balochistan, where remote and geographically dispersed populations often faced challenges in accessing public services. She said digital service delivery could help bring government services closer to citizens, reduce bureaucratic hurdles and improve coordination among government departments, thereby ensuring more effective and timely public service delivery. Dr Rubaba Buledi emphasized that digital governance was not merely about adopting technology but represented a comprehensive approach aimed at introducing reforms, accountability, transparency and citizen-centric service delivery within government institutions. "The present era is driven by data and modern technology. It is essential for government officers to continuously enhance their professional capabilities in digital governance, administrative innovation and the use of artificial intelligence to make public administration more efficient, responsive and people-friendly," she said. She noted that the Balochistan government was actively pursuing the digitalization of official processes and modernizing public service systems. According to her, expanding digital services would help bridge the gap between citizens and government institutions while enabling departments to align traditional administrative practices with contemporary requirements.—**DNA**

Rs 50m uplift funds allocated to each tehsil

RAWALPINDI, Nov 02 (APP): District Administration, Rawalpindi, will directly supervise the establishment of model villages and clean drinking water projects, with an initial allocation of Rs 50 million for each tehsil.

Presiding over a meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner Social Services Fazail Mudassar said that, in line with the policy being implemented across Punjab, responsibility for the execution and supervision of model village projects in Rawalpindi had been entrusted directly to the district administration.

He said work was underway to establish 26 model villages across the district, adding that development funds would be utilised under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioners concerned, while village committees would play a key role in identifying and implementing local development schemes.

He directed the officials to immediately constitute committees for model villages in each tehsil, ensuring the inclusion of reputable, capable and socially committed individuals. He said an initial allocation of Rs 50 million was being provided to each tehsil to initiate development work.

Officials of the Punjab Saaf Pani Authority briefed the meeting on the status of existing and proposed water filtration plants. They informed participants that 182 of the district's 241 water filtration plants were currently functional.

The meeting was further informed that 252 new filtration plants, including 94 reverse osmosis (RO) and 158 filtration plants, were being installed across the district's five tehsils under the Chief Minister Punjab Saaf Pani Programme.—**APP**

15 arrested, 435 mobile phones recovered in crackdown

KARACHI: Central District Police have arrested 15 suspects allegedly involved in the illegal purchase and sale of mobile phones and IMEI tampering, recovering 435 mobile phones worth millions of rupees, SSP Central Dr Imran Khan said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference at his office, he said the raids were conducted in Khawaja Ajmer Nagri, New Karachi, Taimuria and Gulbahar areas.

He said shopkeepers from mobile phone markets were also among the arrested suspects. The recovered items included 37 phones with tampered IMEI numbers, nine stolen Android phones and several expensive iPhones.

Police also seized five computers and seven laptops allegedly used to alter the identity of mobile phones, he added. The SSP said the suspects used to change the IMEI numbers of stolen and snatched mobile phones before selling them in the market._**APP**

CM opens Sindhi Muslim Food Walk, interacts with people

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday evening inaugurated the Rs250 million Sindhi Muslim Food Walk in Chanesar Town, marking a major step towards transforming of one of Karachi's popular commercial and food destinations into a more organised, attractive and pedestrian-friendly public space.

Following the inauguration, the chief minister visited different eateries along the Food Walk, interacted with restaurant owners, customers and members of the public, and mingled with people enjoying the lively atmosphere. He also obliged citizens by posing for selfies, making the occasion a public interaction beyond the formal inauguration ceremony.

The visit reflected the importance of making public spaces more accessible and welcoming, while connecting urban development initiatives with the everyday lives of citizens.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, attended by provincial ministers, including Saeed Ghani, Nasir Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chairman Town Municipal Corporation (TMC) Chanesar Town Farhan Ghani, elected representatives, senior government officials, members of the business community and other distinguished guests, the chief minister congratulated the TMC chairman, municipal commissioner, engineers, contractors and workers who contributed to completing the project.

He said Sindhi Muslim was already among Karachi's well-known commercial and food destinations, attracting visitors from different parts of the city. Its growing popularity, however, required proper planning, improved infrastructure and organised public spaces.

The chief minister said the Sindhi Muslim Food Walk was not merely a beautification scheme but a comprehensive urban improvement initiative designed to make the area more accessible, attractive, organised and convenient for businesses, visitors and residents.

Executed by TMC Chanesar Town at an estimated cost of Rs250 million, the project was initiated on February 1, 2026, and completed in October 2026.

The development works include replacement of sewerage lines, installation of underground electrical cabling and removal of overhead wires, rehabilitation of roads and pedestrian footpaths, installation of modern streetlights, bollard lights and decorative lighting, plantation and landscaping, beautification of roundabouts, improvement of parking facilities and diversion roads, and installation of traffic signs and road markings.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said such improvements would enhance the experience of visitors and create a more organised environment for restaurants, shops and other businesses operating in the area. Highlighting Karachi's potential for food and cultural tourism, he said the city's cuisine, traditions, diversity and hospitality were important elements of its identity. Initiatives such as the Sindhi Muslim Food Walk could help unlock this potential by creating opportunities for restaurants, small businesses, entrepreneurs, vendors and the local workforce.

He observed that better public infrastructure and organised commercial spaces could attract private investment, generate employment and strengthen economic activity at the neighbourhood level.—**DNA**

CM sets target to train 2,500 rural women

Under the initiative, the Women Development Department has started registration of women from rural areas of Lahore for a three-month training course at Shahkam Industries, located on Multan Road near Lahore.

LAHORE: As many as 1,150 rural women received textile skills training under the SheThreads programme launched on the initiative of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, while a target has been set to train 2,500 women by June 2027. The programme aims to equip rural women with market-oriented skills and provide them with dignified employment opportunities in the textile industry. The participants will also receive a monthly stipend of Rs15,000 during the training period. Under the initiative, the Women Development Department has started registration of women from rural areas of Lahore for a three-month training course at Shahkam Industries, located on Multan Road near Lahore.

The training will focus on industrial sewing machine operation and apparel supervision, combining classroom instruction with practical training to prepare participants for employment in the textile sector.

Women aged between 18 and 45 years, holding Punjab domicile and having at least matriculation qualification, are eligible to apply.

Interested candidates can submit their applications at Shahkam Industries along with their national identity cards and domicile certificates. Following initial screening and verification of eligibility, shortlisted candidates will be required to submit an affidavit before admission.

Further information regarding registration can also be obtained through assistant commissioners, union council secretaries and relevant district offices.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said the initiative aimed to empower rural women through market-based skills training and enable them to earn a respectable livelihood. She said the programme would equip women with skills according to the needs of the market and facilitate their employment in the textile industry after successful completion of training.—**APP**



Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Tuesday November 03, 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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Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092



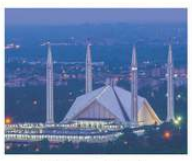
Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Gilani pledges support for water security commitments



ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday pledged parliamentary support through legislation, oversight and budgetary allocations to advance commitments made at Pakistan Water Week 2026, calling water security a national priority. Inaugurating the sixth edition of the conference, Gilani said Parliament must ensure that water policies translate into practical improvements for farming communities and people facing floods and shortages.

The five-day event, being held in Islamabad from Nov 2 to 6, focuses on turning commitments into action to strengthen water security and climate-resilient food systems. More than 200 participants attended the opening session. Senate Chairman identified three areas for parliamentary action: enforceable legislation, effective oversight and sustained funding. He called for the full implementation of provincial water laws and stronger groundwater governance. Parliament, he said, must ask whether policies were reaching farmers at the tail end of irrigation networks and whether flood warnings were reaching villages in time. Budgets should prioritise prevention alongside disaster relief, he added. The Senate chairman said solar-powered pumps had provided relief to farmers but needed to be accompanied by rules governing groundwater extraction. He called for careful regulation of aquifers, planned recharge and the use of floodwater to replenish underground reserves. Sharing reliable data could help build trust between provinces, he said, adding that women, young people and farming communities must be involved as partners in water management. Recalling his experience as prime minister during the 2010 floods, Mr Gilani said Pakistan faced the twin challenges of devastating floods and declining water availability. He said the 2022 floods had affected about 33 million people and caused more than $30 billion in damage and economic losses, while nearly seven million people were affected by floods last year. Meanwhile, per capita water availability had fallen from more than 5,000 cubic metres to about 1,000 cubic metres. "Too much water and too little, sometimes in the same districts within the same year," he said. Stressing that "response is not resilience", he questioned whether reconstruction efforts were reducing risks or recreating existing vulnerabilities. Mr Gilani also reiterated Pakistan's position that the Indus Waters Treaty remained valid and binding, saying water must never be used as an instrument of pressure. He called for a water-secure and flood-resilient Pakistan by its centenary in 2047.

IWMI Pakistan Country Representative Dr Muhammad Ashraf said water security was closely linked to food security, climate resilience and economic stability. Each conference session should produce a clear commitment, identify responsibility and set a timeline for action, he added.

In his keynote address, IWMI Strategic Programme Director for Water, Food and Ecosystems Dr Mohsin Hafeez said Pakistan had substantial evidence and ideas but needed a shared commitment to put them into practice. Decisions taken in Islamabad must bring tangible changes for farmers, he said. The conference is organised by IWMI and the CGIAR Policy Innovations Science Program in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources and the Ministry of Water Resources.

Its programme includes two thematic tracks, with 13 sessions each, alongside plenaries on development partners' water and climate priorities and water governance in the Indus Basin. The closing ceremony is scheduled for Nov 5, while the event runs until Nov 6.

Concluding his address, Mr Gilani urged participants to consider what their commitments would change for a farmer in Thar, a family living along the Ravi or a child in Quetta waiting for clean water.—**DNA**

IWMI official stresses coherent implementation of water policies

ISLAMABAD: Dr Mohsin Hafeez, Strategic Program Director-Water, Food and Ecosystems at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), has stressed the need for coherent implementation of water-related policies through better coordination among ministries and provinces.

Addressing the inaugural session of the sixth edition of Pakistan Water Week 2026, a five-day international conference, he underscored the importance of translating policies into action through evidence-based solutions and tools developed in collaboration with international institutions like IWMI.

He highlighted the need for improved coordination among federal ministries and provincial governments to safeguard environmental outcomes while ensuring food security. The conference is being held under the theme "Commitments to Action: Advancing Water Security and Achieving Climate-Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan." The event is organised by IWMI in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and the Ministry of Water Resources. The event is supported by PCRWR through the Ministry of Water Resources, UNICEF, ACIAR, the CGIAR Policy Innovations Science Program, and ICIMOD. The five-day event, being held in Islamabad from Nov 2 to 6, focuses on turning commitments into action to strengthen water security and climate-resilient food systems.—**APP**

New admin units to improve public service delivery: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday said the creation of smaller administrative units would help address public grievances, improve governance and ensure better service delivery.

He said growing public support for the creation of new provinces and emerging consensus among political parties on the issue was a positive development.

Speaking during a meeting with local party leaders here, he said the country's population had increased substantially over the past eight decades, making new administrative arrangements necessary to improve governance and administrative efficiency.

He added that smaller administrative units would help to address public grievances, improve governance and ensure better service delivery.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that there was already considerable consensus on various proposals, including the Hazara Province in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, separate administrative arrangements for Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh and South Punjab in Punjab.

Discussions among different political parties on these matters were also moving towards mutual understanding and consensus in a positive way, Abdul Aleem Khan remarked.

He stressed that ground realities must be taken into account to improve public service delivery and administrative efficiency. He made it clear that individual political interests could not be placed above the collective ones, emphasising that all stakeholders must give priority to the broader national interest when addressing important national issues.

Expressing his pleasure over visiting Faisalabad, Abdul Aleem Khan said that the promise to expand the M-4 Motorway had been fulfilled and practical progress had been made on a longstanding demand of the people of Faisalabad.

He observed that Faisalabad was one of the country's major industrial and commercial centres and its business community and residents deserved better facilities to promote industrial and trade activities and further strengthen the national economy. During his visit, IPP President Abdul Aleem Khan held meetings with political leaders, industrialists and prominent social figures. Former Provincial Minister and senior IPP leader Chaudhry Zaheeruddin also hosted a reception in his honour. The reception was attended by IPP Secretary General Mian Khalid Mahmood, IPP Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Shoaib Siddiqui, former MPA Chaudhry Akhtar Ali, along with prominent political and social personalities and industrialists from Faisalabad. On the occasion, Chaudhry Zaheeruddin and other party leaders warmly welcomed Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan to Faisalabad and arranged a reception in his honour. It is worth mentioning that, during his visit, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan also addressed the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.—**APP**

FCCP not bound by SC judgments

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCCP) has ruled that judgments of the Supreme Court have only persuasive value for the Federal Constitutional Court and are not binding on it, although it may adopt legal precedents for guidance where they are consistent with the Constitution and the law.

In its detailed written judgment, the FCCP held that the scope of review jurisdiction is extremely limited and cannot be used as a means to reopen a case or reargue issues already decided. The court observed that a review could only be entertained on the basis of an error or omission apparent on the face of the record or where a miscarriage of justice had occurred. Litigants and lawyers should avoid filing review petitions as a matter of routine and invoke this jurisdiction only where genuine legal grounds exist.

The court further ruled that a minimum cost of Rs 25,000 could be imposed for filing frivolous or malafide review petitions, while disciplinary action could also be taken against the Advocate-on-Record concerned.—**APP**

AI integration in Judiciary requires trust, transparency

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja Monday said that the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the judicial system was need of the hour. However, ensuring authentic data, digitization of court records, cybersecurity, data privacy and human oversight is essential to make the delivery of justice faster, more transparent and effective, she said. Addressing an international conference on AI and the Judiciary in Islamabad, the federal minister highlighted that Pakistan enacted the Digital Nation Pakistan Act to drive digital transformation. This legislation provides a comprehensive framework to transform governance, economy, and society through technology, she added.a She said that the Pakistan Digital Authority was established under this Act to define standards for digital transformation. In collaboration with the Ministry of Law and Justice, she said the Pakistan Digital Authority has published standards for machine-readable legislation, converting traditional PDF legal documents into machine-readable formats to provide authentic legal data and a linguistic corpus for AI integration. The federal minister emphasized the imperative to digitize legacy court records, pending cases, laws, and other legal documents according to established standards. She remarked that AI cannot yield reliable results based on unstructured data and paper-based records. Commending the role of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Law Minister and the Law Secretary, she appreciated the judicial sector's proactive cooperation in driving the digital transformation process. Elaborating on the progress made in digitizing the judicial ecosystem, Shaza Fatima Khawaja shared that the National Information Technology Board (NITB) had signed two (MoUs) with the Supreme Court of Pakistan. "An E-Office system has been introduced at the Supreme Court, while digital systems have been deployed to make the administrative affairs of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan paperless. She added that significant progress has been achieved in digitizing the Case Management System.—**DNA**

Water, food, national security closely linked

ISLAMABAD: International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Country Representative in Pakistan Dr. Muhammad Ashraf has underscored the critical link between water security, food security and national security, calling for concerted efforts to address the country's water challenges.

Addressing the inaugural session of the sixth edition of Pakistan Water Week 2026, a five-day international conference, he highlighted the increasing impact of climate change on water resources. Dr. Ashraf said Pakistan Water Week had evolved into an important platform bringing together national and international stakeholders to deliberate on water-related challenges and explore the sustainable solutions.

Sharing key lessons from previous editions, he stressed the importance of keeping water security on the national agenda and engaging multiple sectors in the transformation process to achieve sustainable water management.—**APP**

Grand Steam Science exhibition held at IMCG G-14/4

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake-Resistant Building Model made by Anaya Fatima and Azka Iftekhar of IMCG G-14/4 secured first position at Federal Directorate of Education sector level competitions with a seismic-resistant model utilizing base isolation and cross-bracing. This project highlights practical engineering techniques designed to safeguard infrastructure during earthquakes.The achievement reflects the institution's strong focus on advanced disaster mitigation skills. A Grand Steam Science Exhibition was held at Islamabad model college for girls G14/4 here on monday. The event was graced by Director General FDE Prof Javed iqbal mirza along the guest of honor Director Model Colleges Ihsan ul haq. The Principal Uzma Hamid welcomed the guests and presented annual report of the college and also briefed about development work and important steps taken by her own for the college. There were about 100 Science projects displayed in the exhibition which were made by students of both junior and senior classes . Another model named "Smart Irrigation System Model" made by Izza Batool of 9th grade secured second position in biology at the FDE sector-level competitions, this project integrates soil moisture sensors and weather forecasts. The automated setup reduces water waste by 50 percent while optimizing landscape health. Cloud-connected controllers further enable remote monitoring and water management. Shahzeen of 8th class developed automated Restaurant Waiter Robot Model.This autonomous service unit seamlessly transports food and beverages without human intervention in dining spaces. Utilizing integrated sensors and custom programming, it navigates environments to serve patrons efficiently. The prototype illustrates the expanding role of automation in modern hospitality. Fourth top model by Zahra Faiz of 10th class was on Waste-to-Energy and Ink Converter was an eco-friendly model which transforms urban waste into sustainable electricity and byproduct ink. Powered by a combustion chamber, solar panels, and carbon filters, it generates off-grid 4.5V DC power. The initiative demonstrates effective waste management and clean energy conversion.

Students of the college presented tableau and Allama Iqbal poems in tne ceremony. Principal presented college insignia to the guests and the event was ended with National anthem.—**DNA**



Briefs

Police barracks renovation odered

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Capt (retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry on Monday visited residential barracks at Police Lines Headquarters and directed the authorities concerned to complete the ongoing construction and renovation work at the earliest while ensuring quality standards. According to an Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police official, the IGP Sohail , accompanied by senior police officers, inspected the residential barracks and personally reviewed the progress of construction and renovation work. IGP Sohail directed the officials concerned to maintain quality standards in all development activities and ensure timely completion of the project. The IGP Sohail said the welfare of police personnel and provision of better residential facilities remained among the department's priorities. –APP

IRSA releases 99,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 99,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 51,500 cusecs.
According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1506.20 feet, which was 104.20 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 28,900 cusecs and 65,000 cusecs, respectively.
The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1194.70 feet, which was 144.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 5,900 cusecs and 18,000 cusecs, respectively.
The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 72,900, 43,800, 31,100, and 11,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 2,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.–APP

FIA nabs oil depot owner over alleged theft

ISLAMABAD :The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Corporate Crime Circle Islamabad has nabbed an oil depot owner for his alleged involvement in the theft and illegal transfer of government-owned high-speed diesel (HSD). According to an FIA official on Monday that, the accused, identified as Sajid Mahmood, was taken into custody during an operation conducted by the Corporate Crime Circle's EGOA Unit Islamabad.
He said the accused, who owned an illegal oil depot, was nominated in FIR No. 06/2026 in connection with the alleged theft and unauthorised transfer of government-owned diesel.–APP

Week-long polio vaccination drive begins

ISLAMABAD, Nov 02 (AP-P):Pakistan on Monday launched a week-long sub-national polio vaccination campaign across 97 selected districts, targeting more than 23.9 million children under five years of age to protect them against the crippling disease.
According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), the campaign will continue until November 8, with vaccination teams administering polio drops to eligible children through door-to-door visits and other designated arrangements. Across Punjab, more than 9.278 million children will be vaccinated in 13 selected districts, while 6.883 million children will receive polio drops in 20 districts of Sindh. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the campaign will cover 27 selected districts, targeting over 4.808 million children, while 2.217 million children will be vaccinated in 31 districts of Balochistan._APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on establishment of Jinnah Medical and Research Centre.

PTV Drama, Film Academy to be revived :Tarar

"Equipping young people with practical skills in filmmaking, drama production, editing, colour grading and digital content creation is among our key priorities," he said

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday directed the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to revive the Pakistan Television (PTV) Drama and Film Academy as a modern training institution, equipping young people with professional skills in filmmaking, drama production and digital content creation. He was chairing a high-level meeting to review plans for the revival of the PTV Drama and Film Academy and the revamping of PTV Home through specialised training programmes, modern technical facilities and practical, industry-oriented training models. Federal Secretary for Information Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil and senior officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting attended the meeting. During the meeting, various training models proposed in collaboration with the private sector were reviewed, with a focus on providing hands-on professional training to young people while creating new revenue streams for Pakistan Television. The minister said the revival of the PTV Drama and Film Academy and revamping of PTV Home were part of the government's commitment to promoting the media and creative industries in the country.
He said Pakistan was launching, for the first time, an advanced training programme in colour grading, adding that previously, professionals had to travel abroad to acquire training and access modern facilities in this specialised field. The availability of advanced colour-grading facilities in Pakistan would provide the film industry and private sector with access to modern technical training and resources, while helping improve the quality of local filmmaking, he added. The minister directed that a transparent and practical pilot project be launched in partnership with the private sector to ensure that training programmes remained aligned with the evolving needs of the industry. He said all necessary measures would be taken to make the PTV Academy an effective and fully functional institution in line with modern requirements. "Equipping young people with practical skills in filmmaking, drama production, editing, colour grading and digital content creation is among our key priorities," he said. The meeting also reviewed proposals for establishing modern classrooms and studio laboratories, installing workstations for students, appointing technical staff and trainers, and developing a comprehensive curriculum. The minister said students would be trained in a professional environment equipped with modern editing suites, studio laboratories and technical equipment. He emphasised that the training programmes would focus not only on theoretical knowledge but also on practical assignments, project development and portfolio building to enhance the professional capabilities of participants.
He further said young people's creative projects would be encouraged for PTV News, PTV Home and other Pakistan Television platforms, providing emerging talent with opportunities to showcase their skills. The initiatives would help strengthen Pakistan's film and drama industry by developing a skilled workforce, introducing advanced technical expertise and making modern production facilities available locally, he added.
The minister said efforts would also be made to ensure the financial sustainability of the PTV Academy alongside its transformation into an effective professional training centre.–APP

MIH observes infection prevention week

ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital (MIH) has observed infection prevention and control week to promote safe healthcare practices and strengthen adherence to infection prevention protocols across its departments.
During the week, departmental rounds were conducted to review infection prevention practices, assess compliance with safety protocols and encourage a culture of responsibility to protect patients, healthcare professionals and visitors.
A special recognition ceremony was also organized at the conclusion of the week to acknowledge departments demonstrating outstanding commitment and vigilance in maintaining infection prevention and control standards.
The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) secured first position, followed by the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Labour Room, which jointly achieved second position. The Dialysis Department secured third position. –APP

FIA nabs oil depot owner over alleged theft

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SCP, Korea forge new pathways of judicial coop

By establishing structured channels of engagement with one of the world's technologically advanced judiciaries, the initiative creates opportunities for mutual learning, professional development and the adoption of innovative approaches to judicial administration

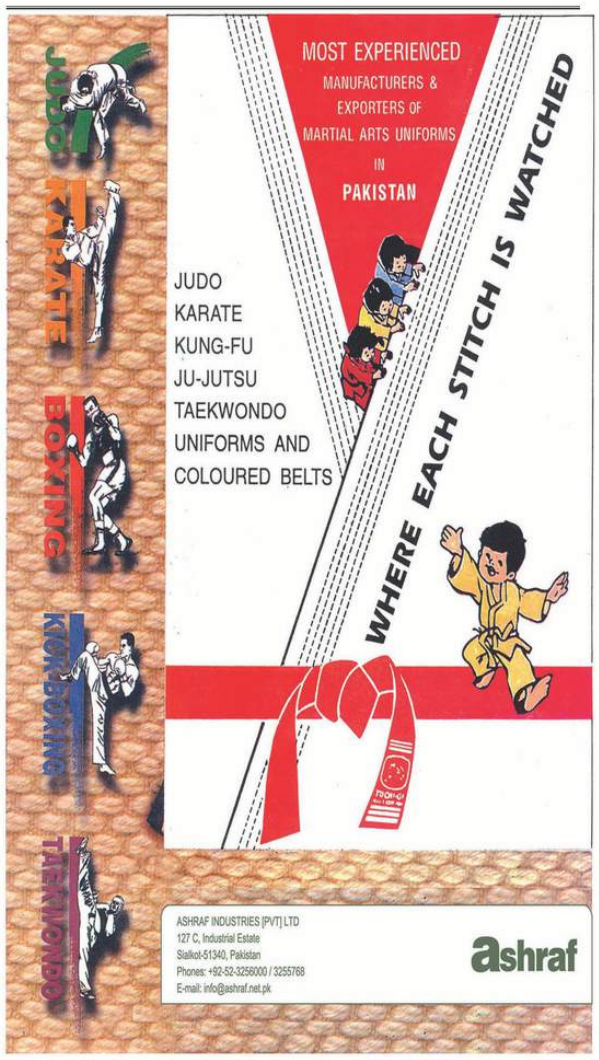
ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards strengthening international judicial partnerships, the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea on Monday signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Bilateral Judicial Cooperation, opening new avenues for institutional collaboration, judicial knowledge exchange and technological innovation. The Chief Justice of Pakistan, who is on official visit to Korea, was warmly received by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Justice JO Hee-de, at the Korean Supreme Court in Seoul. The two Chief Justices held substantive discussions on strengthening institutional relations, fostering mutual learning and exploring opportunities for closer cooperation between the two judiciaries. The meeting culminated in the signing of the MoU by the two Chief Justices, marking an important milestone in judicial relations between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. The MoU provides a comprehensive framework for sustained institutional engagement, covering judicial exchanges, professional capacity building, judicial education, collaborative research and the sharing of institutional experiences and best practices. It places particular emphasis on judicial reform and modernization, electronic court systems, digital justice, artificial intelligence and its responsible use in judicial administration, smart courts, judicial analytics and cybersecurity. The framework also envisages reciprocal judicial delegations, professional attachments, study visits, expert exchanges, joint conferences and seminars, as well as periodic high-level judicial dialogue. It provides an institutional mechanism for coordinating and advancing mutually agreed initiatives, thereby translating the commitment to cooperation into practical and sustained engagement. During the visit, the Chief Justice of Pakistan also had a meeting with Justice NOH Gyeongpil, Minister of the National Court Administration of the Republic of Korea.
The interaction focused on matters of judicial administration, institutional governance and the role of technological innovation in improving court management and strengthening the effectiveness of justice delivery. As part of his engagement with Korea's judicial technology infrastructure, the Chief Justice of Pakistan visited the Supreme Court of Korea IT Center. The visit provided an opportunity to gain first-hand insights into Korea's technological advancements in judicial administration, digital court systems and technology-enabled justice services. It also offered a valuable platform for exploring areas of potential knowledge exchange and institutional learning in the context of Pakistan's ongoing judicial reform and digital transformation initiatives. Syed Moazzam Shah, Ambassador of Pakistan to the Republic of Korea, accompanied the Chief Justice throughout the visit and participated in all meetings and engagements, providing valuable diplomatic support in advancing institutional relations between the two countries. The signing of the MoU represents an important dimension of the Supreme Court of Pakistan's continuing efforts to strengthen international judicial cooperation and draw upon global experiences in advancing institutional reforms. By establishing structured channels of engagement with one of the world's technologically advanced judiciaries, the initiative creates opportunities for mutual learning, professional development and the adoption of innovative approaches to judicial administration.–DNA



ISLAMABAD:Health worker administrating polio drop to a child at Bari Imam area during subnational polio vaccination campaign aimed at reaching around 24 million children in 97 districts, according to the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC).

Ulema Council's Central Shura, executive committee held

ISLAMABAD: The Central Shura and Executive Committee of the Pakistan Ulema Council, while reviewing the national and international situation, decided to organize nationwide conventions of religious scholars and spiritual leaders to eliminate extremism, promote inter-sect harmony and strengthen national unity. A landmark initiative was also taken to establish "Dar-ul-Sulh" (Centres for Reconciliation) in all mosques affiliated with the Council to prevent growing family disputes, divorces and violent social attitudes. The meeting strongly condemned attacks by Houthi terrorists on Makkah Mukarramah, Madinah Munawwarah and Saudi Arabia. It fully endorsed the Government of Pakistan's policy regarding the security of the Two Holy Mosques and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, expressed solidarity with the Saudi leadership and people, assured all possible cooperation, and reaffirmed support for the legitimate government of Yemen. The meeting also paid glowing tribute to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for his ongoing conciliatory and courageous efforts for global peace, unity of the Muslim Ummah and regional stability, and unanimously adopted several comprehensive resolutions.–APP



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Refugees are becoming agents of justice and accountability

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

WHEN people flee war crimes, they do not leave the evidence behind. They carry memories of burned villages, destroyed homes, disappeared relatives, and military units responsible for abuses. Some carry photographs, documents or digital records. Others know the names of commanders, locations of detention centers or identities of fellow witnesses. We normally think about refugees primarily as victims requiring protection, but displacement is also beginning to change the geography of international justice.

A case filed in Denmark this week demonstrates why. Ngun Siang Dim, a 39-year-old woman from Myanmar's Chin minority now living in Denmark, has submitted a criminal complaint concerning alleged crimes committed by Myanmar's military. She says she witnessed homes being burned in her village and that relatives and friends were killed or permanently injured. Whether Danish prosecutors ultimately pursue the case remains to be seen, and filing a complaint is clearly not the same as establishing criminal responsibility. But the significance of the case extends far beyond one survivor or even Myanmar itself. The complaint relies on the growing use of universal jurisdiction, the principle that certain crimes are so serious that national courts may investigate them even when the alleged offenses occurred abroad and involved foreign victims and perpetrators. The precise rules differ between countries, but the underlying idea is increasingly important because international justice remains difficult to deliver through traditional institutions. The International Criminal Court has limited jurisdiction. The International Court of Justice deals with disputes between states rather than prosecuting individuals. UN Security Council referrals can be blocked by geopolitical interests. Domestic courts in countries experiencing atrocities may be controlled by the authorities implicated in those crimes or may simply have ceased to function independently.

This creates enormous accountability gaps. Refugee movements can, unexpectedly, help narrow them. When survivors move from countries where independent investigation is impossible to states with functioning courts, evidence moves with them. People who could never safely approach the police at home may suddenly find themselves living in countries where investigators can hear their testimony, preserve evidence, and and potentially open cases. Displacement, therefore, changes more than where victims live. It can also change where justice becomes possible. Syria demonstrated the potential of this model. After millions of Syrians fled the country, European investigators gained access to survivors, former detainees, witnesses, and defectors. Germany and other European states became centers for cases concerning torture and crimes against humanity committed thousands of kilometers away. German courts eventually convicted former Syrian intelligence officials in landmark proceedings. These cases did not end impunity in Syria, but they established an important principle: Perpetrators may control courts at home without controlling every court their victims can eventually reach.



When people flee war crimes, they carry memories of burned villages, destroyed homes. Myanmar could now test the same proposition. For people from Chin State, Rakhine State, Sagaing, and other areas, meaningful domestic accountability remains extremely difficult. The country is divided by conflict and the military retains considerable influence over the central institutions of the state. Yet Myanmar's displaced population is increasingly global. Refugees and exiles now live throughout Europe, North America, Australia, and across Asia. This diaspora is usually discussed in terms of humanitarian protection, remittances or political activism. Its potential role as an accountability network deserves far greater attention. Survivors can preserve testimony. Diaspora organizations can help identify witnesses. Lawyers can assemble cases. Civil society groups can connect victims with prosecutors. Digital evidence collected inside Myanmar can be stored abroad until courts are capable of examining it. This does not mean every refugee should be treated as a potential witness, nor should asylum systems become extensions of criminal investigations. Participation must be voluntary, confidential, and sensitive to trauma. But where survivors actively seek justice, governments should ensure that specialist prosecutors and war crimes units have the resources and expertise necessary to respond.

Universal jurisdiction also has important limitations. National prosecutors have finite resources and must meet high evidentiary standards. Testimony requires corroboration. Defendants retain the right to challenge allegations and receive a fair trial. There is also the practical difficulty of arrest. Investigating a commander who remains inside Myanmar is very different from prosecuting one who enters a country willing and able to detain him. Universal jurisdiction, therefore, cannot substitute for functioning international institutions or credible domestic courts in countries where atrocities occur.

This also requires us to rethink how refugees themselves are portrayed. People displaced by atrocities are too often discussed only through the language of vulnerability. They are people to be protected, housed, fed, and eventually returned. All of those needs are real, but survivors can also be witnesses, plaintiffs, historians, and agents of accountability. They can preserve memories that perpetrators would prefer erased and carry legal claims across borders that those responsible for atrocities cannot completely control. Myanmar's military may be able to influence what happens inside many of the country's courts. It cannot necessarily determine what happens in Copenhagen, Berlin, or another jurisdiction willing to investigate international crimes. That is the deeper significance of the complaint filed in Denmark. Global displacement is usually understood as one of the consequences of impunity. People flee because those responsible for violence believe they will face no consequences for their actions. Yet displacement can produce an unexpected reversal. The same refugee who crosses a border because justice is impossible at home may eventually bring evidence before a court beyond the reach of those who forced them to flee.

International justice has traditionally struggled to reach victims. Increasingly, victims themselves are carrying the possibility of justice across borders.

The Growing Burden of Anxiety in Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Economic policy must also form part of the broader response. Controlling inflation, expanding employment opportunities, protecting workers' purchasing power and ensuring a fairer distribution of resources are not merely economic objectives; they are also measures that can strengthen the psychological security of society. Development loses much of its meaning when ordinary citizens remain uncertain about their ability to afford food, education, housing and medical treatment. Faith, family bonds, gratitude and a sense of purpose can provide individuals with valuable emotional strength

A CHILD enters the world without an understanding of fear, uncertainty or responsibility. His days are governed by immediate needs, and tomorrow holds no particular threat. But as childhood gives way to adolescence and adulthood, the mind gradually becomes occupied with questions about education, employment, financial security, family responsibilities and social standing. What begins as a natural concern for the future can eventually become a persistent psychological burden. In a society where economic insecurity and social pressures are widespread, the ability to preserve mental well-being is becoming an increasingly difficult undertaking.

At every stage of life, anxieties assume a different form. Students worry about examination results, admission to reputable institutions and the expectations of their parents. Those who struggle academically may become apprehensive about their prospects of finding employment and earning a respectable livelihood. For graduates, the transition from education to professional life often brings the frustration of unemployment and uncertain opportunities. Later, marriage, raising children, meeting household expenses and caring for ageing parents introduce further responsibilities. Even a medical emergency within a family can destabilise an otherwise settled household, particularly when treatment is beyond its financial means.

These concerns are not unusual in themselves; they are part of the human experience. The real danger emerges when pressures accumulate without adequate emotional, social or financial support. Persistent anxiety can develop into depression and other mental health conditions, impairing an individual's ability to work, maintain relationships and participate constructively in society. Yet mental distress often remains invisible. Many people continue their daily routines while concealing their suffering, partly because society is more accustomed to judging emotional vulnerability than understanding it.

The figures presented before Pakistan's National Assembly offer a disturbing indication of the scale of the problem. The number of people suffering from mental health conditions reportedly increased from 30 million in 2019 to 32.4 million in 2023. Against this growing burden, the country has only 1,050 registered psychiatrists. Of these, 406 serve in Punjab, 228 in Sindh, 122 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and just 44 in Balochistan. The disparity between the scale of need and the availability of professional assistance raises serious questions about the capacity of the public healthcare system to respond to this challenge. The shortage is not merely a matter of numbers. Access to mental healthcare is further restricted by geographical inequalities, financial constraints, limited institutional facilities and the social stigma attached to psychological illness. In smaller towns and rural communities, specialist services are often difficult to obtain. Even in urban centres, treatment may remain unaffordable for families already struggling with basic necessities. Consequently, many people either postpone seeking assistance or suffer in silence until their condition becomes more difficult to manage.

Pakistan's economic circumstances have added another dimension to this crisis. According to the World Bank figures cited for 2025, the national poverty rate reached 29 per cent, compared with 22 per cent in 2019. The report attributes the increase to inflation, rising prices of essential commodities, unequal distribution of resources and declining incomes among workers. It further estimates that 72.6 million people were living below the poverty line in 2024. Behind these figures are households making difficult choices between food, education, healthcare and other basic requirements. Poverty is not simply an absence of money; it is also an enduring source of uncertainty. A father unable to meet his children's educational expenses, a young graduate unable to secure employment despite years of study, or a daily-wage worker uncertain about tomorrow's earnings may experience a level of stress that gradually affects the entire household. Financial insecurity can strain marriages, disturb family relationships and deprive children of the emotional stability essential for their development. When economic hardship becomes prolonged, hope itself can begin to diminish.

There is, therefore, a close relationship between economic well-being and mental health. An individual struggling with depression or persistent anxiety may find it difficult to perform professionally, make sound decisions or sustain productive relationships. At the same time, unemployment, poverty and financial uncertainty can intensify psychological distress. The two conditions can reinforce one another, creating a cycle that is difficult to break without institutional support and timely intervention. Addressing this challenge requires more than advising people to remain patient or optimistic. Personal resilience matters, but it cannot compensate for the absence of employment opportunities, affordable healthcare and social protection. A comprehensive national response must recognise mental health as an essential component of public health rather than a secondary concern. Government hospitals need more psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and trained counsellors. Mental health services should be incorporated into primary healthcare, while educational institutions should provide appropriate counselling facilities to help students cope with academic pressure and emotional difficulties.

Public awareness is equally important. Psychological illness should not be treated as a source of embarrassment or a failure of personal character. Families must learn to recognise signs of emotional distress and respond with understanding rather than criticism. Employers and educational institutions should promote healthier environments in which individuals can discuss their difficulties without fear of discrimination. Early intervention, affordable treatment and community-based support can prevent many conditions from becoming severe.

Economic policy must also form part of the broader response. Controlling inflation, expanding employment opportunities, protecting workers' purchasing power and ensuring a fairer distribution of resources are not merely economic objectives; they are also measures that can strengthen the psychological security of society. Development loses much of its meaning when ordinary citizens remain uncertain about their ability to afford food, education, housing and medical treatment. Faith, family bonds, gratitude and a sense of purpose can provide individuals with valuable emotional strength. Physical activity, adequate sleep, meaningful social interaction and a balanced routine can also contribute to psychological well-being. Nevertheless, spiritual encouragement and personal discipline should complement professional care, not replace it when medical intervention is necessary.

The progress of a nation cannot be measured exclusively through economic growth, infrastructure or the strength of its institutions. It must also be judged by the security, dignity and peace of mind enjoyed by its citizens. Worries are an unavoidable part of life, but a society should not allow them to become an unbearable burden. Pakistan's growing mental health challenge demands a response that combines economic reform, accessible healthcare, public awareness and compassion. The ultimate measure of development is not merely how much a nation produces or possesses, but how securely and peacefully its people are able to live.

Can the Makkah Pact coax Iran toward peace?

Hassan Al-Mustafa

The delegation's makeup was deliberate. Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan all have political and defense ties with Washington and their own lines to Tehran. That lets them pair deterrence, should Iran resume attacks, with de-escalation, should it engage. Sending senior defense and security figures rather than diplomats alone also matters. It brings to the table issues handled by military and intelligence services: maritime security, cross-border threats and armed militias. No closing statement was issued but the sides agreed to keep talking about cooperation, peace and regional security

WHEN Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, Pakistani army chief Asim Munir and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin last week sat down in Tehran, across the table were Iran's most senior officials: President Masoud Pezeshkian, Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. The trip was meant to support the Qatari-Pakistani mediation between Washington and Tehran. The stakes were rising. Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and disruption in the Strait of Hormuz had put regional security and the global economy under strain, while strikes on civilian airports had killed and wounded people of several nationalities. Sources told me the delegation brought a clear message. The members of the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement wanted to stop a return to war, but not at the expense of their security interests or their independence in strategic decisions. They would rather mediation succeed than see fighting resume.

The talks also looked at whether a durable US-Iranian settlement was possible – one that would serve everyone, the Arab Gulf states included. The warning behind that was plain. If threats against Iran's neighbors continue, war resumes between Iran, the US and Israel, and the Revolutionary Guards hit Gulf cities and targets, Riyadh and its allies would defend themselves through the legitimate military means international law allows. Tehran should be under no illusion: such a step would push its neighbors further away than ever.

The talks looked at whether a durable US-Iranian settlement was possible – one that would serve everyone

Rayed Krimly, the Saudi Foreign Ministry's deputy minister for public diplomacy, said the mission aimed at "de-escalation between the parties to the current crisis" and "encouraging dialogue and diplomatic solutions" in support of the Qatari and Pakistani mediators. The ministry added that it hoped the parties would "engage positively and pragmatically with the outcomes of this visit." Taken together, these statements show Riyadh pushing diplomacy toward tangible results and greater Iranian flexibility. That would give the mediators proposals they could take to US President Donald Trump. At the least, they could discuss those proposals with him and urge him to accept them, as long as they genuinely serve everyone: averting war, reining in Iran's destabilizing activity and denying Israel a pretext for another military operation.

The delegation's makeup was deliberate. Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan all have political and defense ties with Washington and their own lines to Tehran. That lets them pair deterrence, should Iran resume attacks, with de-escalation, should it engage. Sending senior defense and security figures rather than diplomats alone also matters. It brings to the table issues handled by military and intelligence services: maritime security, cross-border threats and armed militias. No closing statement was issued but the sides agreed to keep talking about cooperation, peace and regional security. Reuters quoted a Pakistani official as saying the discussions touched on a regional nonaggression framework, with the Makkah Agreement states and Qatar as possible guarantors. None of this has yet become a public commitment. There are no agreed mechanisms for carrying it out or for handling breaches, and years of miscalculation and mistrust will have to be worked through step by step.

If Tehran treats today's diplomatic opening as proof of its own strength, or of its neighbors' fear, it risks overplaying its hand Vali Nasr, the Iranian-American scholar, argued on X that the meeting handed Iran a propaganda win, which Tehran would use to build a regional security order with itself at the center. That reading mistakes the photo opportunity for the substance. The real question is what the three countries actually said behind closed doors – and their messages were serious and direct. Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan went to Tehran to head off the threat of a new war and to press Iran to respect its neighbors and international law. Nothing from the visit suggests they accepted Iran's vision of regional security or rethought their strategic partnerships with Washington.

The record explains why. For decades, Iran's Revolutionary Guards have threatened Gulf security, arming local groups with explosives and intelligence. Until that behavior changes, there can be no real security partnership across the Gulf. If Tehran treats today's diplomatic opening as proof of its own strength, or of its neighbors' fear, it risks overplaying its hand and wasting a genuine chance at lasting peace. History offers a warning. On Jan. 9, 1991, US Secretary of State James Baker met Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva. The talks failed to persuade Baghdad to comply with UN Security Council resolutions and leave Kuwait, and war broke out days later. The two crises are different but the lesson holds: misreading a diplomatic opening is dangerous and so is assuming the other side will keep making offers indefinitely and for nothing.

The Qatari-Pakistani mediation has to work on two linked tracks. One is between the US and Iran: the nuclear program, sanctions and the naval blockade. The other is regional: shipping through the straits, respect for sovereignty and attacks by Iran-backed militias. A practical start would be gradual steps taken by both sides simultaneously. Iran would stop attacks on civilian and economic sites in the Gulf, guarantee safe passage for ships and tankers through the straits and open talks on its nuclear file, including the fate of its highly enriched uranium. In return, it would get a conditional, phased easing of economic and financial restrictions and access to part of its frozen funds for humanitarian, medical and food needs. It would also be allowed to export oil and trade by sea under monitoring, with a clear mechanism in place.

The goal should be a full plan of action that leads to a solid, lasting agreement, not another temporary understanding or fragile truce.

– Hassan Al-Mustafa is a Saudi writer and researcher interested in Islamic movements, the development of religious discourse, and relations between Gulf Cooperation Council states and Iran. X: @Halmustafa

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Briefs

Shehbaz stresses to further...

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bonds between the peoples of both countries. He appreciated the important role played by the IDCPC in fostering institutional linkages and promoting cooperation between the political leadership of the two countries. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to working closely with China, the Prime Minister commended the shared focus on advancing cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity, infrastructure development, IT and agriculture modernisation. Liu Haixing conveyed the greetings of the Chinese leadership and reaffirmed China's commitment to further deepening its long-standing friendship with Pakistan. He appreciated the ongoing momentum in high-level and party-to-party exchanges, aimed at further bolstering the iron-clad friendship between the two countries. Both sides exchanged views on regional and international developments and reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining close coordination and cooperation at bilateral and multilateral forums.

CDF Munir received Chinese...

FROM PAGE 01

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Liu Haixing, minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee (IDCPC), called on CDF Munir at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The department is in charge of the CPC's external relations. Besides discussing matters of mutual interest, both sides "expressed their shared resolve to further strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China", ISPR said. CDF Munir highlighted the "historic and time-tested bond between the two countries and emphasised the importance of sustained high-level engagement, stronger institutional linkages and expanded cooperation across areas of mutual interest". China's Haixing appreciated Pakistan's contributions to regional peace and stability and expressed confidence in further advancing the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries, according to the statement.

'New mechanism allowed...

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deteriorated. Malik said the government worked with local refineries to deal with the situation and contain the impact on consumers without disrupting the availability of imported petrol. Around 70% of the country's petrol requirement comes from the international market while locally produced petrol accounts for about 30%, according to the minister. He said the government had to ensure that any intervention did not make imported petrol commercially unviable and consequently lead to supply shortages. "I am grateful that they listened to our appeal and absorbed roughly a Rs15 increase that was coming due for petrol on Friday, helping the government maintain prices," Malik said, referring to local refineries. He said the arrangement had allowed petrol to be kept around Rs15 per litre cheaper than international market rates, adding that refineries were absorbing a burden of roughly Rs15 billion per month. Malik said international market prices were now declining, expressing hope that the trend would lead to further improvement for consumers. The federal cabinet approved changes to the petrol pricing mechanism on October 30 amid volatility caused by the US-Iran war. Under the revised formula, the import price of petrol is determined on the basis of the actual import cost of the relevant PSO cargo. If that cost is unavailable for daily pricing, the premium, incidentals and customs duty of the last available cargo are used instead.

Pakistan-China Research Center of CPC inaugurated in Islamabad

DNA



ISLAMABAD: A special event "A Journey to China, A Bond of Brotherhood: An Exchange Event Between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Its Pakistani Iron-Clad Friends was held here on Sunday at a local hotel.

It was hosted by Pakistan-China Economic & Cultural Council (PCECC) on occasion of the visit of Mr. Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC). The event also marked the inauguration of the Pakistan-China Research Center for Party and State Governance, celebrating the enduring friendship and strategic partnership between Pakistan and China.

Prominent among those who were present on the occasion included Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong. The Chinese Minister noted, over the 75 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China and Pakistan have stood side by side through thick and thin, setting an example of political mutual trust, mutual benefit, win-win cooperation, friendship between the two peoples and multilateral coordination between countries with different ideologies and systems.

He said he has highly impressed by warm welcome extended to him since his arrival in Pakistan. Both countries needed to enhance their mutual exchanges at various levels. " We are proud of the two countries' strong and long-standing friendship. We cherish it. We have heart to heart connections for further development of our decades-old friendship from generation to generation, " he added.

He also underlined the importance of setting the Research center in Pakistan. He called for close cooperation and exchanges among all the political parties and other socio-economic groups of the two countries. Since the beginning of the new era, under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and Pakistani leaders, the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership has been continuously deepened, advancing steadily toward the goal of building a China-Pakistan community with a shared future he added. He also briefed the audience about China's fast economic growth under the leadership of CPC. He highlighted the party's building in transforming the country on modern lines.

Mr. Liu emphasized that the two sides should implement the important consensus that had reached between the two countries' upgrading of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), maintaining close communication and coordination on major international and regional hotspot issues, and jointly build a China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Chairman Senate in his address noted, Pakistan and China share a close, brotherly relationship. Inter-party exchanges are an important part of bilateral relations. He lauded the establishment of the Research Center and thanked for nominating him its honorary chairman.

Over the past 75 years since diplomatic ties were established, exchanges and cooperation between political parties of both countries have never been interrupted despite changes in the international landscape. He said he had an honour of personally seeing various phases of the two countries' friendship. He assured full support of the Senate for further consolidating the friendship.

Pakistan highly appreciates the major global initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping, which reflect his far-sighted vision. Pakistan will firmly support and actively participate in these initiatives. Pakistan stands ready to further consolidate strategic and political mutual trust with China, deepen practical cooperation across all fields, jointly build an upgraded version of the CPEC, promote exchanges at all levels including political parties, legislatures, media and youth.

The CPEC has provided significant support for improving Pakistan's economic and social landscape and is a jewel in the Belt and Road Initiative, he added.

Governor KPK also spoke on the occasion and praised the growing Sino-Pak friendship in different fields. He also praised the Chinese leadership for the country's fast growth. He offered various opportunities for investment in his province by the Chinese side.

Kid' Antonelli gets affectionate tributes from all quarters

DNA

MEXICO CITY: Kimi Antonelli sparked affectionate tributes from all quarters of the Formula One paddock on Sunday after becoming the sport's youngest world champion at the Mexico City Grand Prix. The 20-year-old Italian finished third for Mercedes behind Red Bull's four-time champion Max Verstappen and Ferrari's seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton – who then hoist him aloft as a carnival of celebrations began.

"It's a very special day," said Antonelli's esteemed race engineer Peter 'Bono' Bonnington, who has worked with seven-time champion Michael Schumacher and Hamilton and regards the new champion – Italy's first since 1953 – as another generational talent.

"A young man has broken the record for the youngest world champion. It is the first of many I reckon. I am just super happy for him, stoked. "I feel privileged to work with him and to put up with his pranks and tricks including the water pistols and the rest. It's him all over. This is just the first chapter and tonight we are flying home and we are going to have a plane party."

Antonelli echoed those views and said he felt it was "truly incredible" to share the podium with multiple champions Verstappen and Hamilton. "I'm looking forward to more battles with them in the future," he said. "This is just the beginning.

This win is just going to mark a beginning, a new point to build on and keep improving and keep trying to win a championship."

His father Marco Antonelli, who runs his own racing team, said, "This is the best thank you that Kimi can give to Mercedes for believing in him. It's unbelievable. I will realize in the next day what Kimi has done."

Hamilton, who tipped Antonelli to be his Mercedes successor when he left for Ferrari in 2025, said: "Huge congratulations to Kimi and Mercedes. It's so great to see them all up here celebrating.

"Youngest world champion ever is pretty phenomenal and I'm so very grateful to be in this race and to witness it. He has had a great season and he has handled everything so well with so much grace and humility."

Verstappen added: "It's incredible what a season he has had. To do this at such an age I think is just really impressive and it is amazing to see the whole team celebrating with him.

"His family is here as well so I'm sure this is a very emotional day for him and I'm very proud of him

Outgoing world champion Lando Norris of McLaren said: "Just a massive congrats to him. I mean he deserves it. He has been insane this year. That's an understatement. Congrats to him, especially at his age. Twenty is incredibly impressive. "He deserves it an incredible amount. I hope even though he's young, he goes out and celebrates it. He's had an outstanding season so just very happy for him."

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff brought Antonelli to Mercedes aged 11 after Ferrari had turned him down. "When Lewis told me he was going to Ferrari, it was my immediate reaction to put him in the car. We had sponsors leaving us for that decision. Who is this kid?" Wolff recalled.

Owen leads Saudi F4 standings as he splits Bahrain wins with Seah

DNA

MANAMA: Welsh driver Archie Owen and Singapore's Isaac Seah split victories in round three of the 2026 Aramco F4 Saudi Arabian Championship at Bahrain International Circuit this weekend, with Owen ending 40 points clear in the drivers' standings. Owen, driving for 7.23 Racing, won Saturday's race before finishing second to Peax driver Seah on Sunday. Britain's Harrison Mackie, racing for iCONNA by Aramco Digital, placed third in both races.

The results left Owen atop the standings with 123 points after six races, ahead of Marlon Bayer on 83. Seah and Mackie each have 76 points. Owen edged Seah by 0.575 seconds in Saturday evening's race, finishing in 25 minutes, 28.151 seconds. Mackie crossed the line 11.523 seconds behind the winner. My Car teammates Devin Walz and Eva Dorrestijn shared the Aramco Award for Most Positions Gained, each moving up two places. Walz finished fifth and Dorrestijn 11th. Aramco Digital CEO Ashraf AlTahini presented trophies to the top three finishers. Seah reversed the order on Sunday afternoon, leading from start to finish to win in 25:24.210, with Owen 7.017 seconds behind. Mackie climbed from fifth on the grid to finish third, 14.843 seconds off the lead. Further down the field, Georges Nassar gained four places – the most of any driver in Sunday's race – to finish sixth after starting 10th. Hamza Alfayez advanced from 11th to eighth.

Real Madrid extend winning run with 3-0 victory at Racing Santander

DNA

SANTANDER, Spain: Real Madrid cruised to a 3-0 win at Racing Santander in LaLiga on Sunday as goals from Kylian Mbappe, Jude Bellingham and Yan Diomande secured their sixth successive victory in all competitions. Third-placed Real moved to within three points of leaders Barcelona and one of second-placed Atletico Madrid. Racing remain 16th, a point above the relegation zone. Buoyed by last week's Clasico victory, Jose Mourinho's side moved the ball sharply and delivered another assured performance.

Mbappe opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 11th minute before combining neatly with Arda Guler, who sent Bellingham through 10 minutes later. Bellingham glided around Racing goalkeeper Julen Agirrezabala and rolled the ball into an empty net. Diomande made it 3-0 nine minutes before halftime, thundering a bouncing ball into the top corner. The Ivorian has scored four goals and provided three assists in his last six appearances. Racing competed well but rarely threatened, allowing Real to control a largely uneventful second half. Mbappe came closest to adding another goal when he struck the post on the hour. Real Madrid produced a disciplined defensive display, limiting the hosts to one shot on target as goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois enjoyed a quiet return after missing last week's game through illness. Mourinho praised Real Madrid's forward for setting the tone of their defensive work.

ICC penalises Pakistan for slow over-rate in tri-series final

DNA

PAKISTAN have been fined 5% of their match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate during the final of the Pakistan ODI Tri-Series against Sri Lanka in Lahore on Saturday. The hosts were found to be one over short after time allowances were taken into account by match referee Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel. The offence falls under Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which deals with minimum over-rate offences. Under the provision, players are fined 5% of their match fee for every over their team fails to bowl within the allotted time. On-field umpires Ahsan Raza and Wayne Knights, third umpire Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid and fourth umpire Rashid Riaz levelled charge.

Osairm Nasir Lifts Governor's Cup golf trophy

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Osairm Nasir produced an outstanding performance to emerge as the champion of the 43rd Millat Tractors Governor's Cup Golf Tournament, overturning the overnight standings and leaving his rivals trailing in a memorable finish.

Displaying impressive golfing skills, composure and determination, Osairm rose to the occasion when it mattered most, delivering a decisive net score of 67 in the final round to finish with an aggregate net score of 209 and secure the coveted championship trophy. The triumph was particularly special for the young golfer, who comes from a golfing family and carried forward his passion for the sport with an impressive display of talent and consistency.

In the net category, Dr Hamza Asif secured the runner-up position with an aggregate score of 211, while Omer Farooq finished third with 215. The final results brought a dramatic shift in the leaderboard, as the overnight leaders were unable to maintain their advantage, paving the way for Osairm's remarkable ascent to the top.

In the gross category, Qasim Ali Khan emerged as the leading performer, showcasing excellent control, skill and determination to claim the title with an aggregate score of 216. Mohammed Shoaib secured second place with 219, while Zayd Omer finished third. The prestigious tournament concluded on a high note, providing an exciting finale and celebrating the talent, competitive spirit and sportsmanship of the participating golfers. The closing ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, including chief guest Sikandar Mustafa Khan and Salman Siddique, Chairman of Lahore Gymkhana.

Arsenal ride out Liverpool storm to top Premier League

The Arsenal boss got the response he desired in a strong start from the champions. Havertz was one of the biggest culprits for wasting chances in midweek but made amends with a simple finish from Declan Rice's precise low cross. The early goal lit the touchpaper for a pulsating first 45 minutes as Liverpool roared back

DNA

LIVERPOOL: Arsenal moved to the top of the Premier League with their first win away to Liverpool in 14 years as Kai Havertz's early strike secured a 1-0 victory for the Gunners. The defending champions were made to suffer after the German's 16th-minute opener but held out for what could be a telling win in their quest to retain the title. Arsenal climbed three points clear of Manchester City at the top of the table.

But with City expected to be hit with a severe points penalty, unless they can overturn a guilty verdict on over 100 charges of breaking Premier League rules, Arsenal dealt a huge blow to their most likely rivals for the title. "It's been such a long time without this feeling here, that we really needed it," said Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta. "We are extremely proud of what the team, the players, everybody has done."

Liverpool produced arguably their best spell of Andoni Iraola's early months in charge with a blistering 30 minutes after conceding, but failed to take their chances as the Spaniard suffered just his second defeat in 14 games since arriving from Bournemouth. Arteta was stinging in his criticism of the Arsenal side that crashed out to fourth-tier Fleetwood on Tuesday in one of the biggest ever League Cup shocks. The Arsenal boss got the response he desired in a strong start from the champions. Havertz was one of the biggest culprits for wasting chances in midweek but made amends with a simple finish from Declan Rice's precise low cross. The early goal lit the touchpaper for a pulsating first 45 minutes as Liverpool roared back.

Iraola and Arteta played together as boys for Basque side Antiguoko Kirol Elkartea. Arteta's old friend gave his side one of the most uncomfortable afternoons they have experienced in recent seasons as Arsenal's rock-solid defense was left clinging on for half-time. "I loved the reaction from my players after going 1-0 down," said Iraola. "I loved a lot of moments of the game.

"We have to keep going. It is very early in the season. Arsenal are in the best of the situations but it is just the start of November today." All of Liverpool's three £100 million-plus ($134 million) forward started together and there are signs the relationship between Alexander Isak, Florian Wirtz and Bradley Barcola is beginning to flourish.

Isak did Arsenal a favor by not going down as he was pulled back by Jurrien Timber when just failing to connect with a wicked delivery from Barcola. "The Alex one is a clear penalty," added Iraola. "We can all see that he holds the shirt (but) because he doesn't go to the floor, you are not going to call the penalty? I don't understand it."

Wirtz curled a free-kick onto the bar from a narrow angle and Alexis Mac Allister should have buried a header into the goal rather than finding the stand behind David Raya's goal. Half-time allowed Arsenal the chance to reset and take the wind out of Liverpool's sails as Iraola's men tired in the second period. Alisson Becker produced a stunning save to turn behind Christos Tzolis's shot that was arrowing into the bottom corner to keep Liverpool in the game.

That intervention counted for little as Arsenal rode out the closing stages to register another clean sheet and an eighth win in nine league games. Defeat leaves fifth-placed Liverpool nine points adrift of the leaders and already facing a mountain to climb to get back in the title race. – **APP**

After 11 months PTI lawyer...

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Some sources have suggested the meeting could form part of confidence-building steps between the government and PTI, though Safdar's public statement focused solely on the legal consultation and did not reference any political dialogue. The lawyer's post has been widely shared by PTI accounts and supporters, who have long demanded greater access to Khan and Bushra for lawyers, family, and doctors. No detailed public update on specific health findings or the exact legal instructions has been released beyond Safdar's statement.

PTI leader rejects Saif claims

FROM PAGE 01

that Allama Raja Nasir Abbas was in direct contact with important figures in the establishment, but maintained that those contacts were not aimed at securing Imran's release. Separately, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja linked any party decision on the proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment to a meeting with Imran. Raja also expressed his inability to exercise control over PTI's social media. Moreover, PTI today dismissed reports of internal divisions, saying the entire party remained united behind its founder, his ideology and mission. In a statement issued after a meeting of its political committee, the party said there was no grouping or division within its ranks and that its leaders and workers would continue their struggle towards their shared objectives. The committee also discussed the country's political situation, inflation and law and order, according to the statement. It demanded the immediate release of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, provincial assembly speaker and other detained parliamentarians, describing their detention as illegal.

Iran says it did not target...

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He also called on Tehran's neighbours to use their influence to prevent a fresh conflict. Contacts between Iran and the United States to end their eight-month war are continuing, Tehran's foreign ministry said on Monday, after days of Iranian talks with Qatari mediators ended with altered proposals but no breakthrough. "I can tell you that the dialogues are continuing. However, the issue is complex," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei, adding that the two sides were exchanging messages through mediators. Amid fears the conflict could reignite after Tuesday's midterm elections in the United States, China and Russia both spoke out on Monday against the possibility of renewed military action in a war that has hit the global economy. He said Iran had no hostility towards its neighbours and welcomed Qatar's mediation efforts, as well as cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Oil prices sink on US-Iran...

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marking the highest-level move in months. Iran meanwhile said it was ready to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within two days should the United States agree to ending the war on all fronts, among other conditions related to the conflict. Later, President Masoud Pezeshkian said the country's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei had granted "powers" to the government in its talks with the United States seeking to end the Middle East war. Share prices of energy majors dropped as gas prices also fell, while many other sectors were boosted by the cooling fuel costs. "We believe the (Trump) signals may be tactical ahead of tomorrow's US midterm elections," noted Arne Lohmann Rasmussen, chief analyst at Global Risk Management.

Islamabad POST
Tuesday November 03, 2026

Briefs

Gold prices rise by Rs2,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed an increase in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs2,400 to settle at Rs412,136, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs2,058 to Rs353,340, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs1,886 to Rs323,906. In the international market, the price of gold increased by $24 to reach $3,896 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs100 to Rs5,488, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs86 to Rs4,705. The price of silver in the international market also increased by $1 to reach $50.10 per ounce, the association added.–**APP**

Syria, Qatar defense chiefs meet to boost military ties

LONDON: The Syrian Arab Republic's Defense Minister Maj. Gen. Murhaf Abu Qasra discussed regional and international developments with Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on Sunday in Doha. The meeting focused on strengthening ties and supporting regional security and stability. Several Syrian military officers attended the meeting, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency. Abu Qasra and the Syrian delegation visited the Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani University for Military and Technical Sciences to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise. The delegation also visited the headquarters of the Joint Special Forces Command of the Qatari Armed Forces.–**APP**

Oil prices ease 3% on optimism for Qatari-led talks

SINGAPORE: Oil prices slipped more than 3 percent on Monday after Iranian and Qatari officials held a third straight day of talks aimed at pushing for a deal to end the US-Israeli war on Iran. Brent crude futures fell $3.68, or 3.2 percent, to $109.75 a barrel by 07:07 a.m. Saudi time while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at $100.69 a barrel, down $3.43, or 3.3 percent.

Brent ended October at its highest in six months amid concerns that the US-Iran conflict could escalate again after Tuesday's US midterm elections. "Oil is seeing a technical pullback this morning after last week's strong gains," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade. "Lingering hopes of some form of diplomatic progress, combined with the absence of any meaningful military escalation over the weekend, have taken some of the immediate heat out of prices for now." However, the market remained alert to the possibility that rhetoric around Iran could be ratcheted higher and push Brent toward $120 after the midterm elections, Waterer said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Sunday that the purpose of the "ongoing and progressing" talks was to continue consultations with the Qatari mediators, adding Tehran was prepared for "both defence and diplomacy."

The talks come amid attacks on oil tankers transiting the Strait of Hormuz that are driving up global energy and shipping costs. In October, Saudi Arabia increased crude exports versus September despite attacks by the Iran-aligned Yemeni Houthis on its energy infrastructure, two of three ship-tracking companies said. "The price action in oil in recent weeks reflects a market increasingly bracing for the potential for more hostilities between the US and Iran," ING analysts said in a client note. "If the midterms pass with neither strikes nor a deal, the key question is whether the market continues to price in a substantial geopolitical risk premium or whether that premium gradually begins to unwind." The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia, or OPEC+, kept December production targets steady on Sunday.–**APP**

Pakistan moving towards sustainable growth: Aurangzeb

Highlighting the importance of policy continuity, he underscored the role of the Tax Policy Office in engaging the private sector and developing a medium-term tax policy framework to provide businesses with greater certainty for investment and long-term planning

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday underscored the importance of making exports the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic growth strategy, stressing that policies must be geared towards enhancing exporters' competitiveness in regional and international markets.

During a meeting with President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Ali Hussam Asghar, the minister discussed measures to promote sustainable, export-led economic growth, support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and improve the overall business environment to enhance the competitiveness of Pakistani businesses.

The minister highlighted the government's commitment to achieving sustainable economic growth through greater private-sector participation, enhanced competitiveness and an expanded export base. He emphasised that exports must remain central to the country's growth strategy and that policies should facilitate exporters in becoming more competitive in regional and international markets. He emphasized the need for a predictable policy environment, streamlined regulations and stronger institutional coordination to improve the ease of doing business. He also stressed addressing business concerns, particularly those of SMEs, to encourage investment, boost productivity and support job creation and business expansion. The minister stressed the need to improve access to finance and encourage investment in modernisation, capacity-building and business expansion through targeted measures. He said taxation and regulatory policies should promote productive economic activity, documentation and a broader tax base. He also emphasised evidence-based policymaking and consultation with the business community to assess the impact of policy measures on investment, businesses and employment. Highlighting the importance of policy continuity, he underscored the role of the Tax Policy Office in engaging the private sector and developing a medium-term tax policy framework to provide businesses with greater certainty for investment and long-term planning. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to working with chambers of commerce and industry and other stakeholders to address business concerns, support SMEs and facilitate exporters, stressing that private-sector collaboration is vital for promoting investment, productivity and export-led growth. On the occasion, Ali Hussam Asghar shared the LCCI's perspective on promoting SMEs, improving access to finance and facilitating business expansion. He emphasised the importance of a supportive business ecosystem, greater policy predictability, modernisation and export growth. He also highlighted the importance of continued consultation with chambers of commerce and industry to ensure that business policies address ground-level challenges and support sustainable economic activity. The discussion also covered ways to strengthen the SME sector as an important driver of economic activity, exports and employment. The meeting was also attended by Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kiyani; Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Federal Secretary, Finance; and senior representatives from the Tax Policy Office, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Finance Division.

Jam hold meetings with Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Egypt officials

ISTANBUL: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, arrived in Istanbul to represent Pakistan at the 42nd Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Upon his arrival at Istanbul Airport, the Federal Minister was received by Pakistan's Consul General in Istanbul, Khawaja Khurram Naeem, said a release issued here on Monday.

The Commerce Minister will begin his official engagements by participating in the ministerial sessions of COMCEC and holding bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt to discuss strengthening trade relations, expanding market access and exploring new avenues of economic cooperation.

The 42nd COMCEC Session will focus on strengthening economic cooperation among OIC member states, promoting intra-OIC trade, enhancing private-sector engagement and developing effective trade financing mechanisms to boost exports.

The Minister's participation reflects Pakistan's commitment to expanding economic partnerships, strengthening regional trade connectivity and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation with OIC member countries.–**APP**

China to send ME envoy on regional trips

BEIJING: China will send Zhai Jun, a special envoy to the Middle East, to Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia in early and mid-November, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Monday. Separately, China's special representative on African affairs Liu Xianfa will visit Ethiopia, Djibouti and Egypt in early to mid-November, Mao said at a daily press conference. Hu Changchun, the foreign ministry's special envoy for the Horn of Africa, will visit Eritrea in early November, Mao said, adding to a series of trips by Chinese diplomats to promote peace and dialogue while easing tensions in the regions.–**APP**

HugoBank brings digital banking experience to life

Participation remains limited to approved internal pilot participants. Broader commercial operations will be subject to the requisite regulatory approvals

ISLAMABAD: HugoBank has begun actively onboarding approved internal pilot participants onto its digital banking platform, marking a significant step towards commercial operations following approval from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to commence controlled pilot operations as a Digital Retail Bank under a Restricted Licence.

The bank opened its first pilot customer account on 25 September 2026, initiating live onboarding within the approved pilot scope. With onboarding now having commenced, HugoBank is moving from preparation and testing into practical banking journeys, bringing together its technology, operational processes and customer service capabilities in a live environment, said a news release.

The controlled pilot allows HugoBank to assess the end-to-end banking experience, from account opening and transaction journeys to customer support and operational performance. Participant feedback and insights from live operations will help the bank identify improvements, refine its services and strengthen its readiness for broader commercial availability. "Our ambition is to make banking easier to access and simpler to use for people across Pakistan. With pilot onboarding now underway, we are taking a practical step towards that ambition and learning from participants' experience of the platform. Every account opened gives us an opportunity to assess how well our technology, processes and people work together. We will use those lessons to refine the experience and build the secure, dependable service customers should be able to expect from HugoBank."

HugoBank's approach centres on simplifying banking around evolving customer needs, with security, ease of use and dependable service guiding the development of its platform. The pilot provides an opportunity to assess these priorities through actual user experiences and make improvements before expanding access. Through this next phase, HugoBank continues to work towards its long-term ambition of making banking more accessible and convenient, supporting financial inclusion and contributing to Pakistan's evolving digital banking landscape.

Participation remains limited to approved internal pilot participants. Broader commercial operations will be subject to the requisite regulatory approvals.–**DNA**

Egypt signs $1b WB financing deal under reform program

RIYADH: Egypt has signed a $1 billion financing agreement with the World Bank, aimed at strengthening economic competitiveness, improving the business environment and supporting the country's green transition. The agreement forms part of the North African country's broader efforts to mobilize development financing from international and regional institutions and strengthen the economy's ability to withstand external shocks, according to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The World Bank has also flagged risks to the country's outlook from the conflict in the Middle East.

The funding is aligned with the World Bank Group's 2023–2027 Country Partnership Framework for Egypt, which outlined a $7 billion financial envelope over five years.

This comprises $5 billion in financing from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and about $2 billion from the International Finance Corporation, alongside guarantees from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. The newly released ministry statement said: "The agreement supports the state's efforts to achieve green development, and create an investment environment conducive to creating job opportunities and improving the standard of living of citizens.–**APP**

Hezbollah announces aid to Lebanese displaced by war with Israel

BEIRUT: Iran-backed Hezbollah on Monday announced it had begun distributing financial aid to Lebanese displaced by the group's latest war with Israel, despite efforts to dry up its funding sources. The aid is being provided despite US economic sanctions on Hezbollah backer Iran, and Lebanese authorities tightening controls over the group's channels for obtaining money and weapons, as part of their declared campaign to disarm the group. Hezbollah announced in a statement that it had begun paying a first tranche of aid to displaced people in the Nabatieh region of southern Lebanon. It is an act of "loyalty to the owners of the destroyed homes," the group said. On October 13, Hezbollah had announced that it would provide housing-related financial assistance capped at $14,000 per year for the displaced. The aid is earmarked for people whose homes have been completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, and for residents of Israeli-occupied areas in the south, provided that the displaced have no other place to live. Hezbollah had said it would distribute the aid in four instalments over one year, without specifying the source of the funding or the number of beneficiaries. The aid announcement was the first from Hezbollah since it drew Lebanon into a new war with Israel on March 2 in support of Iran, which the US and Israel attacked on February 28. In December 2024, after an earlier war against Israel in support of Hamas in Gaza, it announced similar assistance worth $77 million to the displaced, describing it as a "a gift from the Iranian people and Hezbollah." The wars waged by Hezbollah against Israel since 2023 have damaged or destroyed more than 290,000 homes, according to provisional figures from the authorities, particularly in the south of the country and in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Violence has decreased in the south since June, following a memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran and a framework agreement between Lebanon and Israel, which includes the disarmament of Hezbollah.–**APP**

Pak's exports to US up by 4.44% to $1.716b

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 4.44 per cent during the first quarter of the current fiscal year (2026-27) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to US were recorded at US $1.716 billion during July-September (2026-27) against exports of US $1.643 billion during July-September (2025-26), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, exports to US increased by 12.46 per cent from $531.269 million in September 2025, against the exports of $597.484 million in September 2026. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, exports to US also increased by 14.09 per cent during September 2026 as compared to the exports of $523.676 million in August 2026, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 7.65 per cent in the first quarter, from US $7.853 billion to US $8.454 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from US into the country during the quarter under review were recorded at US $659.231 million against US $453.285 million last year, showing an increase of 45.43 per cent in July-September (2026-27). On a year-on-year basis, imports from US increased by 23.26 per cent to US $172.481 million in September 2026, against the imports of US $139.922 million in September 2025. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from US into the country also by 7.60 per cent during September 2026, as compared to the imports of US $160.298 million during August 2026, according to the data. The overall imports into the country increased by 14.30 per cent, from $15.558 billion to US $17.784 billion, according to the data.–**DNA**

Pakistan offers Central Asia gateway to global markets

The Minister emphasized that Pakistan's strategic geographical location, youthful population, industrial capacity and seaport infrastructure positioned the country to play an important role in connecting Central Asian economies with international markets

ALMATY: Federal Minister for Investment, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, has highlighted Pakistan's strategic geographical location, seaport infrastructure, and investment potential as key opportunities for strengthening economic cooperation and regional connectivity with Central Asian countries.

Addressing the opening session of the Second TIAN-SHAN Forum for Central Asia Economic and Quality Investment in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the Federal Minister said that Pakistan could serve as an important trade and transit corridor for landlocked Central Asian countries, providing them with access to international maritime trade routes and global markets, said a release issued here on Monday. The Minister highlighted Pakistan's three major seaports, Karachi Port, Port Qasim and Gwadar Port, as strategic gateways that could facilitate regional trade, strengthen transportation links and provide alternative routes for the movement of goods.

He particularly underscored Karachi's importance as that its established industrial base, business infrastructure, financial institutions and port facilities offered significant opportunities for trade, industrial partnerships and foreign investment. He also highlighted Gwadar's potential to further strengthen regional connectivity and economic cooperation. Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh stated that Pakistan, with nearly 60 percent of its population comprising young people, enjoyed a significant demographic advantage in the form of a dynamic workforce and considerable potential for economic growth. He said that the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, was focusing on strengthening regional connectivity, addressing energy requirements and creating an enabling environment to attract domestic and international investment. The Federal Minister invited regional and international investors to explore opportunities in key sectors, including energy, infrastructure, logistics, transportation, manufacturing and trade. He emphasized that improved connectivity ing the region's economic potential. Highlighting the importance of regional cooperation, the Minister acknowledged the contribution of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program in promoting transport connectivity, facilitating trade and supporting economic integration among participating countries. He observed that CAREC provided a valuable platform for strengthening economic partnerships between Pakistan and Central Asian states.

The Minister emphasized that Pakistan's strategic geographical location, youthful population, industrial capacity and seaport infrastructure positioned the country to play an important role in connecting Central Asian economies with international markets.

Concluding his remarks, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh stated that regional connectivity was not merely about linking roads, ports and markets, but also about connecting economies, creating investment opportunities, generating employment and building

Call for rights-based uplift, climate justice

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Dr Musadik Malik on Monday called for a shift towards rights-based and climate-resilient development, stressing that poor and vulnerable communities should not continue to bear the disproportionate burden of climate change, global economic inequalities and mounting debt.

Addressing the inaugural plenary session of the 29th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC 2026), organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under the theme "Rethinking Development in an Age of Disruption," the minister said development should not be measured merely in dollars but by its impact on the lives and future generations of ordinary people.

"For the poor, development is measured in generations, not dollars," he observed, questioning a development model in which communities repeatedly lose their livelihoods and assets to natural disasters.

Explaining the conventional development pathway, Dr Musadik Malik said countries traditionally moved from agriculture to productive farming, industrialisation and then services, with several countries, including China and South Korea, successfully following this trajectory. However, he stressed that changing global economic and climate realities required a fresh understanding of development Highlighting the growing constraints on development financing, he said resources available for development had declined by 23 per cent in a single year, with the funding position in 2024-25 falling back to the level of 2015, when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process began.He also pointed out the disparity in borrowing costs, saying wealthy countries paid around 2.2 per cent interest

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Briefs

'Civilian convicts cannot claim fundamental rights'

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday told the Lahore High Court (LHC) that a civilian who commits an offence against the state and is convicted cannot claim the protection of fundamental rights, while seeking the dismissal of a petition filed by Barrister Hassaan Khan Niazi, nephew of PTI founder Imran Khan, challenging his handover to the army and subsequent trial in a case related to the May 9 riots.

In a report submitted after almost a year on behalf of the provincial government through the home secretary and the inspector general of police, the deputy inspector general of police (legal) said every citizen's first duty was loyalty to the state, citing a 2005 LHC judgment (PLD 2005 LAH 721).

The report described Niazi as a convicted prisoner, arguing that his release through a second round of litigation, other than by way of appeal, was not permissible. It said no judicial order was required for his handover because Niazi was neither in judicial custody nor on remand.

The report further stated that he was an absconder, unlike the 16 co-accused whose transfer had been sought from an anti-terrorism court while they were in jail.

The Sarwar Road station house officer neither handed over Niazi's custody nor received a letter from the commanding officer, the report added. "That was done by the investigation incharge of the Sarwar Road police station, who is not a party to the petition," the report claimed. – **APP**

Lahore air quality index worsens

LAHORE: Air pollution in Lahore reached hazardous levels on Monday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing 530 and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations climbing to 343 micrograms per cubic metre. Several other cities in Punjab also recorded extremely high pollution levels, according to air quality monitoring platform IQAir.

At 8am, IQAir recorded an AQI of 535 in Lahore, placing the city in the hazardous category. PM2.5 concentration, referring to tiny particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, stood at 343µg/m³. Air quality had already deteriorated sharply in the early morning, with hourly readings also entering the hazardous range.

Figure shows the top ranked polluted cities according to IQAir on Friday morning. – Screengrab via IQAir. The deterioration was not confined to the provincial capital. IQAir's live ranking of Pakistani cities on Monday morning placed five Punjab cities among the country's six most polluted urban centres. – **APP**

Good France Food Fest opens

Pakistan's global image undergoes a positive transformation: Sardar Yasir

Speaking at the inauguration, the Head of the Culture Section of the French Embassy Marc Piton said that more than 1,300 restaurants worldwide participate in the festival simultaneously, promoting French cuisine and culture across continents



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Good France 2026 Food Festival was inaugurated at Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad, bringing together diplomats, hospitality professionals, media representatives, and members of the community to celebrate French and Pakistani culinary excellence. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, CEO of The Centaurus, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, thanked the media and guests for their support and highlighted the significance of the collaboration between Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad and the French Embassy in Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan's global image has undergone a positive transformation and that the country is now ready to showcase its true hospitality on the international stage. Referring to upcoming international events and conferences, he emphasized that hospitality plays a crucial role in promoting Pakistan as a welcoming destination for global visitors.

Sardar Yasir noted that the partnership with the French Embassy is particularly important as it enables cultural exchange, talent development, and knowledge sharing through food and cuisine. He praised the expertise being brought by renowned French chefs and said that such collaborations provide valuable learning opportunities for local hospitality professionals. He stressed that Pakistan possesses immense culinary diversity, with unique flavors and traditions spanning from the south to the north of the country. According to him, international visitors should be given the opportunity to experience both world-class international cuisine and Pakistan's rich local food culture.

The CEO also highlighted Mövenpick Islamabad's achievements, including international recognition for excellence in hospitality, corporate services, cuisine, and wellness experiences. He credited these accomplishments to the extensive training and development of local talent to meet global standards. Discussing future opportunities, Sardar Yasir underscored the importance of tourism, trade, and cultural diplomacy. He said that Pakistan is actively focusing on medical tourism, adventure tourism, and international collaborations to attract travelers and investors.

He said stronger cooperation with France and other nations will promote cultural understanding, talent exchange, and economic growth, while reaffirming that Pakistan is ready to welcome the world and do business on a global scale.

Speaking at the inauguration, the Head of the Culture Section of the French Embassy Marc Piton said that more than 1,300 restaurants worldwide participate in the festival simultaneously, promoting French cuisine and culture across continents. He noted that French gastronomy is recognized on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, highlighting its global cultural significance. Guests were invited to discover and rediscover authentic French cuisine throughout the festival week.

Addressing the gathering, the General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad expressed pride in joining the prestigious event. He highlighted that Mövenpick's roots date back to 1948 in Zurich, where it began as a restaurant dedicated to culinary excellence before expanding into an international hospitality brand.

He said the festival would offer guests a unique French dining experience, featuring specially curated menus, culinary creativity, and the renowned French art de vivre. A special highlight of the week will be a gourmet event accompanied by live jazz music.

Afghanistan asks US to act responsibility

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban government asked the United States to act responsibly when deporting Afghan immigrants back home, the Afghan foreign ministry said on Monday, adding that Kabul was prepared to engage constructively with Washington on the issue. President Donald Trump's administration plans to deport some Afghan immigrants to Afghanistan, a US official and a coalition of veterans and advocacy groups said on Friday.

"The Afghan side is prepared, while understanding the existing realities and taking into consideration the legitimate interests of both sides, to engage constructively and on the basis of mutual understanding in this regard," the Afghan Taliban foreign ministry said in a statement.

More than 150 Afghan immigrants are expected to be deported, the New York Times reported on Friday, adding the first flight is expected as soon as Monday. The deportations would be via Pakistan as Washington cannot directly arrange deportations to Afghanistan as it lacks diplomatic ties with the Taliban government.

"Third countries should not treat the citizens of another country as a matter of bargaining in exchange for limited temporary concessions or other considerations", the Afghan statement said. – **APP**

Jordan king vows to confront terrorism

DUBAI: Jordan's King Abdullah II vowed on Monday that the country will remain vigilant against terrorism, warning that extremists will not be allowed to undermine national unity and declaring that those responsible have betrayed the country. Jordan has faced security concerns following an attack on the Greek Orthodox St. George's Church in Karak in October, which killed nine people. Authorities later arrested three suspects over the attack, identifying them as Islamic extremists.

"There is no place for terrorists among us, neither today nor tomorrow," the king said, stressing that Jordan would remain resistant to terrorism. "We will be on the lookout for terrorists and will not allow them to undermine the unity of the nation," he added. The monarch also turned his attention to wider regional security, describing Israeli expansionist ambitions as the greatest threat to the region's future. – **APP**

LHC summons Lahore DC over Imran's sisters detention

Noreen's two daughters be allowed to meet mother in Kot Lakhpat jail on Tuesday, orders court

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday summoned the Lahore deputy commissioner (DC) over extensions in the detention of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's sisters, while ordering a meeting between Noreen Niazi and her daughters. Justice Abher Gul Khan issued the directions while hearing petitions filed by Aleema Khan's son, Shahrez Khan, and Sakeena Bibi concerning the detention of Aleema, Dr Uzma Khan and Noreen Niazi, as well as the latter's medical treatment. Noreen was shifted from Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology on October 28 after experiencing heart-related discomfort. Lawyer Rana Mudassar Umar said Noreen had experienced discomfort in her heart while detained at Kot Lakhpat jail, following which she was taken to the hospital. Aleema, Noreen and Uzma have remained in custody since last month under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance in connection with the PTI's anti-government protest.

Noreen and Uzma were detained for 30 days on September 21, shortly before the PTI's planned September 27 protest, which was subsequently moved to October 4. Aleema's detention had taken place a day earlier, on September 20. The Punjab government had told the court in late October that it had extended the detention of the three sisters. A government lawyer had told the LHC that the detention was extended by another 30 days on recommendation by the deputy commissioner.

During today's proceedings, the LHC directed the Lahore DC to appear in person on November 4, while ordering that Noreen's two daughters be allowed to meet their mother in jail at 10am tomorrow (Tuesday) for an hour. The court directed the petitioner's lawyer to submit an application to the Lahore DC regarding the meeting and ordered the deputy commissioner to arrange it on the basis of that request. During the hearing, a lawyer representing the Punjab government informed the court that Noreen had received treatment at a hospital and was subsequently transferred back to jail on doctors' advice. The government lawyer further submitted that Noreen's daughter, Hajra Niazi, had already met her mother on October 29 during her hospital treatment. – **DNA**

Nine people dead in Learjet crash

Videos on social media show jet slamming into the ground next to a road and exploding

LONDON: A Learjet crashed on Sunday afternoon in a residential area in Palm Beach County, Florida, killing all nine people on board, US transportation officials said. The private jet had taken off from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Texas and was headed to North Eleuthera Airport in the Bahamas, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. Videos on social media showed the jet slamming into the ground next to a road and exploding.

"It was a big-time tragedy that happened," Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said at a press conference near the crash site in Lake Worth Beach. "When you see that video, it's a jarring thing. It was like a missile coming down, and a massive explosion, debris going everywhere." The National Transportation Safety Board said it had launched an investigation into the crash, which Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy called a "horrific tragedy."

FAA records list the Bombardier-made BBDb.TO Learjet 60's owner as a Delaware corporation. Canada-based Bombardier said it would fully support the investigation and cooperate as needed.The crash left a "massive crater" by the road near the entrance to a mobile home park, Palm Beach County Commissioner Joel Flores said at the news conference. – **APP**

Hundreds of garments factories closed in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Hundreds of garment factories across Bangladesh were closed on Monday after hundreds of thousands of workers staged the largest protest in years to demand a rise in monthly wages. The world's second-largest exporter after China, the Bangladeshi ready-made garment industry is the backbone of its modern economy, accounting for 80 percent of export earnings, which reach $40 billion per fiscal year. The sector is the largest formal industrial employer in the country, with around 4 million people working at 3,500 factories registered across major industrial hubs including Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, and Savar. Millions more jobs are created in the ecosystem generated by the RMG industry, including in transport, packaging, and supply chains. But despite contributing about 10 percent to gross domestic product, workers at garment factories have the statutory minimum wage of 12,500 taka ($100) per month — one of the lowest among garment-exporting countries. As the cost of living has risen significantly since the wage was set in 2023, especially in the wake of a fuel crisis and rising inflation linked to the US-Iran war, unions are demanding an increase to 30,000 taka. – **APP**

China's Xi says Middle East should not become battleground for great power rivalry

Beijing willing to strengthen communication with Arab countries to work together towards restoring peace, says Xi



BEIJING/DUBAI: The Middle East and Gulf region should not become a battleground for great-power rivalry, and China is willing to work with Arab nations to achieve lasting peace, Chinese President Xi Jinping told Oman's sultan on Monday. China has traditionally played a low-key diplomatic role in the Middle East, but has stepped up efforts to try to help end tensions amid the US-Israeli war on Iran, which has snarled the Strait of Hormuz and driven up global energy and shipping costs.

Xi told Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said that the world is undergoing "profound changes unseen in a century." "The Middle East Gulf region should not become an arena for great-power rivalry and geopolitical conflict. Peace and stability in the region require joint nurturing and protection by all parties," Xi said, according to China's Foreign Ministry. China has consistently been committed to stopping the war, and hopes to contribute "wisdom and solutions to resolving the region's security dilemmas," he added.

China is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with Arab countries, including the Gulf Cooperation Council states, to work together toward restoring peace and achieving lasting stability and security, Xi said.

Last week, China's Foreign Ministry said the country will soon be dispatching its special envoys to the Middle East to promote engagement and de-escalation. Haitham arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a two-day visit, the first by an Omani head of state since the countries established ties in 1978. Haitham told Xi his government had deep appreciation for China's positions on key issues concerning the region, Omani state media reported. "We believe that development and stability are inextricably linked," he said.

"The prosperity of nations requires an environment defined by security, peace, respect for state sovereignty, and adherence to international law — an environment where disputes are resolved through peaceful means." He also said Oman was open to entering into a preferential bilateral trade and investment agreement with China. "We are confident that such an agreement would open new avenues for trade and investment, facilitate and enhance commercial and investment exchanges between our two nations," Haitham said. – **APP**



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