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## Steve Smith breaks multiple records with drought ending ton

Detailed News On Page-06

## No Space for chaos-based politics: Rana

Detailed News On Page-08



## US in 'direct contact' with Syria rebels

Detailed News On Page-08



## Siddiqui Farooq passes away

Senior politician's funeral prayers will be held at H-11 cemetery in Islamabad at 11am on Monday

MEHTAB PIRZADA



RAWALPINDI: Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Siddiqui Farooq breathed his last on Sunday. According to family sources, the seasoned politician was suffering from a heart disease. During his political career, Farooq served as press secretary to three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, head of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) and PML-N's information secretary. His funeral prayers will be held at H-11 cemetery in Islamabad at 11am on Monday (tomorrow). Reacting to the grim news, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the late PML-N leader's demise. Conveying condolences to his family, the premier said that the PML-N had lost a sincere politician and that his services to the party would always be remembered. Meanwhile, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui paid homage to Farooq calling him a man of firm ideas and loyalty who showed exemplary courage in difficult times and refused to become a witness against Nawaz.

## PM aide slams IPPs

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: As the incumbent government continues efforts to review agreements with the independent power producers (IPPs) amid concerns over rising electricity tariffs, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Power Muhammad Ali has denounced the power firms for "not allowing regulators to audit their books." "No heat rate audit of IPPs ever carried out in this country," says Ali who along with sector officials and an economist, addressed the contentious issue of agreements with power producers. Among the participants are Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Power Muhammad Ali, former SAPM on CPEC) Khalid Mansoor, former caretaker minister Gohar Ejaz, former chairman of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), Asif Inam, economist Ammar Habib Khan and CEO of Lucky Electric Power Rohail Muhammad.

## Schools to remain closed in Punjab, Islamabad

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Schools across Punjab and the Islamabad Capital Territory will remain closed on Monday (tomorrow) due to a "security situation", a notification from the Punjab School Education Department said on Sunday. "In view of the prevailing situation in the province, it has been decided that all public and private schools in Punjab will remain closed on 16 December, 2024 (Monday)," the notification, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, said. It added: "However, all offices will remain open and perform their functions as usual." A separate notification issued by Islamabad District Magistrate Irfan Nawaz Memon also ordered that "all public/private schools and colleges shall remain closed on 16th December, 2024 (Monday) within the revenue limits of ICT".

# Amid civil disobedience threat 'Meaningful dialogue with PTI not possible'

Statements regarding talks coming from former ruling party, says defence minister

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Referring to prevailing political unrest in the country in the backdrop of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) civil disobedience threat and back-to-back marches on Islamabad, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday said that he did not think that "meaningful negotiations" with the former ruling party could be initiated in this situation. Talking to a private news channel in Sialkot, the defence minister accused the embattled Imran Khan-founded party of creating an "unfavourable" situation for the reconciliation process. Earlier this month, the incarcerated PTI founder, who was ousted as prime minister through the no-confidence vote in 2022, warned the government of launching a "civil disobedience" movement if his demands, including the judicial probe into the crackdown on party supporters, are not met. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Imran - who claimed to have a "trump card" - announced the constitution of a negotiation committee comprising Omar Ayub Khan, Ali Amin Gandapur, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Asad Qaiser and others.

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## Will follow Khan's decision: CM Gandapur

Gandapur reiterated that the decision rested with Imran Khan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Sunday said that the PTI would move on with the implementation of "civil disobedience" based on incarcerated party founder Imran Khan's orders in the same spirit, but "there is no clarity" until now regarding that. Imran, in a post on his X account on December 5, lamented that party supporters had been killed "as a result of state terrorism" during his "final call" for nationwide protests on November 24, demanding the restoration of the PTI's electoral mandate.

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## Foreign Office clarifies

# One Pakistani dead, 47 rescued in boat mishap

Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates possibility of rise in death toll as rescue operation still underway

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) confirmed on Sunday that 47 Pakistani nationals had been rescued from the site of the boat capsizing near Greece while another one was confirmed to be among the migrants who died in the mishap. In response to speculation regarding the casualties, MoFA clarified the situation but also indicated the possibility of additional casualties, as the rescue operation is still ongoing. "At this stage, we are unable to confirm the number of deceased or missing Pakistani nationals," the ministry stated. According to the coastguard on Saturday, at least five migrants drowned after their wooden boat capsized off the southern Greek island of Gavdos, while witnesses reported that many others were still missing as search operations continued. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the Pakistani Embassy in Athens has been in

Continued on Page 06

## President, PM for combating human trafficking

Shehbaz Sharif seeks inquiry report into Greece boat tragedy from Interior Ministry

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have emphasized the need for fast-tracking measures to combat human trafficking. In their separate statements on Sunday, both the president and the prime minister expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Pakistani nationals in a boat capsizing incident near Greece.

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## PIA all set to resume direct flights to Paris

Ambassador of Pakistan to France, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, recently met with PIA's marketing representatives to discuss preparations

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is set to resume direct flights to Paris in January 2025, marking a significant step towards enhancing business, tourism, and people-to-people contacts.

Ambassador of Pakistan to France, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, recently met with PIA's marketing representatives to discuss preparations for the launch of the direct flights to Paris.

"Direct flights between Pakistan and France will facilitate travel, and contribute towards enhancing business, tourism, family visits and people-people contacts," a press release issued on Sunday said.

Earlier, it was revealed that Pakistan's aviation sector is set to make a significant advance with preparations underway for the resumption of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flights to the United States (U.S.). According to reports, Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA),

Continued on Page 06

## Landslide leaves 5 dead in Skardu

The deceased hailed from Shengus village, the police added

DNA

SKARDU: At least five people died after their vehicle was struck by a landslide near Rondo Malupa in Skardu on Sunday afternoon. According to rescue sources, the ill-fated vehicle was travelling from Skardu to Shangus when it was suddenly buried under a massive amount of falling debris, private news channels reported. Police described the scene as "horrific" as the vehicle was swept away by the landslide, leaving no chance of escape for the occupants. A rescue team was immediately dispatched to the scene to launch a search and rescue operation. As the rescue operation continued, officials confirmed that at least five people had lost their lives in the tragedy. The identities of the victims have not been released yet.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing the launching ceremony of the last Anti-Polio Campaign 2024. - DNA

## As country's tally reaches 63

# PM vows to end polio, launches nationwide drive

Premier Shehbaz welcomes int'l partners, BMGF, WHO, and KSA for assisting Pakistan in war against polio

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday launched the last anti-polio campaign of 2024 which is set to commence on Monday (tomorrow) across 143 districts in the country after the number of polio cases reached 63 this year. The premier formally launched the vaccination campaign by administering drops to children during an inauguration event in Islamabad today. This anti-polio drive will be conducted from December 16 to 22. Addressing the event, PM Shehbaz welcomed international partners including Bill Gates-founded Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and Saudi Arabia for assisting Pakistan in the war against polio. He said that the Saudi crown

Continued on Page 06

## Pak forex reserves top \$12 billion

Pakistan's total foreign exchange reserves reach \$16.62 billion, with commercial banks holding \$4.58B of the total

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have surpassed \$12 billion for the first time in over two years, aided by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) where as of November 2024, the reserves stood at \$12.04 billion, reflecting an increase of

Continued on Page 06

# PTI is fond of pursuing 'politics of violence' Tarar

Says, lacks positive, constructive agenda

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf always indulged in protests and sit-ins as the party did not have any positive or constructive agenda. Talking to the media on Sunday, the minister said that the series of incitement, threats and accusations was the style of

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership. He reminded that in 2014, they attacked the Pakistan Television Corporation building and targeted law enforcement personnel. The PTI leaders incite people to violence and then run away, he maintained. The minister said it was important to inform the nation about the facts regarding the baseless allegations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

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# PTI, government talks: an exercise in futility?

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



PAKISTANI politics is a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape that rarely fails to capture attention. The phrase "never a dull moment" aptly describes the constant flux of activity, marked by a whirlwind of developments that unfold on a daily basis. These events keep the public, political analysts, and media highly engaged, fueling relentless debates and speculation. On one hand, the relentless pace of political happenings ensures that there is always something new to discuss, whether it be parliamentary maneuvers, shifting alliances, legal battles, or policy decisions. On the other hand, this very dynamism often leads to a plethora of controversies, ranging from allegations of corruption and misuse of power to heated rivalries between political parties and institutions. The combination of high-stakes drama, deep-seated divisions, and an ever-watchful public ensures that Pakistani politics remains both captivating and contentious. The recent development indicating the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s willingness to engage in talks with the government has introduced a new layer of intrigue to the already vibrant and volatile political landscape of the country. This gesture initially sparked interest and speculation about potential breakthroughs

in the ongoing political stalemate. However, the momentum seemed to falter following former Prime Minister Imran Khan's scathing criticism of the party's leadership for their perceived conciliatory approach toward the government. Despite the apparent public setback, it is widely believed that informal, behind-the-scenes communications among key stakeholders continue, hinting at a possible recalibration of strategies by both sides. This unfolding situation underscores the fluid nature of the country's political dynamics and the complex interplay of public narratives and private negotiations. The key question is whether these talks will yield any meaningful results, given the starkly opposing views held by the PTI and the government on numerous issues. The PTI's willingness to engage in dialogue with the government stems from widespread criticism, urging the party to prioritize discussions with political stakeholders rather than relying on apolitical forces, if it genuinely aims to strengthen democracy in the country. Otherwise, the PTI, which firmly regards the current government as an illegitimate entity assembled solely to sideline it from the political arena, risks reinforcing this perception of its approach. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has outlined specific preconditions for engaging in talks with the government, including the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the May 9 incidents and the release of all political prisoners. However, the feasibility of such talks yielding any constructive outcomes seems highly doubtful. One critical issue is that these conditions largely fall outside the government's direct purview. The investigation into the May 9 incidents, which involved attacks on military installations, and the detention

of political activists are matters deeply intertwined with the military establishment's authority and influence. The government, therefore, lacks the mandate or capacity to address these demands independently. Moreover, the Establishment, which holds significant sway in such matters, is unlikely to entertain discussions on these contentious issues. The May 9 incidents, in particular, have been framed by the Establishment as a direct challenge to its authority and an attack on national institutions. The government's seriousness about engaging in meaningful talks with the PTI appears questionable, as there seems to be little inclination within its ranks to pursue dialogue earnestly. This reluctance can be attributed to several factors. First, the government is acutely aware of its powers and mandate, which grants it the prerogative to decide whether or not to engage in negotiations. Second, the government likely recognizes that negotiations inherently involve concessions. Any meaningful dialogue would require a level of flexibility and willingness to reach a "give-and-take" arrangement. However, this could lead to demands from the PTI that the government finds politically or strategically disadvantageous, such as agreeing to early elections or other significant shifts in policy or governance. In light of these factors, the government might perceive the potential risks of negotiations as outweighing the benefits, especially if it feels that conceding to PTI demands could weaken its position or set an unwelcome precedent. Consequently, engaging in such talks could be seen as placing itself in a precarious or "weird" situation, which it is understandably keen to avoid. This lack of incentive to compromise significantly

undermines the prospects of productive dialogue. The PML-N ranks include a faction that strongly advocates for dialogue with the PTI, arguing that it aligns with the government's broader strategic interests. This group contends that engaging in talks could serve as a tactical maneuver to reduce the likelihood of the government being ousted before completing its constitutionally mandated five-year term. They perceive the PTI's relentless confrontational stance and repeated protests targeting the federal capital as key destabilizing elements that undermine governance and public confidence. Furthermore, these disruptions have been identified as significant barriers to attracting foreign direct investment, which is crucial for the country's economic recovery and growth. Proponents of this approach believe that initiating discussions with the PTI could create an environment of political stability, which is essential for maintaining investor confidence and fostering national development. They argue that even a partial resolution or temporary truce could help ease tensions, allowing the government to focus on pressing economic and administrative priorities without the constant specter of political unrest. By addressing the underlying friction through dialogue, this group hopes to mitigate the risks posed by the PTI's adversarial tactics and contribute to a more stable political landscape. But as the saying goes, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. The ruling clique must recognize that its mandate and powers are limited. The real authority lies with those who have constructed the entire system. It ultimately depends on them whether the government is permitted to engage in such talks—especially if they intend to bring in a new setup in the near future.



# Punjab tops in health services with quality care

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision for Punjab's healthcare is truly transformative, Director General Health Services Punjab said. Her commitment to providing top-notch healthcare to the people of Punjab is evident in her flagship projects, such as the "Clinic on Wheels" and free medicine for slum dwellers, he mentioned

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General Health Services Punjab, Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Gondal Sunday said that the province has emerged as a trailblazer in healthcare services under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, with significant improvements in health outcomes and patient satisfaction. DG in an interview with state run news channel said that the province's healthcare system has achieved remarkable milestones, solidifying its position as a leader in the sector. The province's healthcare system has witnessed a remarkable transformation, with state-of-the-art facilities and specialized treatment services being made accessible to the common masses, Dr. Gondal noted. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision for Punjab's healthcare is truly transformative, he hailed. Her commitment to providing top-notch healthcare to the people of Punjab is evident in her flagship projects, such as the "Clinic on Wheels" and free medicine for slum dwellers, he mentioned. These initiatives are a historic step towards ensuring accessible and

affordable healthcare for all, particularly the underprivileged, he added. Responding to a query, the Director General revealed that new hospitals are urgently needed and in a significant move, the Chief Minister will soon be inaugurating a state-of-the-art Cardiology Hospital in Sargodha and a Cancer Hospital in Lahore, aiming to bridge the gap in healthcare services and meet the demands of the time. The Director General appreciated the significant progress made in Punjab's healthcare sector, particularly the establishment of around 32 field hospitals and health units, adding, these facilities are closely monitored at both the district and divisional levels, ensuring effective healthcare delivery to the masses. He also disclosed that the Punjab government has planned to revamp the healthcare infrastructure by converting some underutilized public hospitals into private hospitals. This strategic move aims to optimize resource allocation, enhance the quality of healthcare services and increase accessibility for the masses, he added. Responding to another query about awareness programs for communicable and non-communicable diseases, the Director General explained that the government is actively conducting

workshops, seminars and other projects at the district level to educate the public. Additionally, special sessions are being organized in schools to sensitize the younger generation about the prevention and management of these diseases, he mentioned. Gondal also emphasized the crucial role of community involvement in combating TB, Dengue and Polio. He acknowledged the government's efforts but stressed that community participation is vital in achieving success. Punjab's remarkable progress in reducing Polio cases serves as a testament to the power of collective action. By working together, we can make significant strides in controlling and preventing these diseases, he added. He stressed the importance of people's awareness on population control, stressing that family planning is crucial in ensuring that the population growth aligns with available resources. He noted that excessive population growth is not in line with the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended GDP growth rate of 5%. This highlights the need for sustainable population growth to ensure economic stability and development, he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors looking different handmade items displayed on stall during the Islamabad Women Gala at Pak-China Center in the Federal Capital.

**Kundi applauds WAPDA for resolving water shortage in Gomal Zam area**

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday applauded Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) officials for resolving the water shortage issue faced by farmers in the Gomal Zam Dam Command Area. The closure of the bottom outlet gate of Gomal Zam Dam had caused severe water scarcity, affecting thousands of acres of land and leaving farmers in distress in different areas of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan districts. Following a request from Provincial Assembly Member Ihsanullah Khan Miankhal, Governor Kundi contacted the Wapda officials and instructed them to send a team of experts to open the gate. As a result, the issue was resolved the day before. Farmers, landowners, and prominent leaders from the Gomal Zam Dam Command Area, including Engineer Saifur Rehman Khan, expressed their gratitude to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, MNA Sardar Fatehullah Khan Miankhal, MPA Ihsanullah Khan Miankhal, Chairman Wapda, Wapda Power Member, GM Hydel Operations, and Chief Engineer Chashma, as well as their teams.

## Sindh to develop economic zones for Chinese Companies: Nasir

KARACHI: The Sindh government is working to develop two special economic zones in Karachi to facilitate Chinese investors in setting up various industries in collaboration with local businessmen. Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah stated while speaking at 10th Beauty, Fitness and Consumer Health International Expo here. The provincial minister highlighted that multiple industries are being established in Karachi, the commercial hub of the country, mainly due to shifts in global trade policies for China. Chinese products could still be indirectly imported via other countries, particularly from Pakistan, which will be the preferred destination for importers and

exporters under the emerging trade opportunities. Nasir Shah urged Pakistani businessmen to collaborate with their Chinese counterparts to attract investment in various sectors and enhance exports under the "Made-in-Pakistan" brand. He further stated that the Sindh government was actively working with different industrial zones in Karachi to develop their infrastructure in line with specific plans and requirements. Highlighting the province's achievements in energy, Nasir Shah mentioned that the government had achieved a significant milestone in power generation. A remarkably low tariff of 3.5 cents per unit has been approved for the planned solar park, which is set to provide affordable electricity to the residents of Karachi and

other parts of Sindh in different phases. The provincial government is also working to further empower local governments in Sindh to provide relief to the masses, Shah said, adding that a bill is expected to be passed in the provincial assembly on the directives of the party leadership. Nasir Hussain Shah mentioned the participation of foreign delegates in the four-day exhibition reflects positive developments in the country, particularly with the inflows of foreign investments. On the occasion, Executive Director of E-commerce Gateway Muhammad Uzair Nizam remarked that the participation of foreign and local delegates and businessmen showcases Pakistan's positive image on the global stage, attracting traders.—DNA

## CEO DRAP for ensuring the availability of quality medicines

RAWALPINDI: The CEO of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), Mr. Asim Rauf, visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and participated in a meeting of the Standing Committee on Pharmaceuticals. During the meeting, Mr. Rauf emphasized that ensuring the availability of quality medicines remains a top priority for the government. He highlighted efforts to streamline the processes for licensing and registration, making them more efficient and business-friendly to unlock the true potential of Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector and drive export growth. The meeting, presided over

by RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaikat, also included Mr. Umar Farooq, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Pharmaceuticals. The committee members expressed their appreciation for DRAP's proactive role in supporting the pharmaceutical industry and modernizing the regulatory framework. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Usman Shaikat stated, "The pharmaceutical sector holds immense potential to expand Pakistan's exports. With a significant pharma cluster located in the Rawalpindi region, there is substantial demand for Pakistani medicines in Central Asia and Africa. Simplifying the pro-

cesses for licensing, registration, and certification will be key to harnessing this potential." The meeting was attended by notable figures, including Group Leader Mr. Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Mr. Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Mr. Fahad Barlas, Executive Committee members, and other distinguished members of the chamber. The participants discussed strategies to enhance collaboration between DRAP and the pharmaceutical industry, address existing challenges, and capitalize on export opportunities to contribute to the national economy.—DNA

## Citizens flock to flea markets to beat cold

ISLAMABAD: Amidst the rising prices of woollies, flea markets are once again an easier way out for poor dwellers of different cities in the country to survive during winter by purchasing cheaper used woolen wear. Every year with the very onset of winter, the poor and low income groups including those from Rawalpindi and Islamabad flock to flea markets in search of affordable warm clothing for their family members. As soon as weather changes and cool breeze starts blowing, significant influx of people can be observed at these markets in twin cities, where they purchase essential winter items like sweaters, woollies, caps, socks, jackets and hoodies. These purchases are vital to protect themselves and their children from cold, especially at a time when many are battling seasonal allergies, chest infections and influenza. Seasons come and go, but with no change in lives of millions of poor Pakistanis who every year have to bank on used clothes brought in by importers mostly from western countries. No matter how much it hurts their ego and self-respect, they are left with minimal options when fresh and branded woollies are far out of their reach. The ongoing inflationary wave has eroded the purchasing power of all social classes. However, it is the lower middle class and poor segments of society that are bearing the brunt of this economic crisis. Now even the people are seen complaining of rising prices of even the used clothes at flea markets. "Even the second-hand clothes that we used to buy every winter for our children are now priced high and gradually slipping out of our reach," said Sajid Abbasi, a buyer in Rawalpindi.—APP



RAWALPINDI: NBP Rawalpindi Operation chief Zia Ahmed Nawaz delivering promotion letters to Executive officer.

## ICCI members visit Aabpara Market to greet newly elected President

ISLAMABAD: Members of the Founder Group Council of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) visited Aabpara Market to congratulate newly elected President Ajmal Baloch and General Secretary Akhtar Hussain Abbasi. The delegation was led by Chairman of the Founder Group, Tariq Sadiq, accompanied by ICCI President Nasir Qureshi, UBG (FPCCI) General Secretary Zafar Bakhtawari, former FPCCI President Abdul Rauf Alam, former Chairman of the Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, Khalid Javed, Ejaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, and Shaikat Masood. The members of the Founder Group commended Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi for their dedicated services to the business community and expressed their full confidence in their leadership. Speaking on the occasion, Founder Group Chairman Tariq Sadiq said that Ajmal Baloch has always been at the forefront of resolving business community issues. His leadership has provided a strong platform for traders, standing by them in every challenging time. ICCI President Nasir Qureshi emphasized the importance of strong and active market associations for the business community in Islamabad. He assured his full support in addressing market issues and finding their solutions. UBG (FPCCI) General Secretary Zafar Bakhtawari remarked that the election of Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi is a recognition of their services by the business community. He expressed hope that they would continue to work diligently for resolving traders' issues. Former FPCCI President Abdul Rauf Alam stated that Ajmal Baloch's success symbolizes the unity and trust of the business community. He highlighted that Ajmal Baloch's leadership has always played a significant role in the development of Aabpara Market and addressing traders' concerns. Former Chairman of the Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik praised Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi for their exceptional work for the welfare of traders. He added that their success reflects the complete trust traders have in them. Ejaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, and Shaikat Masood also shared their views, acknowledging the commendable efforts of Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi in addressing traders' issues. They expressed that their success guarantees a bright future for the business community. Later, the delegation presented bouquets to Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi and expressed their best wishes for them. In response, Ajmal Baloch and Akhtar Hussain Abbasi thanked the delegation, stating that serving the traders is their top priority, and they will strive to live up to their trust and expectations.—DNA

## E-vehicles shuttle service to be started in Saddar's 'Pedestrian Bank Road'

More than 400 vehicles can be parked in Potohar-1 parking whereas Potohar-2 which can accommodate 220 plus vehicles, is further being expanded

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The recently revamped Bank Road, Saddar has reshaped the market landscape through its conversion into a pedestrians' bazaar. The remodeling project of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) entails the full removal of motorized vehicles, expanded car parking and undergrounding of electric cables. To further facilitate the citizens, a shuttle service comprising electric vehicles will be started soon. Section I, from Murree Road to the Canning Road



of the project which was recently completed and opened for the public, is receiving appreciation by the general public and the business community. In a

brief interaction with media, Ali Irfan Rizvi, Cant Board's CEO informed him that four E-vehicles would be available in a month, for section one. "We

have received two e-vehicles and two more will be received in the next two weeks totalling four which will serve the citizens as shuttle service from park-


ing areas; 'Potohar-1' to the market outlets", said Rizvi while talking on the pedestrian management mechanism in the market after removal of private vehicles. The remodeling project cost about Rs. 350.0 million for the civil works done by Rawalpindi Cantonment Board and Rs. 750.0 million for electrical works undergrounding electric cable etc., done by the IESCO. For redressal of the crowd management and the traffic congestion in Saddar areas, the Cant Board has broadly categorized three parking areas, one for each section.




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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### DECEMBER

- Dec 01/Romania National Day
- Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day
- Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day
- Dec 05/Thailand National Day
- Dec 06/Finland Independence Day
- Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day
- Dec 09/Tanzania National Day
- Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day
- Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day
- Dec 12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day
- Dec 16/Bahrain National Day
- Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day
- Dec 18/Qatar National Day
- Dec 18/Niger National Day
- Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day
- Dec 23/Japan National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133  
Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police.....9266044  
Motorway Police.9270601-20  
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596  
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



## Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Massive FOECHS scam, FIA launches inquiry

According to the documents available with this correspondent, the management committee, which once operated with the aim of serving Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) employees, was infiltrated by individuals from the real estate sector who exploited their positions for personal gains. Among them, real estate agents and other external parties indulged in embezzlement and illegal land acquisitions of hundreds of kanals of land for an unapproved extension of the society

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A mega scandal has come to light involving financial irregularities, illegal land acquisitions and embezzlement within the Foreign Office Employees Cooperative Housing Society (FOECHS). The society, originally established in the early 1980s to provide affordable housing for employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), has been marred by corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of power, particularly under the previous management committee, which was largely taken over by the property dealers. The FOECHS, which was originally reserved for MOFA employees, opened its membership to the general public in January 2012. This decision, however, resulted in a major crisis. According to

the documents available with this correspondent, the management committee, which once operated with the aim of serving Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) employees, was infiltrated by individuals from the real estate sector who exploited their positions for personal gains. Among them, real estate agents and other external parties indulged in embezzlement and illegal land acquisitions of hundreds of kanals of land for an unapproved extension of the society. The documents reveal that despite a clear rejection of the extension proposal by the President of the society in August 2022, the former management committee proceeded with the expansion, acquiring land without approval from the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The additional land was later sold as residential plots in the market, generating substantial il-

licit profits for the perpetrators. The society's former management committee also engaged in a series of unethical practices, including awarding contracts to favoured contractors at inflated rates for personal kickbacks. These actions led to significant financial losses for the society. As a result, much-needed projects, such as road construction and maintenance of essential infrastructure were left incomplete or neglected. A road that was previously in good condition was even scrapped and replaced with low-quality material, causing inconvenience to residents. Further exacerbating the situation, the boundary wall of various blocks in the society, including Blocks A, B, C, and D, were dismantled and removed in recent months without any prior notice. This left the residents vulnerable to security breaches. Members

or residents of FOECHS perturbed over the situation told this correspondent that despite the dissolution of the previous management committee in November 2023, former members are still involved in meetings with government officials, attempting to influence the upcoming elections for the new committee. This on-going interference has raised questions about the fairness of the election process and the possibility of continued corruption under a new management. The members of the society have also raised the issues of irregularities and embezzlement at different forums and have also called for an external audit to assess the extent of the financial losses caused by the previous members of management committee. In light of these serious allegations, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched an inquiry

into the irregularities within FOECHS. Notices have been issued to several key members of the previous management committee, including Khalid Hussain Memon, the former President; Israr Hussain, the former Vice President; Hashim Kiyani, the former Secretary; Faheem Khan, the former Treasury Member; and Khalid Bashir Tabassum, Muhammad Akram, Muhammad Ishtiaq, Imtiaz Aziz and Irshad Ahmad, all of whom were members of the committee during its tenure. These individuals are under investigation for their alleged involvement in fraudulent activities. The society members demand that the FOECHS be restored to its original purpose of providing affordable housing to MOFA employees without the interference of unscrupulous outsiders, and those involved in fraudulent activities are taken to task as per the law.

## Pakistan's budding writers struggle to find publishers: Mufti

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has a rich pool of literary talent, but new authors face challenges in finding willing publishers to print their work. Talking to APP on Sunday, a writer, folklorist, and the creative founder of Lok Virsa, Uxi Mufti highlighted the need for support in the country's publishing industry. He noted that established publishing houses favour well-known authors, while smaller publishers often require authors to pay for the opportunity to be published. In the traditional model, he said that writers receive royalties for their work but in the current scenario, many budding writers are asked to pay publishers for printing their books, with no guarantee that their work will reach a wider audience. The writer underlined the demand for Urdu literature abroad, particularly in India. "This demand is largely being met by individuals who buy books in Pakistan and resell them overseas at inflated prices, without providing any royalties to the publishers or writers", he maintained. He noted that institutions like the Academy of Letters, National Book Foundation and National Language Promotion Department (NLDP) were established to promote a culture of reading and writing. However, he said that these institutions have lost sight of their primary objective and are now publishing books themselves, which is further weakening the publishing industry. Uxi Mufti stressed that government institutions should focus on supporting and promoting publishers, rather than publishing books themselves. By doing so, he said that Pakistan can create a thriving literary ecosystem that will allow its talented writers to flourish. He said that literature festivals such as Oxford Literary Festival and the Islamabad Literature Festival, showcase dozens of literary works and generate substantial book sales. "This vibrant engagement in literary culture reflects a growing appetite for literature in the society and the presence of both writers and readers", he concluded.

## Mohsin Khalid appointed Convener ICT Admin Standing Committee

ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, along with Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, formally presented him with the appointment letter



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Malik Mohsin Khalid has been appointed as the Chairman/Convener of the ICT Administration Standing Committee of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A respected business leader and Executive Member of ICCI, Mohsin Khalid is well-regarded for his hard

work and commitment to the business community, particularly traders. His close ties with both the local administration and the ICCI are expected to help address the community's issues and strengthen the relationship between the two entities. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, along with Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman

Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, formally presented him with the appointment letter. Meanwhile Mohsin Khalid expressed his gratitude for the support and confidence shown by the ICCI leadership including Chairman Founder Group ICCI Tariq Sadiq, President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Senior Vice

President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry by vowing to make efforts to improve the city's environment and its status as a business hub. His appointment has been widely praised by his well-wishers and friends, recognizing it as a testament to his skills and dedication.

## MD PTDC sees Khunjerab's winter opening as a 'Turning Point' for Pakistan's tourism industry

Managing Director PTDC has termed the historic winter opening of Khunjerab Pass as a 'turning point' for Pakistan's tourism industry. This landmark initiative is poised to pave the way for unprecedented growth and development, unlocking new avenues for tourism and cementing Pakistan's reputation as a premier tourist destination, he added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Aftab ur Rehman Rana Sunday welcomed a new era for Pakistan's tourism sector, as Khunjerab's historic winter opening set the stage for Pakistan's tourism industry to soar to new heights, fostering global collaboration and cultural harmony.

In a recent interview with PTV news channel, the Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation expressed optimism that year-round tourism at Khunjerab Pass would be a game-changer for the local community, significantly improving their quality of life. Managing Director PTDC has termed the historic winter opening of Khunjerab Pass as a 'turning point' for Pakistan's tourism industry. This landmark initiative is poised to pave the way for unprecedented growth

and development, unlocking new avenues for tourism and cementing Pakistan's reputation as a premier tourist destination, he added. He hailed the initiative as a "historic achievement" that would catapult Pakistan's tourism industry to new heights. In a significant boost to Pakistan's burgeoning tourism industry, Aftab ur Rehman Rana revealed that numerous Chinese companies and investors have expressed keen interest in developing world-class tourism resorts in Pakistan. This influx of foreign investment is expected to catapult the country's tourism sector to unprecedented heights, he mentioned. Moreover, he said with the historic opening of Khunjerab Pass to tourists throughout the year, Pakistan is poised to welcome a substantial increase in winter tourism, further bolstering the nation's reputation as a premier destination for global travelers. He announced that Chinese tourist buses will soon be making their way to Pakistan, mark-

ing a significant milestone in the strengthening of bilateral tourism ties between the two nations. This reciprocal arrangement will not only enable Chinese tourists to experience the breathtaking beauty of Pakistan, but also pave the way for Pakistani tourists to embark on exciting journeys to China, he added. As part of this initiative, Pakistani tourist buses will also begin ferrying visitors to China, fostering a new era of people-to-people exchanges and cultural understanding between the two countries, he highlighted. Managing Director also expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the governments of Pakistan and China for their unwavering support and cooperation in making the historic opening of Khunjerab Pass a reality. He praised the visionary leadership and diplomatic efforts of both nations, which have paved the way for a new era of tourism collaboration and people-to-people exchanges.

## Blue line service sets new standard for public transport

ISLAMABAD: The newly launched Blue Line Metro Bus service in Islamabad on Sunday received widespread acclaim from citizens of all ages, with thousands praising its exceptional comfort, affordability and safety as a state-of-the-art bus service showcasing the government's commitment to modern and affordable transportation. According to a report by PTV News, officials have revealed that a substantial 3,000 to 4,000 citizens are relying on the Blue Line Metro Bus Service daily, underscoring its rapid popularity and adoption among the masses, including students, professionals, and families, were seen enjoying the comfortable and hassle-free ride, appreciating the government's efforts to provide a world-class transport facility, the report added. The Blue Line Metro Bus service has not only eased the commuting woes of the citizens but has also set a new standard for public transport in the country, said a citizen. The present government's commitment to improving the public transport system has been evident in the successful launch of the Blue Line Metro Bus service, said Kinza a student. "I am so impressed with the Blue Line Metro Bus service," said Muhammad Ali a daily commuter. "The buses are comfortable, clean and punctual. It is a huge relief for people like me who have to travel long distances every day," he added. "The best part is the affordable fare," said Abdul Raheem, adding, I can travel across the city for just Rs 50, which is a huge saving for me. I am so grateful to the government for launching this service," said another student. "It is convenient, reliable and affordable. I think this service will revolutionize the way people travel in Islamabad," said a working woman while traveling to bus. Waqar, a staff member of the Blue Line Metro Bus service, appreciated the positive response from citizens. "We are thrilled to see people enjoying our service," he said. "Our team has worked tirelessly to ensure that the buses are clean, comfortable and punctual, adding, we are committed to providing the best possible service to our commuters.—DNA

سولہ ایلوٹیشن کمپنی  
SNGPL  
Sindh National Gas Pipeline Limited

### سمجھداری دکھائیں

### کمپیوٹر پر گزرنے لگائیں

گیس کنکشن کتنے سے بچائیں

### خبردار!

کمپیوٹر کے استعمال پر گیس کنکشن بغیر ڈیس کے فوراً منقطع کر دیا جائے گا۔  
پریشن سے بچنے کے لیے گیس کنکشن کے گیس کمپیوٹر کا استعمال ہرگز نہ کریں۔

کمپیوٹر کے استعمال اور گیس چوڑی کی اطلاع 1199 پر دیں

PID/L1700-D/24



## Briefs

## Capital University convocation held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Convocation for Graduates of 2024 of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) held at Convention Centre Islamabad wherein 1269 graduates including BBA, MBA, BS, MS and PhD in the fields of Management Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Engineering Management, Project Management, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Bioinformatics, Biosciences, Biotechnology, Microbiology and Doctor in Pharmacy (PharmD) will be awarded degrees. The chief guest was chairman security and exchange commission Aqif Saeed, whereas Executive Director Cust Prof Sohail afzal presided the ceremony. Prof. Dr. Mansoor Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of University in his inaugural speech, welcomed the graduating students for their presence in this memorable and happy occasion and declared this event as a significant milestone in their lives. He highlighted the contribution made by the University in the field of higher education. "Education plays a vital role in economic development of country. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of sustainable economic development." He added, Akif Saeed, while delivering his keynote address, said education plays a vital role in the economic development of the country. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of sustainable economic development. Nowdays, modern technology should be adopted by students to meet the challenges of 21st century.

"We should act like an educated nation to solve our problems and demonstrate our abilities to meet the challenges of the high-tech era." He added In this Convocation 33 graduates awarded PhD degrees; including 16 in the field of Management Sciences, 8 in the field of Engineering, 4 in the field of Computing, 4 and 05 in the field of Biosciences. PhD graduates who received PhD degrees includes; Maria Mashkoor, Wasim Nasir, Maria Mashkoor, Noshir Wan Khan, Anam Tariq, Haris Bin Khalid, Muhammad Hassaan, Syeda Nawazish Arooj, Ghazia Khoulia Qureshi, Fizzah Khalid Butt, Aamna Batool, Syed Muhammad Hamza Abid Wasti, Ramsha Zakaria, Waseem Akhter, Mushtaq Ahmed, Rameeza Andleeb, Munibah Munir, and Umer Niaz in the field of Management Sciences; Muhammad Usman Tahir, Azmat Saeed, Ahmad Mahmood, Samana Batool and Samra Kanwal in the field of Electrical Engineering; Saheeb Ahmed Kiani and Shumaila Raheed in the field of Mechanical Engineering; Muhammad Waqas Zaffar in the field of Water Resource Management; Najam Ul Hassan, Fakeeha Jafari, Humaira Liaqat and Bilal Ahmad in the field of Computer Science; Anam Tariq, Sana Ilahi, Shahid Hussain, Hina Ahsan and Amna Naheed Khan in the field of Biosciences and Bioinformatics.

## PIDE's proposals for Pakistan's new EV Policy

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Technology Transfer, Global Value Chain Integration, Export Oriented Production and Reducing Upfront Cost – these are the priority areas identified by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in its recommendations for the upcoming Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy. The Prime Minister of Pakistan in September 2024 directed the government to present a new policy for accelerating EV manufacturing and increase user adoption across the country. In response to the Prime Minister's call for a robust EV policy, PIDE has presented its set of recommendations 'Future on Wheels' to support the development of an effective policy framework.

## Chairman PRCS meets Red Cross Society of China chief

President He Wei commended PRCS for its impactful humanitarian work under Chairman Laghari's leadership, particularly its proactive disaster response and climate change initiatives

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD– Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari held a landmark meeting with Mr. He Wei, President of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) and Vice President, Mr. Sun Shuopeng, on the sidelines of the International Seminar on Red Cross Resilient Communities in Guiyang, Guizhou Province on Friday. The meeting marked a significant milestone in the growing partnership between the two humanitarian organizations. The discussions centered around strengthening collaboration to address shared humanitarian challenges and building resilient communities in Pakistan and China. Chairman Laghari expressed gratitude for the steadfast support of the Red Cross Society of China in humanitarian initiatives, which have greatly benefited vulnerable communities in Pakistan. He underscored the longstanding and multifaceted friendship between the two nations, built on mutual respect and cooperation. Highlighting PRCS's recent achievements, Chairman Laghari briefed President He Wei and Vice President Sun Shuopeng on the organization's comprehensive flood 2022 response and ongoing recovery efforts for flood affected families. He also emphasized PRCS's focus on climate resilience, notably the establishment of a Climate Research Center at the PRCS National Headquarters to tackle the escalating impacts of climate change. President He Wei commended PRCS for its impactful humanitarian work under Chairman Laghari's leadership, particularly its proactive disaster response and climate change initiatives. He reaffirmed RCSC's commitment to supporting such



endeavors and emphasized the importance of further collaboration between the two National Societies. "Pakistan's efforts in addressing climate challenges are exemplary, and the Red Cross Society of China is keen to strengthen this partnership to achieve shared goals,"

he stated. The meeting concluded with both organizations agreeing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the near future. The MoU aims to formalize collaboration on capacity building, volunteer network strengthening, joint projects on cli-

mate resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness in communities. Chairman Laghari extended a warm invitation to President He Wei to visit Pakistan and PRCS National Headquarters in Islamabad, further cementing this historic partnership.

## "South Asia will continue to be a relatively low priority for Trump Presidency 2.0"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: At a seminar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, (IRS) and the Metropolitan International University College (MIUC), US foreign policy experts felt that Trump's policies towards South Asia were likely to remain unchanged, with terrorism remaining a key concern. Michael Kugelman, Director South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, U.S., stated that Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy would remain unchanged, making it difficult for Pakistan to navigate its position due to China factor. Regarding India, he noted that while the U.S.-India relationship may face shifts in priorities and, its overall trajectory would remain positive. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the IRS, highlighted that President Trump's aggressive approach on tariffs, immigration, as well as the China factor could lead to enhanced challenges, both bilaterally

and regionally. However, there were significant stakes for Pakistan and the US in a bilateral relationship which, despite many vicissitudes, had withstood the test of times. Besides the existing avenues of cooperation, given the re-emergence of terrorism in Afghanistan, there was potential for cooperation between Pakistan and the US in the area of counterterrorism as well. Dr. Hassan Abbas, a distinguished professor at the NESAC Centre in Washington D.C., suggested that under the Trump administration, the two key elements of US-Pakistan relations; namely security sector collaboration for counterterrorism and the Fulbright scholarship program fostering educational ties—were likely to remain significant and dynamic. The economic ties were also likely to withstand any challenges that may emerge because of Trump's protectionist perspective. He did envisage some challenges for Pakistan in view of the US' "Indo-pacific" strategy, given its close ties with China but felt

that Pakistan could navigate its way through those through well calibrated approach. Additional Foreign Secretary Hamid Asghar noted that Trump would prefer bilateral dealings not just with South Asian countries, but globally as that was the hallmark of his political approach given his background of big business. Renowned journalist and author, Zahid Hussain stated that Trump's engagement with South Asian states, including Pakistan, was likely to remain limited and that developments in Afghanistan would dictate his future engagement with the Taliban as well as Pakistan. Mr. Walid Mustaq, CEO MIUC, noted that since the U.S. was Pakistan's largest export market, enhancing bilateral ties could create new opportunities for Pakistan's entrepreneurial and export ecosystem. The seminar was attended by a large number of researchers, students, academicians, journalists, and foreign diplomats including ambassadors.

## SAARC regional trade just 5% against 40% of NAFTA, 68% of EU

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Trade among SAARC continues to remain in the low range of just 5% of the total trade of the region while this trade in NAFTA region is over 40 percent, 68 percent in EU and 27 percent in ASEAN, laying emphasis on explor-

ing the vast untapped trade potential in SAARC region. This was stated by the speakers at a reception held in honour of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's President Md. Jashim Uddin, organized by the SAARC CCI Vice President Mian Anjum Nisar here at a local hotel today. The SAARC

CCI delegation, led by its President Md. Jashim Uddin, is presently on visit to Pakistan from Bangladesh with a view to revitalize the apex trade body of the South Asia region. The meeting underscored the shared goals and mutual interests, paving the way for enhanced regional cooperation.

## Honda introduces updated prices CG 125

ISLAMABAD: Honda has expanded its CG 125 motorcycle lineup with different variants, including the self-start and gold edition models in Pakistan. These versions were offering minor differences, such as the addition of a self-start feature in the CG 125S and glowing colours in the gold edition. The specifications of all variants were largely similar, featuring a 4 Stroke 125cc OHV Air Cooled engine and a 5-speed constant mesh transmission. The bike also offers both self and kick-start options, with a total weight of 108 kg. The Honda CG 125's build quality, availability of parts, and after-market services contribute to its strong sales in Pakistan. As of December 2024, the price of the CG 125S stands at Rs282,900. In addition, the public bank was offering a Shariah-compliant financing plan for the CG 125S, where buyers can opt for a two-year installment plan. The plan requires a 30 per cent down payment, which amounts to Rs876,670, and a monthly installment of Rs8,555.—DNA

## WARNING!

Common Frauds and Fake Schemes

■ Sale / Purchase of Files of non-registered Housing Societies	■ Fake messages on ATM card blockage
■ Promise of unrealistic reward in return on investment	■ Online trading Cryptocurrency (Bitcoins etc.)
■ Illegal deposits and private loan apps	■ Multi-level marketing, Ponzi schemes and online lotteries
■ Fake messages on BISP funds	■ Online trading of foreign currencies (Forex trading)
■ Online Employment / Visa Frauds	■ Fake insurance coverage offers

Avoid Frauds

Don't share your personal or bank account information (password or PIN code).	Don't fall into the temptation of high and unrealistic profits.
Don't invest in schemes without verification.	Don't sign documents without reading the terms and conditions.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

BE AWARE, BE SAFE

## ATC discharges 32 suspects arrested in D-Chowk protest

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad has discharged 32 individuals arrested during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) protest at D-Chowk.

The suspects were presented for identification before ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain late at night, prompting the judge to express displeasure at the timing. Defence lawyer Ansar Kiyani argued that police had arrested innocent workers from their homes to meet quotas. The investigating officer requested a 30-day remand for the suspects, citing failure to complete identification procedures since their arrest on November 25.

Judge Zulqarnain ordered the suspects' handcuffs to be removed in court and discharged them from the cases. He sternly warned the police against re-arresting them, saying: "If police do this again, I will have them handcuffed." The suspects were previously linked to cases filed at I9 and Margalla police stations. The former ruling party's much-hyped protest last month in Islamabad, aimed at securing the PTI founder's release, had culminated in the party's hasty retreat after the government's midnight crackdown on the protesters. The party's protesters were dispersed from the Red Zone in Islamabad following a crackdown by law enforcers with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and PTI founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi taking to their heels, fleeing the protest site. The law enforcement agencies had arrested more than 1,000 supporters of the party who stormed the federal capital to demand his release, the city's police chief said talking to Reuters on November 27. Khan's aides had alleged, without immediately providing evidence, that hundreds had suffered gunshot wounds during chaotic scenes overnight in the heart of Islamabad as police dispersed protesters.



## Painful narratives

**A**S the Israeli occupation army intensifies its acts of extermination and ethnic cleansing in the northern Gaza Strip, waves of displacement continue towards Gaza City, where the displaced live in dire humanitarian conditions within temporary shelters. New camps have emerged in public squares, clubs, and playgrounds in Gaza City to accommodate those fleeing from the north of the Strip, housing hundreds of families forced to evacuate under the threat of bombardment and death. In these makeshift camps, residents face severe shortages of food and water supplies, compounded by harsh cold weather that exacerbates their suffering. Despite grassroots and charitable initiatives attempting to provide some basic necessities, the limited resources are insufficient to meet daily needs. Prior to the Israeli military aggression on the northern Gaza Strip that began on October 5, approximately 200,000 Palestinians were living in the area. However, forced displacement has led to the evacuation of around 130,000 people, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The displaced individuals moved to Gaza City, primarily to the western and central areas, after refusing to relocate to the southern part of the Strip as requested by the Israeli army. Under the policy of a complete siege on the area, the occupation army has prevented more than 8,000 trucks of aid and goods from entering, according to a statement by Gaza's Government Media Office (GMO). UN officials confirm that the occupation army repeatedly rejects requests to allow aid into the area, which the Gaza government declared a disaster zone on November 5. Throughout the days of the genocide preceding the military operation in the northern governorate about two months ago, the residents of Gaza City were unaccustomed to seeing these camp gatherings. Those who were displaced or whose homes were destroyed would typically seek refuge in the homes of relatives and friends or in displacement centers such as schools and health centers. However, as the number of displaced people from the north increased significantly, there was no longer enough space in homes or centers, forcing the displaced to reside in tents that offer no protection from nearby Israeli airstrikes or the winter cold. On October 5, the occupation army swept through northern Gaza. Palestinians claim that the occupation army aims to occupy the area and turn it into a buffer zone after forcibly displacing its residents amid bloody bombardment and the blockade of food, water, and medicine. Consequently, tens of thousands of Palestinians from northern Gaza were forcibly displaced towards Gaza City, where most settled in tents and shelters. In a new camp set up in the middle of the al-Shati refugee camp west of Gaza, the Rusdi Ghabin family was displaced from Beit Lahiya a month ago. He notes that his family consists of 13 members and that they have no acquaintances or relatives in Gaza City, forcing him to look for a tent to live in after spending two nights on the street. Ghabin describes life in the camp, "The situation in the tents is very difficult, especially at night when the cold intensifies... but it's still better than the street and the open air." He adds, "Many displaced people from Beit Lahiya resorted to tents because they had no alternative and stayed there hoping to return soon to their homes and belongings."



## Syria's new chapter

**R**EBEL GROUPS that ousted former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad have named Mohammed al-Bashir as the caretaker prime minister of a nation that is caught in the vortex of a dramatic regime change with significant geopolitical implications, both regional and global. The flux in Syria ranges from celebration over the removal of a brutal ruler to deep anxiety about what the future holds for more than 23 million citizens who have endured years of repression, war, displacement and turmoil. Violent clashes between rival groups have been reported in the northern city of Manbij, which could plunge Syria into another messy civil war with external powers advancing their sectarian interests by supporting different factions. Rival armed groups range from Islamists and Kurdish separatists to factions representing the interests of the Druze community, with some backed by Iran, Turkey or the United States. Syria, which has been under the authoritarian rule of the Assad family since the 1970s, witnessed a tectonic development when rebel forces led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seized the capital, Damascus, with virtually no resistance. Assad has fled to Russia where he has been granted asylum, thereby bringing more than five decades of tyrannical governance by one family to an inglorious end. The speed with which HTS – once tied to al-Qaeda and currently designated as a terrorist organisation both by the United Nations and the US – seized power has been stunning. Several factors enabled this dramatic sequence of events that began in late November, including low morale and discord within the Syrian military, weakening levels of tangible support from Russia and Iran for the Assad regime and the role of external powers such as Turkey and the US in aiding anti-Assad groups. The events of September 11, 2001, and the US-led "war on terror" convulsed the Arab and Islamic worlds. When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, parts of southwestern Asia were undergoing varying degrees of turmoil. The threat posed by al-Qaeda morphed into what is now known as Islamic State. At one time, Isis controlled large parts of Syria. Over the years, new groups were spawned – some with US support. In the tangled web of clones, HTS emerged from a group known as Jabhat al-Nusra, which was considered the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda before it broke its allegiance. In English, HTS translates as the Organisation for the Liberation of the Levant. It cannot be ruled out that Syria could be governed the way Afghanistan is being ruled by the Taliban, with an inflexible interpretation of Sharia law. Social media commentary from Syrians who fled the country over the past decade to escape the brutal repression of the Assad regime varies from exultation over political prisoners freed from dungeons to deep anxiety about what system HTS will impose. Recent statements by the interim leadership about women and their freedoms have been reassuring. Iran, which backed Assad through its non-state ally Hezbollah has been weakened by his overthrow while Turkey has emerged as a major beneficiary in the regional geopolitical flux. It has been reported that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tacitly enabled HTS in their triumphant takeover of Damascus. While Turkey has rejected claims of its involvement, the country is undoubtedly in a powerful position in the wake of Assad's overthrow. The future course of events will depend on how the new government in Damascus positions itself in relation to its neighbours – particularly Turkey and Israel.

# China and USA: Pillars of Global Prosperity

Qamar Bashir



Bilateral trade surpasses \$700 billion annually, making it one of the most significant economic relationships in the world—larger than the entire GDP of over 150 countries. As of 2023, U.S. investment in China totaled approximately \$126.9 billion, focused on sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, and consumer goods, while China's investment in the U.S. stood at about \$28 billion, concentrated in real estate, technology, and infrastructure. If all economic, political, and legal irritants between the United States and China were resolved, their trade...

**I**N December 2024, the United States and China renewed their government-to-government Science and Technology Agreement (STA) with a five-year protocol, continuing a collaboration first established in 1979. Over the decades, the STA has yielded significant mutual benefits, with the U.S. leveraging China's biodiversity to advance agriculture, medicine, and environmental science, besides joining hands in climate science, renewable energy, AI, and quantum computing. For China, the STA facilitated modernization in biotechnology, aerospace, and telecommunications while enabling its researchers to gain expertise at U.S. institutions, fueling domestic advancements in agriculture, environmental policy, and clean energy. The deep-rooted cooperation between the United States and China defies the prevalent perception of adversarial bilateral relations. In reality, their economies are so deeply intertwined and interdependent that further strengthening their economic, financial, trade, and investment ties seems inevitable. Bilateral trade surpasses \$700 billion annually, making it one of the most significant economic relationships in the world—larger than the entire GDP of over 150 countries. As of 2023, U.S. investment in China totaled approximately \$126.9 billion, focused on sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, and consumer goods, while China's investment in the U.S. stood at about \$28 billion, concentrated in real estate, technology, and infrastructure. If all economic, political, and legal irritants between the United States and China were resolved, their trade and investment relationship could grow exponentially, potentially doubling trade volumes to over \$1.5 trillion annually and increasing bilateral foreign direct investment (FDI) to \$500 billion or more, transforming them into a global trade powerhouse. However, significant roadblocks hinder this potential, including a persistent trade imbalance, tariffs, and mutual accusations of unfair practices. Intellectual property concerns, forced technology transfers, and restrictive regulations challenge U.S. businesses in China, while national security fears limit Chinese investments in sensitive U.S. sectors. Geopolitical tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, and human rights issues in Xinjiang and Hong Kong exacerbate mistrust. In an ideal scenario, where the United States and China have resolved their longstanding differences, established a partnership that have prioritize

global development, technological innovation, and peace, diplomatic resolutions have address security issues in Taiwan and human rights concerns, while fair trade policies and the removal of investment barriers have created open markets and foster mutual trust, in such a scenario, the two nations could lead efforts to upgrade road, air, and port infrastructure worldwide, adding an estimated \$2 trillion in global trade capacity annually and boosting GDP growth by \$500 billion across developing regions.

This mutually beneficial collaboration could extend to defense and space research, yielding advancements in security, space exploration, and renewable energy technologies, with an estimated combined annual investment of \$300 billion generating global benefits. This partnership will ensure peaceful and secure sea, air, and land routes, paving the way for sustained economic growth and global stability, estimated to contribute \$1 trillion annually to global economic activity. For the citizens of both nations, this cooperation will bring significant dividends. Open markets and seamless trade, estimated to exceed \$2 trillion annually, will boost GDP growth by \$1 trillion combined and create millions of new jobs in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and technology. Joint investments in clean energy, valued at \$500 billion over a decade, will make renewable technologies affordable and accessible, reducing energy costs for households and businesses by as much as 20%-30%. Defense collaboration will reduce tensions, reallocating an estimated \$100 billion annually to critical sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Increased cultural exchanges and educational opportunities, valued at \$30 billion annually through student and tourism contributions, will further strengthen mutual understanding and nurture global talent. Globally, this partnership will drive transformative changes. Modernized infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, worth an estimated \$1.5 trillion in investment, will unlock economic potential, reduce poverty, and foster regional development, adding \$500 billion annually to regional GDP. Affordable renewable energy initiatives and global climate efforts will mitigate environmental risks, contributing \$200 billion annually in savings from reduced emissions and energy efficiency gains. Collaborative trade and economic policies will sta-

bilize markets, reduce volatility, and enhance global supply chains, contributing an estimated \$1 trillion annually to global economic efficiency. Joint advancements in AI, quantum computing will add \$300 billion annually in global technological value, addressing challenges like climate change and resource optimization. A U.S.-China partnership in space exploration would revolutionize scientific discovery, technological innovation, and global economic growth, benefiting both nations and the world. By pooling resources, expertise, and infrastructure, they could achieve ambitious goals like establishing lunar and Martian bases, advancing satellite technology, and pioneering space-based industries such as asteroid mining and solar power. This collaboration would lower costs, accelerate breakthroughs in medicine, energy, and materials science, and create millions of high-tech jobs. Beyond the economic and scientific dividends, a united front in space exploration would inspire humanity, reduce geopolitical tensions, and foster global cooperation, marking a transformative era for civilization. By reallocating resources currently spent on military competition, trade restrictions, and geopolitical conflicts, both nations could instead foster global peace and channel investments into projects that uplift not just their citizens but also billions of people around the world. The logic for such cooperation is compelling. Continued rivalry drains resources, creates uncertainty, and destabilizes global markets, harming not only the two nations but also the international community. In contrast, collaboration would unleash the peace dividend, reducing global tensions and ensuring stability. Investments in infrastructure, clean energy, and technology could catalyze growth across developing regions, lifting millions out of poverty and fostering resilience against global challenges like climate change. Ultimately, the realization of this vision depends on the leadership of both nations understanding that mutual upliftment is not just desirable—it is essential for the well-being of their own citizens and for global progress. The path to cooperation may require hard compromises, but the rewards—a peaceful, prosperous, and unified world—are undeniably worth the effort.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
Former Press Minister at  
Embassy of Pakistan to France  
Former MD, SRBC

## Separation and Sacrifice: The pain of December 16 in Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Another shared aspect of these tragedies is the lack of full transparency. While the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report attempted to shed light on the events of 1971, much of it remained classified for years, leaving gaps in public understanding. Similarly, despite numerous investigations, the complete truth behind the APS attack, particularly in terms of lapses in security and intelligence...

**D**ECEMBER 16 marks one of the most solemn days in Pakistan's history, a day forever etched in the collective memory of the nation. It stands as a grim reminder of two harrowing tragedies—both different in nature yet equally devastating. On December 16, 1971, Pakistan faced the painful separation of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and on the same date in 2014, the nation was shaken to its core by the heinous attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, which claimed the lives of 149 people, including 132 children. These events, separated by decades, continue to haunt Pakistanis, demanding reflection, accountability, and lessons for the future. The fall of Dhaka in 1971 was not a sudden event; it was the result of political mismanagement, lack of inclusivity, and the inability to bridge growing regional and ethnic divides. The seeds of discontent were sown over years of neglect and mistrust, culminating in a brutal conflict fueled by external interference. While the military surrender at Dhaka remains a wound which may never be healed. The real tragedy lies in the disintegration of unity and the loss of what could have been a shared future. This event underscores the importance of equitable governance, justice, and respect for diversity. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize the importance of self-reflection, repentance, and learning from one's mistakes as a means of personal and spiritual growth. The Qur'an encourages believers to seek forgiveness for their errors and amend their behavior, as seen in verses like, "And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins..." (Surah Al-Imran, 3:135). The Hadith further underscores this principle, with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) teaching that all humans err, but the best are those who repent and strive for improvement (Sunan Ibn Majah, 4251). Islam views mistakes as opportunities to develop humility, gain wisdom, and strengthen one's faith through sincere effort to avoid repeating them. This perspective fosters resilience and personal accountability, aligning human actions with divine guidance. Yet, even decades later, there are aspects of this chapter that remain shrouded in secrecy. Understanding

and acknowledging the full truth behind the events of 1971 could help Pakistan learn from its mistakes and build a more inclusive and resilient nation. Fast forward to December 16, 2014, and Pakistan faced another heart-wrenching moment. The APS massacre exposed the barbarity of terrorism in its most horrifying form. Innocent children, the future of the nation, were targeted in an act of pure evil that shocked the world. This attack was not merely an assault on individuals; it was an attack on the very fabric of society. The massacre ignited a national resolve to eradicate terrorism, leading to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and a significant military offensive. However, as the years pass, questions linger about the sustained implementation of these measures and the commitment to preventing such tragedies in the future. In both of these tragedies, the enemies were internal or external, but they left no stone unturned to harm this country and its people. The separation of East Pakistan was fueled by both internal discord and external exploitation, while the APS attack demonstrated the cruelty of those who seek to destabilize Pakistan by targeting its most vulnerable. These incidents highlight the need for constant vigilance, unity, and proactive measures to protect the country from such adversaries. Both incidents brought immeasurable grief and highlighted the heavy price of division, extremism, and unresolved conflicts. Yet, they also posed a vital question: have we truly learned from these tragedies? The separation of East Pakistan was a stark reminder of the importance of unity, justice, and political prudence. The APS attack emphasized the need for a zero-tolerance approach to extremism and a commitment to safeguarding the lives of the most vulnerable members of society. While efforts have been made, such as counter-terrorism measures and initiatives for regional cooperation, there remains much to be done in addressing the root causes that lead to such catastrophes. Another shared aspect of these tragedies is the lack of full transparency. While the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report attempted to shed light on the events of 1971, much of it remained classified for years, leaving

gaps in public understanding. Similarly, despite numerous investigations, the complete truth behind the APS attack, particularly in terms of lapses in security and intelligence, remains elusive. In both cases, the absence of full disclosure has hindered the nation's ability to move forward with clarity and purpose. The lessons from December 16 are manifold. First and foremost, there is an urgent need for introspection. Whether it is ensuring that all regions of Pakistan feel equally represented or fostering an environment where extremism finds no foothold, the path forward demands unity and vigilance. Political stability, economic inclusivity, and a commitment to the rule of law are crucial. For decades, the mistakes of the past have been repeated due to a lack of accountability and long-term planning. Both the events of 1971 and 2014 demonstrate the devastating consequences of ignoring warning signs and failing to act decisively. Moreover, education plays a pivotal role. The APS tragedy was an attack on education itself, a stark reminder of the transformative power of knowledge and the threat it poses to those who seek to perpetuate ignorance and extremism. A renewed focus on education, one that emphasizes critical thinking, tolerance, and national cohesion, is vital in ensuring that future generations grow up with the tools to confront challenges with resilience and unity. Another critical lesson lies in the need for an unwavering commitment to justice. Whether it is addressing the grievances that lead to political or regional unrest or ensuring swift and effective responses to acts of terror, justice must remain a cornerstone of the nation's policies. This includes holding those responsible for past mistakes accountable and taking steps to prevent their recurrence. As Pakistan reflects on December 16, it must do so with a sense of purpose. This day is not only a reminder of what was lost but also a call to action for what must be achieved. The pain and grief associated with this date should serve as a catalyst for change—a change that ensures unity, security, and prosperity for all citizens. Only by learning from the past and committing to a brighter future can Pakistan truly honor the memories of those lost on this tragic date.



## Briefs

## 'Meaningful dialogue with PTI not possible'

FROM PAGE 01  
The committee, he said, would negotiate with the federal government on two points – the release of "political prisoners" facing trial and the constitution of a judicial commission to probe the events of May 9, 2023, and a late-night crackdown on PTI protesters on November 26. "If these two demands are not accepted, a civil disobedience movement will be launched from December 14," the jailed former premier had said, adding that the government would be responsible for the results of this movement. Later, the Khan-founded party extended the date for civil disobedience to December 16. Responding to a question, the minister said that he did not know about the talks with the former ruling party, adding that statements regarding talks were coming from the former ruling party.

## Will follow Khan's decision...

FROM PAGE 01  
The release of detained party members, and the reversal of the 26th Amendment. He announced the formation of a five-member team to negotiate with the federal government on two points: the release of political prisoners facing trial and the formation of a judicial commission to probe the events of May 9, 2023 and November 26. He said if these two demands were not accepted, the PTI would initiate a civil disobedience movement on December 14. Imran also criticised the PTI leadership for acting like 'all is well' on Thursday and reiterated his call for civil disobedience if the demands were not met by December 15.

## One Pakistani dead, 47...

FROM PAGE 01  
contact with both the Hellenic Coast Guard and the Coast Guard of Chania, who are directly managing the search and rescue operation. "Embassy officials have travelled to Crete to meet with the rescued Pakistanis and provide any necessary assistance," the ministry said. The ministry also confirmed that its Crisis Management Unit (CMU) have been activated to assist Pakistanis in Greece. Pakistani nationals in Greece and their families are urged to contact the CMU via telephone at 051-9207887 or by email at cmu1@mofa.gov.pk. Families of the missing Pakistanis can reach the Embassy of Pakistan in Greece to provide details at +30-6943850188.

## President, PM for combating..

FROM PAGE 01  
The prime minister instructed Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to submit an inquiry report of the incident as soon as possible. He said concrete steps should be taken to prevent such incidents in future. Shehbaz Sharif said human trafficking is a heinous crime that claims many lives and destroys many homes every year. He said human traffickers are a cruel mafia which extorts money from poor people by showing them false dreams. Shehbaz Sharif said such people should be identified and punished severely so that they may not repeat such heinous acts. On the directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, a special cell has been established at the Pakistani Embassy in Greece to address the emergency situation, arising out due to boat capsizing incident. The special cell will ensure the identity of the Pakistanis and the access of their relatives to their loved ones. As many as 47 Pakistanis, affected in yesterday's boat sinking incident, have been identified and rescued.



ISLAMABAD: Participants walking with their dogs during FCI CACIB show, at F-9 Park, in the Federal Capital. – Online

## Smith and Head's tons give Australia control over India

Head and Smith share a dominant 241-run partnership for the fourth wicket

## SPORTS DESK

BRISBANE: In-form Travis Head and experienced batter Steve Smith scored centuries to put Australia in a commanding position on the second day of the third Test against India here at the Brisbane Cricket Ground on Sunday. The home side resumed their first innings from 28/0 through Nathan McSweeney and Usman Khawaja. The opening pair, however, could not stretch their overnight partnership as Khawaja (21) fell victim to in-form Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah in just the third over of the day. The right-arm pacer struck again in his next over to dismiss McSweeney (nine) and reduced the home side to 38/2. Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith then shared a brief 37-run partnership for the third wicket, which culminated with the former's dismissal off Nitish Kumar Reddy after scoring a 55-ball 12. With Australia reeling at 75/3,

Head joined hands with Smith and together they raised an astounding recovery. The pair dominated the Indian bowling attack and recorded a marathon 241-run partnership, which saw both batters scoring centuries. The match-defining partnership eventually concluded Smith's dismissal off Bumrah after scoring a drought-ending ton. "It was nice to get in, feel good," said Smith, who scored 101 off 190 deliveries with the help of 12 boundaries. "I missed out for a little while now so it's nice to get three figures again." Meanwhile, Head was then involved in brief partnerships with Mitchell Marsh (five) and Alex Carey before India's ace pacer Bumrah drew curtains on his stellar knock. The left-handed batter remained the top-scorer for Australia with 152 off 160 deliveries with the help of 18 fours. His dismissal had reduced Australia to 327/6 but a sensible 58-run partnership between skipper Pat Cummins (20) and



Carey kept the home side afloat. The wicketkeeper batter was unbeaten on 45 when the stumps were called. He will resume Australia's first innings on day three with Mitchell Starc, who had scored a run-a-ball seven not out. Bumrah was the pick of the Indian bowlers, courtesy of his five-wicket haul, while Reddy and Mohammed Siraj, chipped in with

a wicket apiece. Australian batter Steve Smith showcased his class and resilience by breaking multiple records during the third Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India. Smith's 33rd Test century at the Gabba not only ended an 18-month drought but also cemented his place among cricket's greats. The 35-year-old registered his 10th Test century against India in just 41 innings, equalling Joe Root's record for the most hundreds against a single opposition. Most centuries in Test cricket by players against India:

- Steve Smith - 10 centuries in 22 matches
- Root - 10 centuries in 30 matches
- Gary Sobers - 8 centuries in 18 matches
- Viv Richards - 8 centuries in 28 matches
- Ricky Ponting - 8 centuries in 29 matches

This was also Smith's first century since June 2023, spanning 23 innings—the longest dry

spell of his career. Smith's knock of 101 off 190 balls saw him surpass Mark Waugh to become the sixth-highest run-scorer in Australian international cricket history. Across 344 matches, Smith has accumulated 16,561 runs at an average of 47.58, including 45 centuries and 80 half-centuries. Most runs by Australian players in international cricket:

- Ricky Ponting: 27,368 runs
- David Warner: 18,995 runs
- Steve Waugh: 18,496 runs
- Allan Border: 17,698 runs
- Michael Clarke: 17,112 runs
- Steve Smith: 16,561 runs
- Mark Waugh: 16,529 runs

The former skipper entered the crease under pressure, with Australia at 38/2 after Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah dismissed both openers, Usman Khawaja and Nathan McSweeney, within the first five overs. Marnus Labuschagne's lean patch continued as he fell for 12, edging a delivery from Nitish Kumar Reddy.

## India crush Pakistan in U19 Women's Asia Cup encounter

Pakistan next face Nepal in their second match on Monday

## WEB DESK

KUALA LAMPUR: Sonam Yadav's four-wicket haul led India to a dominant nine-wicket victory over Pakistan in the second match of the ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup here at the Bayuemas Cricket Oval on Sunday. Pakistan captain Zoofishan Ayyaz's decision to bat first backfired as the green shirts could only manage 67/7 in the allotted 20 overs despite opening batter Komal Khan's gutsy knock. Komal remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with a cautious 24 off 32 deliveries, laced with four boundaries. She oversaw Pakistan's batting expedition until Mithila Vinod trapped her lbw in the ninth over. Her dismissal sparked a collapse, which saw the green shirts losing wickets at an alarming rate and subsequently halting the team's scoring rate. Besides Komal, Fatima Khan was the only other Pakistani batter to amass double figures, while the rest struggled against Sonam-led Indian bowling attack. Sonam returned astounding figures of 4/6 in her four overs, while Mithila, Parunka Sisodia and VJ Joshi chipped in with a wicket apiece. In response, India comfortably chased down the modest 68-run target for the loss of just one wicket and 73 balls to spare, thanks to a quickfire knock by opener G Kamilini. India, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as Fatima Khan got Gongadi Trisha (0) caught and bowled on just the second delivery of the run chase. Following the early blow, Sanika Chalke joined Kamilini in the middle and together they anchored the run chase. The duo recorded a match-winning 68-run partnership, majorly led by Kamilini, who top-scored with a 29-ball 44, studded with four fours and three sixes. Chalke, on the other hand, made an unbeaten 19 off 17 deliveries. For her match-winning knock, Kamilini was adjudged the player of the match.

## Wolves sack O'Neil after Ipswich defeat

## WEB DESK

LONDON: Wolves have sacked manager Gary O'Neil in the wake of Saturday's 2-1 defeat by Ipswich Town. Wolves chairman Jeff Shi said: "We're very grateful to Gary for all of his effort, dedication and hard work during his time at the club, and we wish him and his team the best of luck for the future." The departure of the 41-year-old and his backroom staff comes just three days after Shi said the club was "united" behind O'Neil following Monday's 2-1 defeat at West Ham. Saturday's defeat was their 11th in the Premier League this season - and leaves the Black Country club 19th, four points from safety. O'Neil replaced Julen Lopetegui just four days before the start of the 2023-24 season, with Wolves going on to finish 14th. Wolves began this season poorly, losing seven and drawing one of their first eight league games. A run of four games unbeaten, including successive wins over Southampton and Fulham.

## Real Madrid held to high-scoring draw at Vallecano

BARCELONA: Real Madrid was held at Rayo Vallecano to 3-3 in a thrilling derby on Saturday, missing a chance to overtake Barcelona at the top of La Liga. Rayo set a fast pace and stunned the powerhouse with two headed goals from Unai López and Abdul Mumin to lead 2-0 by the 36th minute. Federico Valverde struck with a powerful shot from well outside the area to pull one back for Madrid then Jude Bellingham headed the visitors level from a pass by Rodrigo just before halftime. Madrid looked on course to completing a comeback win when Rodrigo put them in front for the first time with a deflected shot in the 56th. But Rayo midfielder Isi Palazon stretched out a boot to steer Florian Lejeune's shot past Thibaut Courtois in the 64th. Madrid was without striker Kylian Mbappé, who is nursing a left-thigh injury. Vinicius Junior went on as a second-half substitute. Goalie Augusto Batalla saved the Brazilian's best effort in the final period. Madrid remained second, one point behind Barcelona. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted his team dropped its guard in defense when his players left López and Mumin unchecked to turn in crosses. But he said he was "satisfied" with his team's reaction, especially given the injuries to defensive starters Dani Carvajal, Eder Militao, and Ferland Mendy. He also looked to last season, when his team drew twice with Rayo. "Last year we didn't win here, we drew, and we won the league anyway," Ancelotti said. "We are playing well and on the right path. So, we had a draw. We need to look toward the next games." Madrid, as the Champions League titleholder, next travels to Qatar to play the

Intercontinental Cup final against Mexican club Pachuca. "We have a great chance to win a title on Wednesday, which would put the cherry on top of a great year," Ancelotti said. Bellingham took his league scoring run to six games in a row. Vinicius will miss the next game at home against Sevilla after picking up his fifth yellow card, this time for protesting. Rayo was in 13th place. The modest club has also held Atletico Madrid to 1-1 and forced Barcelona to rally for a 2-1 thanks to a late goal. "Before the game we talked about all our recent games with Real Madrid when we had been close to winning, so we knew that if they weren't on their game then we could get a good result," Rayo coach Íigo Pérez said. Sevilla's Jesus Navas bid farewell to his home fans during a 1-0 win over Celta Vigo as he nears the end of his 20-year playing career. Players from both teams wore T-shirts saying "Navas Legend" before kickoff. They gave a tearful Navas an honor guard with trophies he won with the club placed on the pitch. Navas wept again, and knelt to kiss the turf when he was substituted with 20 minutes left. "Jesus has always been my role model, I remember watching him when I was a child," Sevilla goal-scorer Manu Bueno said. "I am so proud to have scored this goal and be able to dedicate it to him." Navas announced in May he would retire at the end of the year, midway through this season. Navas, who turned 39 last month, debuted for his boyhood club in 2004 and played two stints for Sevilla on either side of his spell at Manchester City from 2013-17 when he helped it win one Premier League. – Agencies

## Haris, Ali give Stallions victory over Panthers

Stallions strengthen their top position in the standings with fourth victory

## WEB DESK

RAWALPINDI: Mohammad Ali's four-wicket haul, followed Mohammad Haris's quickfire half-century, steered Stallions to a resounding six-wicket victory over Panthers in the 11th match of the Champions T20 Cup here at the Rawalpindi Stadium on Sunday. Put into bat first, Panthers registered a commendable total of 168/7 in their allotted 20 overs, courtesy of in-form Haider Ali's half-century. The Shadab Khan-led side, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as their hard-hitting opener Sharjeel Khan (four) walked back in the second over with just 12 runs on the board. Following the early hiccup, Haider joined hands with wicketkeeper batter Umar Siddiq to anchor the innings. The pair batted cautiously to add 61 runs for the second wicket until the opening batter was cleaned

up by Ali in the 11th over. He scored 29 off 30 deliveries with the help of three boundaries. The right-arm pacer struck again on the next delivery, dismissing Panthers'



skipper Shadab Khan for a golden duck. Haider then put together an important 63-run partnership for the fourth-wicket before both perished in an eventful 18th over.

Haider remained the top-scorer for the Panthers with a 49-ball 73, studded with 10 boundaries including five sixes, while Mubasir made 30 off 19. Mohammad Ali was the standout bowler for the Stallions, picking up four wickets for 28 runs in his four overs, while Mohammad Amir Khan bagged two wickets. Set to chase 169, Stallions knocked the winning runs on the fourth delivery of the final over to seal their fourth victory in the ongoing tournament. Leading the way was their skipper Mohammad Haris, who struck a blistering half-century and top-scored with a 35-ball 61. Haris was also involved in match-defining third-wicket partnership with Hussain Talat, who made significant contribution with his 25-ball 32. After the two batters perished in the span of just one over, veteran Shoaib Malik (21\*) and Mohammad Mohsin (15\*) batted sensibly at the backend and led their side over the line with an unbeaten 34-run partnership.

## PM vows to end polio...

FROM PAGE 01  
prince's role was appreciable for polio eradication in Pakistan. "I especially thank the government of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, for his very valuable contribution towards eradicating polio not only in Pakistan but also Afghanistan, and of course, I deeply appreciate the efforts of Bill Gates Foundation, WHO and I want to assure you that together we will march forward and will not rest until polio is thrown out for all times to come," he added. During the inauguration, the prime minister highlighted the growing concern of rising polio cases, with around 60 new reported cases, but assured that with the combined efforts of the federal and provincial governments, the country would overcome this challenge. The provincial distribution of polio cases this year includes 26 in Balochistan, 18 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 17 in Sindh, and one each in Punjab and Islamabad, according to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). He urged the parents to ensure vaccination of their children to protect them from polio.

## Pak forex reserves top \$12 billion

FROM PAGE 01  
\$620 million in just one week. According to a report, the latest surge comes after a period of economic uncertainty and challenges, marking a significant recovery. The country's total foreign exchange reserves now amount to \$16.62 billion, with commercial banks holding \$4.58 billion of that total. The central bank's reserves increased by \$13 million during the week, supported by inflows from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which exceeded \$500 million. This inflow not only pushed reserves above the \$12 billion mark but also elevated the import cover to 2.15 months, the highest in nearly three years. "The inflow from ADB has contributed to the elevation of reserves and, in turn, import cover, taking them to their highest levels in almost three years," said Waqas Ghani Kukaswadia, an analyst at JS Global. Earlier, the reserves held by commercial banks saw a slight decline of \$33 million, settling at \$4.55 billion, according to Arif Habib Limited (AHL) research head Tahir Abbas.

## PTI is fond of pursuing 'politics...'

FROM PAGE 01  
Gandapur's allegations were based on lies and concoction, he said adding now foreign media was invited to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to give them misleading briefings. The facts should be known to the public and mischief and anti-nationalism should be exposed, he remarked. He said Gandapur had claimed the next call will not be peaceful but the question arises which of their past calls were peaceful. He said on November 26, they invaded the capital with AK 47 rifles, teargas shells, grenades and slingshots. The PTI first faked 1200 dead bodies and spread AI generated fake pictures on social media. "If they were speaking the truth, their leadership would not have been given figures from 12 to 1200 deaths", he added.

## PIA all set to resume...

FROM PAGE 01  
as stated by DG CAA, to settle pending financial obligations. As per DG CAA Nadir Shafi Dar, payments to the FAA are expected to be made shortly, paving the way for the FAA's delegation to visit Pakistan by February or March. There is hope that Pakistan will be reclassified to the 'Category One' status with the FAA, allowing direct flights to the U.S. to resume. The suspension of Pakistan International Airline's (PIA) flights to the U.S. began in 2017, when six flights per week were operated between Pakistan and the U.S., including four to New York and two to Chicago.



## Briefs

## At least 14 killed as Cyclone Chido devastates Mayotte

PARIS: At least 14 people were killed in Mayotte when a fierce cyclone battered the French Indian Ocean territory, authorities said Sunday, with officials warning it will take days to know the full toll. Rescue workers and supplies are being rushed in by air and sea, but their efforts are likely to be hindered by damage to airports and electricity distribution in a territory where even clean drinking water was already subject to chronic shortages. The toll of 14 was counted in a provisional list compiled by authorities, a security source told MEDIA. Nine people were gravely wounded and fighting for their lives in hospital, said Ambdilwahedou Soumaila, mayor of Mayotte's capital Mamoudzou, while 246 more were seriously injured. Mayotte's 320,000 residents had been ordered into lockdown as cyclone Chido bore down on the islands around 500 kilometres (310 miles) east of Mozambique. Its gusts of at least 226 kilometres per hour had "completely destroyed" the territory's many shantytowns, acting Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said following a crisis meeting in Paris late Saturday. Electricity poles were hurled to the ground, trees uprooted and sheet-metal roofs and walls torn off improvised structures inhabited by at least one-third of the population.—APP

## Gaza rescuers say 18 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

GAZA STRIP: Gaza's civil defence agency reported Sunday that overnight Israeli strikes across the Palestinian territory killed at least 18 people, including four displaced individuals who had sought refuge in a tent. Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told MEDIA that rescuers worked through the night, recovering the bodies of 18 people, while dozens more were injured in the "ongoing aggression and Israeli aerial and artillery bombardment" across Gaza. Bassal reported that the dead included four people killed in an Israeli airstrike targeting a house in central Gaza City. Another four were killed, and eight injured, when an Israeli missile struck a tent sheltering dozens of displaced people in Deir el-Balah city, in central Gaza.—APP

## Iran sandstorm forces school closures, flight cancellations

TEHRAN: A sand and dust storm hit southwestern Iran on Sunday, resulting in the closure of schools and public buildings and the cancellation of flights due to poor visibility, state media reported. A thick yellow fog shrouded the oil-rich provinces of Khuzestan and Bushehr, which border Iraq and are more than 400 kilometres (250 miles) from Tehran. Buildings were barely visible in images carried by the official IRNA news agency, while residents protected themselves with masks. In southwestern Iran, schools and public services will remain closed on Sunday, a working day, and all flights are suspended until further notice due to visibility having been reduced to 100 meters (330 feet), Tasnim news agency reported. In the city of Abadan in Khuzestan province, the air quality was considered "hazardous" on Sunday, with an index of 500, exceeding by more than 25 times the pollution rates deemed acceptable by the World Health Organization (WHO). The storm arrived from neighbouring Iraq, while another dust storm hit the city of Zabol in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchistan province, according to state TV. Dust and sandstorms have long affected the region but have become more intense and more frequent in recent years, with Iran particularly hard hit.—APP

## CNS calls on highest civil, military leadership of Bahrain

King of Bahrain appreciated Pakistan Navy's role and commitment to regional maritime security and stability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf, called on the highest civil and military leadership during an official visit to Bahrain. The Naval Chief held meetings with the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy) on Sunday. Pakistan's cuisine CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on highest civil, military leadership of Bahrain. During these meetings, discussions focused on strengthening defence cooperation and reinforcing the historic ties between Bahrain and Pakistan. The King appreciated the Pakistan Navy's role and commitment to regional maritime security and stability. Pakistan's cuisine Later, the Chief of the Naval Staff met the Commander-in-Chief of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Commander of the Bahrain National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed bin



Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force (RBNF), Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Binali. CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on highest civil, military leadership of Bahrain. During these engagements, professional matters of mutual interest, including regional maritime security and bilateral defence collaboration, were discussed. The Naval Chief emphasized the importance of enhancing interactions between the armed forces of both countries through joint exercises, mutual visits, and training exchange programs. Admiral Naveed Ashraf also visited RBNF Ship MANAMA and the Royal Command and Staff College. CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on highest civil, military leadership of Bahrain in his address at the Royal Command and Staff College, the Naval Chief elaborated on the current and emerging environment in the Indian Ocean Region and highlighted the need for a region-centric maritime security construct. The Naval Chief's visit is expected to further strengthen and expand defence ties between the two brotherly nations, it further said.

## Big demo in Dallas demands release of Aafia

Senator Talha Mahmood emphasized the significant global impact of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release, especially on the Muslim community, asserting that her release would serve as a powerful symbol of America's dedication to both justice and compassion

DALLAS, USA: A big protest demo was held in front of FMC Carswell jail, in which Dr Aafia Siddiqui is detained, demanding her immediate release. The protesters asked the outgoing US President to pardon Dr Siddiqui on humanitarian grounds. They said Aafia is an innocent victim of the so-called war on terror and now she should be released. However, Senator Muhammad Talha, a member of the delegation, spoke exclusively to The Media Line from Dallas, describing the meeting with Dr. Aafia Siddiqui as "encouraging." He expressed hope that US President Joe Biden might grant her a pardon. "There comes a time when an outgoing president pardons many individuals," Senator Talha told The Media Line. "Currently, President Biden has over 60 pardon requests, including Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's. We hope her request will be prioritized, and the President will kindly consider it." Talha added that the delegation held multiple meetings with US senators, high-ranking State Department officials, and local community leaders. "We also collaborated with the organization ICNA, which provided significant support in this matter," he noted. The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) in Dallas is part of a national grassroots organization dedicated to serving the Muslim community in North America. Established in 1968, ICNA focuses on self-development, education, outreach, and social services, with its Dallas chapter offering a wide range of programs and services. Dr. Siddiqui, according to Senator Talha, expressed her deepest concern about her continued imprisonment and longing for her family. "She has already served 16 years, well beyond the 10-year sentence typically given for attempted murder in the US. She is missing her children, parents, and relatives, and her primary wish is to be freed from prison," he said. Senator Talha Mahmood emphasized the significant global impact of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release, especially on the Muslim community, asserting that her release would serve as a powerful symbol of America's dedication to both justice and compassion. He expressed optimism, saying, "God willing, Dr. Aafia will be released soon and will return to Pakistan to live a life of dignity and respect with her children."—Agencue

## South Korea's Yoon impeached: what happens next?

SEOUL: South Korean lawmakers have voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his shock decision to declare martial law last week, which plunged the country into some of its worst political turmoil in decades. Technocratic Prime Minister Han Duck-soo has stepped in as interim leader and will govern the country for a maximum of eight months, depending on how long the court deliberates on the impeachment motion and what it decides to do. In his first address to the nation as acting president, Han vowed to "ensure stable governance." "I will devote all my strength and efforts to ensure stable governance," the 75-year-old career bureaucrat said. In its last such deliberation involving former president Park Geun-hye — impeached by parliament over corruption and incompetence allegations — the Constitutional Court took 92 days to review the motion and remove her from office. The court requires six votes in favour of impeachment from its nine-member bench. But with three seats vacant due to disagreements between the ruling and opposition parties, the court must vote unanimously to support the impeachment motion — unless it fills the empty positions in the coming weeks. Legal experts say it is very likely the judges will remove him given the clear constitutional violations involved in his martial law declaration. It is clear Yoon "aimed to paralyse the state's functions," Kim Hyun-jung, a researcher at the Korea University Institute of Law, told AFP. "Even the most conservative scholars acknowledge this has caused a crisis in constitutional order," Kim said. If the court confirms Yoon's removal, a snap election will be held within 60 days. And unlike in typical elections, there will be no 60-day transition period for the president-elect: the victor will be inaugurated the day after the vote. The vast protests both for and against Yoon that have rocked the South Korean capital are likely to continue in a push to pressure the Constitutional Court.—DNA

## Aleem stresses importance of trade corridors for Central Asia

Kazakhstan's Ambassador had a detailed discussion with the minister regarding investment, commerce and trade corridors in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Saturday emphasized that trade corridors from Pakistan is the most important need of the hour for Central Asian countries while access to ports can also help in increasing bilateral trade. He expressed these views during a meeting with Kazakhstan's Ambassador Yerzhan Kastafin, who called on him here on the other day, said a news release. The minister said that under the current circumstances, Pakistani products are the best option for Central Asian countries. He proposed that to raise the trade of industrial products, display centers should be established for the foreign business community where these products could be showcased and sold under one



roof. Pakistan wants better and better road infrastructure to increase foreign investment. He pointed that foreign investment is Pakistan's top priority and essential for improving the economy. Abdul Aleem Khan asserted common history, religion and civilization between

both countries can play a key role in promoting the relations between the two countries. In his conversation, the Kazakhstan's Ambassador had a detailed discussion with the minister regarding investment, commerce and trade corridors in Pakistan. He said that ex-

cellent trade and economic relations with Pakistan are also in the wider interest of Kazakhstan and there will be visible progress in this regard in the coming days. Expressing his heartfelt feelings Yerzhan Kastafin described his stay in Pakistan as pleasant.

## 'Bali Nine' drug ring prisoners fly home to Australia

SYDNEY: The five remaining members of the Australian "Bali Nine" drug ring flew home Sunday after 19 years in jail in Indonesia, ending a saga that had frayed relations between the two countries. Police arrested nine Australians in 2005, convicting them of attempting to smuggle more than eight kilograms (18 pounds) of heroin off the holiday island of Bali. In a case that drew global attention to Indonesia's unforfeiting drug laws, two of the gang would eventually be executed by firing squad, while others served hefty prison sentences. "The Australian Government can confirm that Australian citizens, Matthew Norman, Scott Rush, Martin Stephens, Si Yi Chen, and Michael Czugaj have returned to Australia," Canberra said in a statement. "The men will have the opportunity to continue their personal rehabilitation and reintegration in Australia." Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the men returned in the afternoon, and he had thanked Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto for his "compassion". "Australia shares Indonesia's concern about the serious problem illicit drugs represent," Albanese said. "The government will continue to cooperate with Indonesia to counter narcotics trafficking and transnational crime," he told reporters.—APP

## Ifthikhar urges adoption of China's economic model

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Ifthikhar Ali Malik has called for adopting China's economic model to transform Pakistan's industrial sector into a digitalized economy. Pakistan's cuisine In a press statement issued here on Sunday, he emphasised the need for bold reforms and strategic partnerships to modernize Pakistan's outdated industrial framework, enhance productivity, and foster economic resilience. He said China's rapid ascent as a global economic powerhouse, attributing its success to policies focusing on technological innovation, robust infrastructure development, and incentives for industrial automation. He pointed out that Pakistan could replicate key elements of China's model, particularly its digital transformation initiatives, to harness its industrial potential and compete in the global market. Malik stressed the importance of creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs) with cutting-edge technology and facilities, similar to those established under China's economic reforms. He added that fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and offering incentives for technology adoption were essential to attract foreign direct investment (FDI).—APP

## Bangladesh inquiry recommends feared police unit shut

DHAKA: A Bangladesh commission probing abuses during the rule of toppled leader Sheikh Hasina has recommended a much-feared armed police unit be disbanded, a senior inquiry member said Sunday. Hasina, 77, fled by helicopter to neighbouring India on August 5 as a student-led uprising stormed the prime minister's palace in Dhaka. Her government was accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the extrajudicial killing of hundreds of political opponents and the unlawful abduction and disappearance of hundreds more. The Commission of Inquiry into Enforced Disappearances, set up by the caretaker government, said it found initial evidence that Hasina and other senior officials were involved in the enforced disappearances alleged to have been carried out by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). The RAB paramilitary police force was sanctioned by the United States in 2021, alongside seven of its senior officers, in response to reports of its culpability in some of the worst rights abuses committed during Hasina's 15-year-long rule. —Agencies

## Fake news is great temptation



TANVEER HUSSAIN

FAKE news is a major problem of the present age which has contributed to the division and disintegration of the society. Fake news is not only a source of disinformation and discord, but also causes many economic and social problems. Social media has played a major

role in spreading fake news. Mainstream media has legal restrictions and public pressure does not allow it to cross a certain limit. But social media is free from all these limitations. Social media has gained a lot of importance in Pakistan since the last ten years, but the use of this facility is becoming negative instead of positive. In the form of social media, numerous forums have become available to people which are free from all kinds of rules and regulations. You are not responsible for the consequences of what you post. Due to misreporting of unconfirmed events, accusations, misrepresentation of others, exaggeration of controversial issues, there is always a fear of mischief and corruption in the society. The important question is that there are so many disadvantages of fake news, then what is the reason for spreading such news on a large scale? The main reason behind fake news is to make money. YouTubers and social media activists

become the fuel of political parties' propaganda campaigns to increase their ratings. They spread controversial sensational news in a race for maximum likes to gain more attention. They do not distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate means of earning money. Political parties and leaders resort to such fake news to promote themselves. These parties have hired YouTubers and social media activists who spread fake news viral in favour of party leader. As far as political supporters are concerned, they do not have enough awareness to verify any news. So they share every statement and false news of their leader as reward. Religious parties also use social media negatively to increase their vote bank and gain prominence for their ideology. Ridiculing those with opposing views, creating problems of law and order by giving religious and political differences a religious color, these actions would have increased the vote bank. But it results in violent protests, van-

dalism, burning of public and private property and loss of precious human lives. Due to these problems, the resources of the state are spent on maintaining law and order and unnecessary cases, instead of spending on the development of the country. Some people unknowingly harm society by becoming part of the fake news campaign just out of loyalty to their favorite party. Mostly those people are part of the fake news campaign who are jobless and have no responsibility by their families. They waste their time on social media instead of doing any work. An atmosphere of fear, hatred and violence has been created by the fake news. By highlighting a person's views or his private life through social media, his honor, reputation, and life are put at risk. There have been many such incidents in the country where the angry mob took the law into their hands and killed people due to unconfirmed news. In this situation, everyone is afraid that by justifying his any post,

a piece of writing or a part of his speech, he will be charged with blasphemy or treason. This is a form of blackmail. This situation becomes more dangerous when the victim is in an important position. In such a situation, any official would take into account the public opinion and the demand of the angry protestors instead of taking a decision fairly. Fake news is also causing problems like frustration, depression, blood pressure and heart attack. Addressing the problem of fake news requires improving the performance of the mainstream media first. When people start getting real news about an event, they will turn to TV or newspapers instead of relying on social media. Also, legislation is needed to bring social media into the mainstream. Society can be cleansed of this scourge only by inciting people to violence through fake news and giving the most severe punishment to the perpetrators.



## Briefs

### Turkiye ready to offer military training to Syria

ANKARA: The new administration in Syria should be given a chance to govern following their constructive messages, and Türkiye stands ready to provide military training if such help is requested, Turkish Defence Minister Yasar Guler said. NATO member Türkiye backed the Syrian rebels who toppled President Bashar al-Assad last weekend, ending a 13-year civil war. Türkiye reopened its embassy in Damascus on Saturday, two days after its intelligence chief visited the Syrian capital. "In their first statement, the new administration that toppled Assad announced that it would respect all government institutions, the United Nations and other international organisations," Guler told reporters in Ankara in comments authorised for publication on Sunday. "We think that we need to see what the new administration will do and to give them a chance." When asked whether Türkiye was considering military cooperation with the new Syrian government, Guler said Ankara already had military cooperation and training agreements with many countries. "[Türkiye] is ready to provide the necessary support if the new administration requests it," he added. Since 2016, Türkiye has mounted four military operations across growing swathes of northern Syria, citing threats to its national security. — Agencies

### Syria will be liberated: IRGC chief

TEHRAN: The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has echoed a prediction Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei made this week that Syrian youth would eventually liberate their country from occupation. Speaking during a ceremony on Sunday, Major General Hossein Salami said foreign powers are today tearing apart Syria like "hungry wolves," with the Zionists operating in the south and others in the north and east of the country. "The Zionists can see with the naked eye inside families in Damascus; this is truly intolerable. We must stand firm, as our beloved Leader said, Syria will be liberated by the grace of God by its strong and experienced youth," he added. He was referring to Ayatollah Khamenei's Wednesday remarks, during which he said Syrian youth will rise up, resist, make sacrifices, and overcome the situation as was the case with Iraq. "The occupied areas of Syria will be liberated by the zealous Syrian youth. Do not doubt that this will happen," the Leader stated. "America's foothold will not last either. By God's grace and power, the US will also be expelled from the region by the resistance front." — Agencies

### Section 144 enforced in Bannu

BANNU: Section 144 has been imposed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu for seven days. As per details, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdul Hameed announced the imposition of Section 144 across the district for seven days, effective immediately. The restrictions include a ban on carrying weapons, double riding on motorcycles, and the use of tinted vehicle windows. The Bannu DC clarified that these measures have been implemented in connection with the anti-polio campaign starting tomorrow. He further warned that strict action will be taken against those violating the restrictions. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is set to launch an anti-polio campaign tomorrow (December 16) amid challenges of vaccination refusal, missed targets, fake finger marking, and lack of support by the district administrations and district health officers. — Agencies

# KSA, Pakistan discuss coop in police training

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected various departments of the state-of-the-art Public Security Headquarters. He also visited Saudi Arabia's Safe City Center

## NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Saudi Minister of State for Interior Dr. Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Al Battal here on Sunday. On his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by the Saudi Minister of State for Interior Dr. Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Al Battal and Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations were discussed in detail. Mohsin Naqvi felicitated the Saudi leadership and the people on being awarded the hosting rights for the 2034 FIFA World Cup and expressed good wishes for the event. He said that Saudi Arabia is a brotherly Islamic country and Pakistan's most trusted friend, adding that Pakistan takes pride in this friendship. The Interior minister further stated that Saudi Arabia has always shown immense love and sincerity towards Pakistan. He also appreciated Mohsin Naqvi appreciated Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vision of 2030 which paves the way for achieving progress and



prosperity. The Saudi Minister of State for Interior said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are enjoying very close and cordial relations. He expressed the hope that important meetings with Saudi officials during the visit of Interior Minister will further enhance ties between the two countries. Earlier, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin

Naqvi visited the Public Security Police Headquarters of Saudi Arabia. Chief of Public Security Lt. Gen. Mohammed Al-Bassami welcomed Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on his arrival. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected various departments of the state-of-the-art Public Security Headquarters. He also visited

Saudi Arabia's Safe City Center. While reviewing the system equipped with modern technology to prevent crimes, he appreciated the system of controlling crimes and traffic accidents through the use of modern technology. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also held a meeting with Chief of Public Security Lt. Gen. Muhammad Al-Bassami. During the meeting, it was agreed to activate the joint task force between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia soon. Mohsin Naqvi said that he was happy to see the excellent public security system of Saudi Arabia. He further said that both sides can benefit from the experience of each other through enhancing cooperation in the field of police training. He highlighted that Pakistan is establishing a Special Protection Unit for the protection of diplomats. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi was given a special briefing at the Public Security Headquarters. It was apprised in the briefing that a system has been developed to control crimes and traffic accidents through artificial intelligence. Moreover, special forces also perform duties during Hajj and Umrah. It was also informed that all special forces in Saudi Arabia are controlled from the Public Security Headquarters.

### No Space for chaos-based politics in Pakistan, says Rana

Says "service-oriented politics will prevail"

## MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan Sunday strongly criticized divisive and chaotic political practices, emphasizing that Pakistan has no room for such approaches. "Punjab's people stand with the politics of service and progress," he asserted, during a public address in Islamabad. Highlighting the transformation of Faisalabad from a "large village" into a developed city, Rana credited Mian Shahbaz Sharif's leadership during his tenure as Punjab CM. "It was Shahbaz Sharif's vision and hard work that brought Faisalabad to its current status," he said. Taking a jab at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Rana claimed that their downfall began with their own social media narratives in Islamabad. "PTI's social media tactics backfired and led to their failure," he remarked. He also criticized misleading propaganda, mentioning, "Ambulances carrying Palestinian martyrs were falsely portrayed as their casualties." Rana Sanaullah praised Maryam Nawaz Sharif for bringing a new dimension to Pakistani politics, with her focus on the welfare of the common man.

### Saif demands accountability for Nov 26

## SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Dr. Saif has demanded that the "illegitimate government" explain why shots were fired on November 26. In a statement, Barrister Saif announced that prayer ceremonies would be held today (Sunday) to honour the martyrs of D-Chowk, with the main event taking place at Baghe-Naran, Hayatabad, Peshawar. He vowed to seek justice for the blood of the martyrs, ensuring accountability for every drop of blood. He emphasised that the sacrifices of unarmed workers would not go in vain. Barrister Saif criticised the Sharif family, accusing them of a history of shedding innocent blood for political power.

# PA condemns Israeli apartheid measures in WB

## FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates views with great concern the Israeli escalation in the unilateral and illegal occupation measures in the occupied West Bank with the aim of deepening and expanding the crimes of ethnic cleansing and gradual annexation and accelerating its pace, whether confiscating tens of thousands of dunams and exterminating the Palestinian presence in all its manifestations from all areas classified as (C), or starting to install Israeli watchtowers and communications, or the provocative calls launched by the extreme Israeli right regarding the deployment of more barriers and their installation at main road junctions, which leads to paralyzing the movement of Palestinian citizens and dismembering the occupied West Bank, as well as giving settler militias a free hand and arming them to commit more attacks against Palestinian citizens. The Ministry believes that these measures come in light of the ongoing war of extermination and displacement and official Israeli boasting about annex-

ing the West Bank to undermine any opportunity to embody the Palestinian state on the ground and liquidate the Palestinian cause, and exploit the regional developments taking place to monopolize the Palestinian cause and abuse our people and deny their just and legitimate national rights. The Ministry stresses that the international community's inaction and failure to provide international protection for our people and its failure to implement its decisions, and its sufficiency in diagnosing the situation and some expressions of condemnation and directing demands to the occupying state and double standards have all become a cover that the Israeli government exploits to deepen the crimes of extermination, displacement, settlement and annexation. The Ministry calls on the international community to implement its resolutions, especially Security Council Resolution No. 2735 and the United Nations General Assembly resolution that adopted the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice, and reaffirms once again that resolving the Palestinian issue and ending the occupation is the only key to achieving security, stability and prosperity in the region and the world.

# Khalil Haqqani death likely to fuel rifts within Afghan ranks, damage Pakistan influence

## SHAMIM SHAHID

TARGETING Afghanistan Interim government minister for refugees and mind behind Haqqani network has generated stock of questions. Since return of Taliban into power Khalil Haqqani became third most important figure targeted by suicide bomber inside his most guarded ministerial complex at Kabul. Not only it claimed but even Taliban high command has blamed the Islamic States (IS) also called Daesh for carrying out suicide attack against Khalil Ur Rahman Haqqani. However, common men and analysts as well are in hunt of answers to queries pertained to honouring of IS militants on the soil of Afghanistan. It is no more secret that almost hard line Islamists organs and individuals including Al Qaeda, Daesh and others are benefiting no other than US lead allies. Rebellion against Syrian president Bashar UI Asad after Libyan leader Col Gaddafi has confirmed brain behind such so called Islamist groups. Whatever might be Persian (Islamic Republic of Iran) establishment designs but its patronized Hamas and Hizb Ullah's doing has made more strengthen US puppet Israel in Middle East. Reaction of Qandaharis within Emirati Islamiover murdering of Khalil Haqqani in a suicide attack is not encouraging. Even not a single top leader of Emirate Islami turned to funeral of Khalil Haqqani which confirms rifts within Taliban ranks. Only foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Maulvi Abdul Kabir both from South-Eastern zone were amongst those who attended funeral or last rites of Khalil Haqqani who had accredited himself as pioneer of suicide bombers in the region. Rifts within Taliban ranks are not new but lingering on

since mid if August 2021 last. At that time, Taliban high command had made mind for monopolizing the government set up but opposed by no other than Khalil Haqqani. Siraj Ud Din Haqqani who is leading the family and notorious Haqqani Network is you and less experienced and he was always guided by uncle Khalil Haqqani to right directions. Now when Khalil Haqqani is no more therefore Siraj Haqqani would definitely face hardships. Through different jihadist, militant and other individuals, Pakistan has established unbeatable influence across Afghanistan. Earlier, this influence has sustained first ever set back when the US established direct links with the Emirate Islami through Qatar. However, Pakistan succeeded in recovering of such losses through some extent by exploiting ego-politico locations. But now sudden death of Khalil Haqqani is likely to end Pakistan influence in Afghanistan as Khalil after his elder brother Jalal Ud Din Haqqani was considered most loyal and obedient to Rawalpindi-Islamabad. In the wake of recent developments in Syria, US has confirmed its main role in Islamic world not only for safeguarding its own ego-strategic economic interests but also for making safe and sound Israel. On such ground, US lead allies are interested in further confining Russian to its own international border. No one can deny the fact that Haqqanis are witnesses to prolonged war on the soil of Afghanistan. Almost top amongst the eyewitnesses of this war have been eliminated. Khalil's brutal killing is also considered in sequence or part of the move is in progress against eyewitnesses of war on the soil of Afghanistan, declared a Great Game by former President Dr Najib Ullah little before signing of Geneva Accord in 1988. All those who played pivotal role in this great game have either lost their lives or now unable to live inside the country with honor and peace.

# US in 'direct contact' with Syria rebels

AMMAN: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken says the US has made direct contact with the rebels who control Syria. The US has made "direct contact" with the HTS rebels who now control Syria after toppling the Assad regime, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said. It is the first acknowledgement of direct US interaction with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which the US currently still designates as a terrorist organisation. Blinken told reporters the US has been in contact in particular over the fate of the missing American journalist, Austin Tice. Blinken was speaking in Jordan after talks with representatives from several Arab countries, Turkey, and Europe to discuss the future of Syria. Officials agreed to support a peaceful transition process in the country, with Jordan's foreign minister saying that regional powers did not want to see it "descend into chaos". A joint communique called for an inclusive Syrian government that respects the rights of minorities and does not offer a base for "terrorist groups". The talk both inside and outside Syria after the tumultuous events of recent weeks has been of the vital importance of setting up new governance that represents all Syrians. HTS was not present at the meeting in Jordan. There, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein expressed concern over Syria's future shared across the Middle East and beyond. He said regional players did not want to see another Libya - referring to the chaos that ensued after Colonel Gaddafi's removal from power. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said existing Syrian institutions must be preserved and reformed. "Never allow terrorism to take advantage of the transition period. And we have to coordinate our efforts and learn from the mistakes of the past," Fidan said according to Reuters news agency. Meanwhile, Israel has launched dozens more air strikes against Syria, according to a war monitor, despite regional condemnation. Israel has previously said it was taking action to "destroy strategic capabilities" that threaten it. The UN Secretary General has said he is "particularly concerned" about the hundreds of Israeli air strikes on several locations in Syria. HTS, Syria's most powerful rebel group, was set up under a different name, Jabhat al-Nusra, in 2011 as a direct al-Qaeda affiliate. — Agencies

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