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Trudeau announces plan to resign as **Prime Minister**

Detailed News On Page-08

UK PM slams 'lies' after Musk tirade

Detailed News On Page-08



Rashid steers Afghanistan to Test series win

Detailed News On Page-06



PTI-govt talks

Inability to present written demands behind deadlock

Sources say PTI will have to ink agreement with govt if written demands are accepted; written demands to be submitted after meeting with Imran Khan; PTI files application with the jail authorities for meeting

Mahnoor Ansar / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid no progress in the ongoing parleys between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government despite two rounds of talks, the deadlock between the two sides has been attributed to the PTI negotiators' inability to meet their jailed party founder Imran Khan and present written demands to the government. With the opposition claiming that they have not been allowed to meet Khan by Adiala jail authorities, the government on the other hand has cited the former ruling party's inability to present a written charter of demand leading to National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's hesitance in calling a third meeting, added the sources. The existing stalemate comes after the two sides, following months of heightened political ten- nounce the verdict today (Monday). AC Judge Nasir 2, 2025. During the last meeting between the government and the PTI's negotiation committees, the two sides had likely to be announced on January 13. According to decided that the Khan-founded party would present its charcourt staff, Judge Nasir Javed Rana is on leave today, ter of demands in the next session after meeting the jailed and the verdict in the case has been postponed to prime minister. Also, it was decided that the third round January 13. The court staff informed Imran Khan's of talks would be summoned after the PTI committee had lawyer, Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, about the reschedmet Khan. The former ruling party has time again reiter- uling. Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, stated that the court ated its call for the release of its founder and their workers staff confirmed the verdict would not be announced and the formation of a judicial commission on the events today. It merits mention that the court had reserved of the May 9 riots and last year's November 26 protests. the 190 million pound case verdict on December 18.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

JUI chief

denounces

Kurram riots

How long will

you continue

misleading society?

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ule-

ma-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief

Maulana Fazlur Rehman

has said that riots erupted

the next day after he helped

Kurram delegations work

towards peace. Speaking

at an event at Peshawar's

Nishtar Hall, Maulana

Fazlur Rehman said that

democracy and parliamen-

tary politics in the country

lacked quality. "How long

will you continue misleading

society? Delegations from

both sides approached me,

and when we paved the way

for resolution, riots started

the next day," he held. The

JUI-F chief mentioned that

a diplomat visited him recently and discussed various

matters, including Kurram. 'No backdoor

> contact under way' Denies rumours of

Bushra Bibi's involvement in backdoor talks

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan

Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI)

Chairman Barrister Gohar

Khan has clarified that

the party has no backdoor

contacts or negotiations in

progress. Speaking out-

side Adiala Jail, he said

the committee formed by

PTI founder Imran Khan

was the sole entity author-

ised for negotiations. He

confirmed two meetings

had already been held with

the government's nego-

tiation committee, and a

third round required prior

consultation with Imran

Khan. However, the meet-

ing with him has not been

confirmed yet. Gohar de-

nied rumours of Bushra

Bibi's involvement in back-

door talks, calling it base-

less. He emphasised the

PTI's demands remained

the release of detainees

of judicial commission.

the establishment

Verdict in 190m pound case likely on 13th

Imran Khan's lawyer confirmed the verdict would not be announced today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court has again delayed its verdict in the 190 million pound case against former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. Earlier, the court was due to an-

Continued on Page 06

sions, commenced much-hyped negotiations of which two Javed Rana said the court would announce the vermeetings were held on December 27, 2024 and on January dict later. After the latest development, the decision had been delayed three times. Now the verdict is

Ahsan says govt to complete term

PML-N claims PPP still on board with govt

"There's always a bit of a musical rhythm within a coalition government," says planning minister

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that there are ups and downs in politics, downplaying the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) warning of quitting the coalition government in the centre. PPP spokes- PPP issued detailed guidelines to its person Shazi Marri had a day earlier expressed annoyance over the Pakistan Muslim criticise govt's ineffective, flawed policies League-Nawaz (PML-N) not taking her party on board in the decision-making process, warning that the "federal government will collapse the day PPP withdraws support". ISLAMABAD: Tensions between Pa-She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led kistan People's Party (PPP) and the government kept the PPP and the Sindh ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government in the dark about the establish- (PML-N) have escalated further, with ment of the Pakistan Maritime & Sea Port PPP deciding to openly criticise the Authority (PMSPA). The PPP spokesperson government's policies, citing sourcalso said they had long been demanding to es a private news channel reported. convene a meeting of the Council of Common Sources revealed that PPP leadership

Continued on Page 06

PPP decides to openly oppose

members, advising them to actively

DNA

Interests (CCI) as well, but no meeting of has authorised its leaders to publicly

govt policies

Continued on Page 06



paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

German diplomat found dead in Islamabad apartment

Cause of death is unconfirmed, but initial investigations indicate the staffer had a prior minor heart attack

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMA-BAD:The oody of Thomas Fielder, a German

diplomat German Embassy, was found in his apartment within Islamabad's Diplomatic Enclave. local authorities confirmed on Monday. Thomas Fielder's body was discovered by embassy staff, who became concerned after he had been Continued on Page 06

Türkiye condemns Trubat attack

Foreign Desk

eign Ministry has issued a statement strongly condemning a recent terrorist attack in Turbat, Pakistan, which resulted in significant loss of life and injuries. "We strongly condemn the terrorist attack that took place in Turbat, Pakistan,'

PM directs property confiscation of all human traffickers

'Example must be made'

PM praises FIA for targeting officials aiding traffickers, urges action to dismantle networks and protect lives **Boat incidents**

MEHTAB PIRZADA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed to take strict legal action against all human trafficking groups in the country to make them an example. Chairing a meeting regarding the progress on measures taken against human trafficking in Islamabad today, he emphasized that immediate legal action should be taken to confiscate the properties and assets of human traffickers. The Prime Minister said the prosecution process against all individuals involved in this heinous crime should be made more effective. He added that after consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice, the most competent lawyers should be appointed for prosecution. Shehbaz Sharif further instructed the Foreign Office to contact relevant countries regard-

Continued on Page 06

SUKKUR: A district and sessions court in Sukkur has summoned the top officials, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, over "loss of Pakistani lives" in migrant boat capsizing incidents off Greece coast last month. During the hearing, the additional session

Sukkur court

summons PM,

other top officials

The petitioner asked the court to

issue directives for the registration

of a case against government

officials at Rohri police station

DNA

Continued on Page 06

ing Pakistanis running human trafficking

Turkiye voices support for Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts

ANKARA: The Turkish For-

Continued on Page 06

Maldives, Lankan envoys recalled from Pakistan

Maldives high commissioner's meeting with the Afghanistan Charge d Affaires cost him his job

Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Maldives and Sri Lanka are preparing to appoint new envoys to Pakistan after both countries recalled their respective high commissioners in quick succession. The Maldivian government recalled its High Commissioner, Mohamed Thoha, following a controversial meeting with Afghanistan's top diplomat in Islamabad. Thoha's



ISLAMABAD: A view of meeting between the former Maldives High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohamad Thoha and Afghan Charge d Affaires Ahmed Shakib. After this meeting the Maldives envoy was recalled. - DNA

engagement with Ahmad Shakib, Afghanistan's chargé d'affaires, reportedly took place without prior approval from Maldivian authorities. In a statement, the Maldivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had clarified that the meeting was not authorized. "The Maldives is guided by the practice followed by the United Nations General Assembly regarding the representative character of a government. Accordingly, the Maldives recognizes the Government representing Afghanistan at the United Nations as the legitimate authority," the statement read.

During the meeting, Ahmad Shakib emphasized Afghanistan's goal of fostering constructive relations with all nations and its ambition to transform the country into regional connectivity hub through economic policies. Photographs from the meeting were shared on the social media platforms of both embassies, further fueling the controversy. In response, the Maldives Embassy in Islamabad removed all images of High Commissioner Thoha from its website and social media accounts, although the Afghanistan Embassy retained the photos. Thoha was recalled only a few months after his appointment, marking an abrupt end to his tenure. Similarly, Sri Lanka has recalled its High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral Ravindra C. Wijegunaratne, less than six months into his posting. While the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not provided an official explanation, diplomatic sources suggest that political factors may have influenced the decision. Both recalls highlight unexpected diplomatic challenges for Islamabad as it awaits the appointment of new envoys from the Maldives and Sri Lanka.



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Challenges posed by population

Minister for Finance and

hammad Aurangzeb here

on Monday highlighted

the significant challenges

posed by rapid population

growth, particularly in the

context of the country's

development goals. During

a meeting with Population

Council delegation led by

President Dr. Rana Hajjeh,

that called on the minister,

he stressed the need for a

sustained, long-term, and

evidence-based approach to

understanding and address-

ing population dynamics.

Senator Mu-

ISLAMABAD:

Revenue,

Vintage car show 2025 attracts car enthusiasts at UET

PESHAWAR: A vintage car show 2025 organized by the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar on Monday enthralled car enthusiasts and the public with its stunning display of antique vehicles and innovative designs. The event featured over 40 vintage cars, including rare Iapanese models from the 1990s, and student-crafted refurbished engines. The show, supervised by Professor Dr Sadiq Khattak, Advisor to SAE and inaugurated by Professor Dr Amjad Ullah Khattak, former Dean of Electrical and Engineering. Computer The auto show highlighted cutting-edge technology, creative designs, and the inventive prowess of UET Peshawar's students. Professor Dr Sadiq Khattak remarked that this unique event, held annually, had consistently garnered widespread public acclaim. He emphasized that the show served as a platform to encourage innovation within the automotive industry. The event concluded with participants being awarded certificates of appreciation, celebrating their contributions to the success of this exceptional gathering.-APP

Bus overturns due to overspeeding, 5 dead

ISLAMABAD: At least five people were killed on the spot while multiple others were critically injured after a devastating road accident near Head Muhammad Wala in Chowk Sarwar Shaheed on Monday afternoon. According to sources within the rescue services, the ill-fated bus was en route from Mianwali to Multan when it overturned due to excessive speeding and claimed five lives on the spot, a private news channel reported. The impact of the crash was so severe that five passengers lost their lives on the spot, while several others were left battered and bruised. Rescue teams rushed to the scene to provide aid and transport the injured to nearby district hospital for treatment. An investigation into the incident is currently underway.-APP

Housing Ministry asked to hand over house to widow

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Sub-Committee on Housing and Works on Monday recommended the Ministry of Housing to hand over the house to the widow.

The committee meeting under the chairmanship of Convener Committee Senator Raja Nasir Abbas. The issue of alleged illegal occupation of an official residence by a widow was considered in the meeting of the committee. The petition filed by the widow regarding illegal hand over of her official residence to another citizen was considered. The sub-committee also heard the position of the ministry and carefully reviewed the entire issue. Apart from Senator Aslam Abro, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Works also attended the meeting of the said committee.-APP

Secy Info, BD HC discuss enhanced media coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and Bangladesh's High Commissioner in Pakistan Iqbal Hussain Khan met here Monday and discussed ways to boost media cooperation and people-to-people contacts between their countries. In a meeting held here at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the two sides focused on enhanced partnerships to highlight shared historical narratives and cultural values that strengthen mutual understanding. Secretary Information Ambreen Jan said Pakistan and Bangladesh had a longstanding diplomatic and cultural ties along with a shared history of cooperation in diverse sectors.

She emphasized collaboration between state media organizations including Pakistan Television Corporation, Associated Press of



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan presents a memento to High Commissioner of Bangladesh Iqbal Hussain Khan after meeting held here at Ministry

their Bangladeshi counterparts in fields of joint productions and exchange of news. She highlighted that a journalist exchange programme could provide the media persons from Pakistan and Bangladesh an opportunity to learn about each other's perspectives and narratives on various matters. High Commissioner Iqbal Hussain Khan lauded the government of Pakistan for taking steps to encourage multifarious cooperation between the two countries. He likened the people of two countries as brothers and added that their connectivity through joint cooperation programmes would bring both nations further closer. The two sides also discussed expanding the availability of Pakistani news and entertainment channels on Bangladeshi cable networks and organizing film festivals and photographic exhibitions.

He called for integrating these dynamics into planning across key sectors such as health, education. employment, urbanization, and the environment, as a means to unlock the full potential for socio-economic development. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director, Population Council, and senior officers from the Ministry of Finance, according to press release issued by finance ministry. It focused on the critical issues surrounding population growth, demographic change, and their implications for Pakistan's development and economic growth, it added. Dr. Haiieh and Dr. Sathar provided insights into the Population Council's ongoing research and initiatives aimed at addressing these issues. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Pakistan's efforts in crafting comprehensive, data-driven policies to ensure the country's demographic transition aligns with sustainable

DG MOFA opens second Branch of Rich Food Sri Lankan

Restaurant in Karachi

DNA



KARACHI: Rich Food Sri Lankan Restaurant celebrated the grand opening of its second branch in Karachi with a vibrant inauguration ceremony. The event was graced by Jagath Abeywarna, Consul General of Sri Lanka in Karachi, accompanied by his beautiful wife, prominent Sri Lankan expatriates, media personnel, and other distinguished guests. The chief guest of the event was Mr. Irfan Soomro. Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ceremony commenced with a ribbon-cutting by the restaurant's proprietors, Mr. Asanka Nishan and Gayan Premakumara, joined by the Sri Lankan Consul General and the chief guest Mr. Irfan Soomro This was followed by the lighting of traditional Sri Lankan oil lamps, a symbolic gesture

must be made of the personal attention and dedication shown by H.E. Mr. Jagath Abeywarna, the Sri Lankan Consul General, in promoting Sri Lankan food, culture, and history to the Pakistani audience. As a true representative of his nation, his efforts have significantly contributed to the restaurant's success and the growing appreciation of Sri Lankan heritage in Pakistan Guests were welcomed with refreshing drinks before being treated to a sumptuous spread of authentic Sri Lankan cuisine, which was praised for its rich flavors and culinary artistry. This new branch, located in the Phase 7 Extension of DHA, Karachi, marks the restaurant's rapid growth and popularity. Following the overwhelming success of its first branch, which opened last year in the DHA area, this expansion reflects the brand's commitment to delivering an exceptional dining experience to food enthusiasts in Karachi. The event highlighted the cultural and culinary connections between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, further strengthening bilateral ties in a festive and flavorful setting. It is hoped that this culinary journey will further bolster the cultural and trade relations between these two

of prosperity and goodwill,

performed amidst enthusi-

astic applause from the au-

dience. A special mention

Poet Iqbal Faheem Jozi passes away

development. The meeting

marked a significant step

in fostering collaboration

between the Population

Council and the Ministry of

Finance in tackling the chal-

lenges of population growth

and its impact on country's

future. -APP

ISLAMABAD:An esteemed Urdu poet, researcher Iqbal Faheem Jozi has passed away today (Monday) and his family shared the heartbreaking news late Sunday. Director of Media and Programmes of Nazaria-e-Pakistan Council Hameed Qaiser in his condolence message said that Jozi was not only a good poet but a great human being as well. He prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and for the family to bear the loss with fortitute. Jozi funeral prayer would be held today after the Asr prayer at H-11 Graveyard, his family shared through his official social media account.-APP

Pakistan Navy coastal command annual efficiency competition parade held

Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that the Coastal Command has excelled in its mission by safeguarding Pakistan's coastal areas, spanning from Sir Creek to Jiwani, despite challenging internal and external security environments



DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Coastal Command Annual Efficiency Competition Parade for the year 2024 was held at PNS QASIM. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief uest. The event. ized annually by the Coastal Command of Pakistan Navy, celebrates achievements upon the successful culmination of its operational year. In his address, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that the Coastal Command has excelled in its mission

by safeguarding Pakistan's coastal areas, spanning from Sir Creek to Jiwani, despite challenging internal and external security environments. Earlier, in his welcome address, Commander Coast highlighted the operational achievements of Coastal Command and presented a brief retaken during 2024. He also command's underscored accomplishments in various administraoperational, tive, and welfare projects over the past year. During the ceremony, the Chief Guest presented efficiency awards and trophies to the

best-performing units of Pakistan Navy Coastal Command. The event was attended by a large number of senior serving and retired naval officers, civil dignitaries, and CPOs/sailors of Pakistan Navy. Earlier, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). Admiral Naveed Ashraf has commended the Sindh financial support toward the development and progression of Cadet College Sanghar. Addressing at the 28th Parents' Day ceremony at Cadet College Sanghar, the CNS said the Naval Chief lauded the efforts of the teaching facul-

Earlier, the Principal of the College, Commodore Zeeshan Ali, presented the Annual Report - 2024 and highlighted the exceptional performance of cadets in academics, sports, and co-curricular activities. Later, the CNS presented prizes to the winners for their outstanding overall performance during the Ahmed and Ex-Cadet Sahib Khan clinched the highest prizes of the Stick of Honour and the Badge of Honour, respectively. Ex-Cadet Junaid Babar was

3 injured as fog causes motorbike accident

awarded the Quaid-e-Azam

Medal for Best Academic

Performance.

ISLAMABAD: Three including two brothers were critically injured on Monday when a car collided with their motorbike and hit a tree due to dense fog in Paghala Morr, Shakargarh. According to rescue sources, a car collision with a motorbike, followed by a crash into a tree, left three individuals, including two siblings, with serious injuries on Monday, with dense fog cited as the cause, private news channel reported.

Rescue sources stated that the accident occurred due to dense fog, severely reducing visibility on the road. The car, traveling at a high speed was unable to stop in time, resulting in the collision. The three injured individuals, including two brothers were rushed to district hospital for immediate medical attention. Their condition is reported to be stable but further treatment is required to assess the full ex-

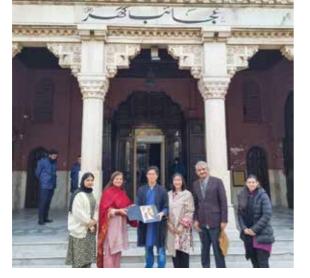
Maryam announces Rs 100b scholarships, 100,000 e-bikes

MULTAN: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced an unprecedented Rs 100 billion scholarship program, the distribution of 100,000 e-bikes to students, and interest-free loans of up to Rs 3 million for young entrepreneurs. In a groundbreaking move to empower Pakistan's youth, she revealed plans to introduce market-based training programs, establish e-bike charging stations, and provide paid internships in agriculture, environment, and other key sectors. = Addressing a gathering in BZU Multan, Maryam Nawaz highlighted her government's efforts to ensure that no talented student is deprived of education due to financial constraints. She declared that 20,000 new scholarships would be added annually and pledged to pay the tuition fees of deserving students. She further stated the scholarship program, which benefits both male and female students, is entirely merit-based, with no consideration of political affiliations. The Chief Minister announced the provision of buses to facilitate female students' transportation and the milestone of awarding 60% of scholarships to girls. She also revealed plans to distribute laptops to students, with the first batch already in place, and to launch international scholarships to support higher education abroad. Maryam Nawaz stressed the need to equip students with skills in artificial intelligence, robotics, and other modern IT disciplines. Inspired by technological advancements in countries like China, she promised to ensure local students excel in the global arena. The government is also focusing on sustainable development, transitioning Punjab's transport system to electric vehicles to reduce pollution and improve air quality. Charging stations will be established in educational institutions to promote eco-friendly practices, she added. Calling the youth the backbone of Pakistan, Maryam Nawaz urged them to stay focused on education and avoid becoming tools for destructive agendas. "The future of this nation is in your hands," she remarked, adding that respect for women and moral values were essential for building a strong society. Concluding her address, she saluted the hard work of students and extended congratulations from Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who wished them success in their endeavors. Maryam Nawaz expressed her commitment to continue supporting the youth, saying, "With your dedication, no one can stop the country from achieving unparalleled progress.-DNA

Thai envoy explores cultural collaboration with Lahore museum

DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador-designate of Thailand to Pakistan Rongvudhi Virabutr along with Madam Bantita Pichyakorn Virabutr, met with Mrs. Nabila Irfan, Director of the Lahore Museum, to discuss fostering cultural and archaeological cooperation between the two nations. On this occasion, Ambassador discussed cooperation on issues such as (1) knowledge-sharing on best practices in the areas of museum management which include organizing a seminar by experts from both countries (2) modernizing museums



to attract younger audiences through technology such as creating virtual museums (3) organizing permanent exhibitions to showcase Thai cultural and historical artifacts and items and (4) supporting archaeological work in Pakistan by Thai archaeologists, particularly at sites associated with the ancient Gandhara civilization. Both sides also discussed plans for an exhibition of Gandharan artifacts in Thailand scheduled for early 2026. The Royal Thai Embassy pledged full support to facilitate all preparations for the Exhibition. Ambassador is of the view that showcasing Gandharan artifacts in Thai-

deepening the knowledge and understanding of Gandhara's rich heritage and its influence on Buddhist art, especially stone-carved Buddha imagery which occurred for the first time during Gandharan civilization. In addition of making Gandharan arts more known in wider circles since more than 35 million tourists visit Thailand, this initiative will also contribute to enhancing tourism Pakistan's Gandhara sites as well as boosting the economy for the local community. This collaboration marks another step forward in strengthening the cultural bonds between Thailand and Pakistan!

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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman Mobile: 0300 8553342

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Palestine

Palestine Revolution Day

National Day

Jan 01 / Sudan

Jan 04 / Myanmar Independence Day

Jan 06 / Iraq Armed Forces Day

Jan 12 / Tanzania Armed Forces Day

Jan 14 / Uzbekistan Armed Forces Day

Jan 15 / Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Mali Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Laos Armed Forces Day

Jan 25 / Thailand Armed Forces Day

Jan 26 / Australia National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



EmergencyRescue (Police).....15



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



Hospitals

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



Departments

pehai tillelits		
CDA	9221334-43	
CDA	9208301-04	
Met Office	9250360-6	
RDA	5555864	
TMA	5770886	
Cantonment B	oard 9270151-3	

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Romina calls carbon guidelines key climate milestone

The road from Baku to Belem" arranged by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Romina highlighted the significance of the outcomes of COP29 held in Baku, particularly the approval of carbon guidelines, which she described as a key milestone in the global journey toward climate action

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam said Pakistan's achievements at COP29 have strengthened its commitment to adopting international carbon trading guidelines. She emphasized the need for robust monitoring and validation systems, which are essential for the successful operationalization of carbon markets. Speaking as a chief guest at the "Post COP Dialogue on operationalization of article 6 of the Paris agreement: The road from Baku to Belem" arranged by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Romina highlighted the signifi-

cance of the outcomes of COP29 held in Baku, particularly the approval of carbon guidelines, which she described as a key milestone in the global journey toward climate action. "With the government actively collaborating with provincial and international stakeholders, Pakistan is positioning itself to capitalize on carbon trading, aiming to unlock new opportunities for green development and sustainable climate action, she added. She emphasized the importance of article 6 for Pakistan, noting that it offers an unprecedented opportunity to develop robust global carbon markets crucial for achieving the country's low-carbon growth and adaptation objectives. For Pakistan, these mechanisms are not merely technical solutions but

essential strategic tools for sus-

tainable development and climate resilience. "The approval of the carbon guidelines marks a historic step forward. Pakistan is ready to implement these guidelines with integrity, transparency, and ambition. We are aligning our institutional frameworks with these global standards to attract investment, ensure environmental integrity, and build confidence in our carbon market," said Romina. Highlighting Pakistan's potential to leverage carbon markets, Romina stated that the country is uniquely positioned to drive transformative change, particularly through projects related to renewable energy, afforestation, and sustainable urban development initiatives. She also emphasized the critical role of regional collaboration in South Asia and expressed optimism about the

shared progress that can be achieved through carbon trading and climate finance in the region. Acknowledging the challenges ahead, including capacity gaps and the need for strong regulatory frameworks, Romina stated that Pakistan is taking concrete steps to address these is form.

steps to address these issues. She shared that Pakistan is forging partnerships with multilateral agencies and private stakeholders to build the necessary expertise and infrastructure. "We are prioritizing the development of a robust monitoring, reporting, and verification system to ensure the credibility of our efforts," she added. Romina reaffirmed Pakistan's role as a constructive voice in global climate negotiations, stressing the country's commitment to advocating for inclusive and equitable frameworks under article 6. She emphasized, "We are committed to fostering South-South cooperation and building capacity among developing nations to ensure that no one is left behind in this transition." Romina also called on developed nations to fulfil their financial and technical support commitments, enabling the successful implementation of article 6 mechanisms. "Capacity building is essential, and I call on the global community to support nations like Pakistan in maximizing the benefits of these mechanisms," she added. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Zulfigar Younas, Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairman of the Board of Governors SDPI, Danish Ambassador Jakob Linulf, and Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director of SDPI also addressed to the event.

Victim families of

Sopore massacre

await justice in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Justice continues to elude the victim fam-

ilies of the gory Sopore massacre for the past 32 years,

whose loved ones lost their lives at the hands of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Sopore town

on the chilly morning of January 6, 1993, in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir

Media Service, over 50 innocent civilians were killed, and

the main business area of the town was set ablaze and looted by the Indian BSF troops on that fateful day when they went

on a rampage after a rifle was allegedly snatched from a BSF

soldier by an unknown individual. Shortly after the incident,

Indian BSF personnel from the 94th Battalion butchered 57

civilians. Witnesses of the gruesome massacre recounted

that the marauding troops dragged a bus driver out of the

vehicle and pumped bullets into the bus passengers, killing

20 of them on the spot. "After killing the passengers, the

troops started spraying gunpowder, petrol and kerosene on

the surrounding buildings and then torched them," they said.

"Among the 57 dead civilians, 48 died due to gunfire and nine

were burnt alive. More than 400 commercial establishments

and 75 residential houses were set ablaze in five localities of

Sopore Arampora, Muslimpeer, Kralteng, Shallapora, Shahabad

and Bobimir Sahab. Among the burnt buildings and shops were

a witness. "We couldn't comprehend anything as we watched

BSF personnel targeting every civilian with bullets. Days after

the gruesome massacre, we came to know that a BSF soldier

was robbed of his rifle by an unknown man and to avenge that

incident, they targeted innocent civilians," added another eye-

witness. Manzoor Ahmed, who witnessed the massacre and ar-

son, said the marauding troops dragged the driver of a bus (JKY-

1901) from the vehicle and fired into the passengers, killing 20

of them. "The troops then set shops and buildings on fire after

sprinkling gunpowder. About 400 shops and buildings, including

75 residential houses, were gutted in Shalpora, Shahabad,

Muslimpeer, Kraltang, and Arampora areas of the town,"

he said. Among the gutted buildings were the Women's

Degree College and Samad Talkies. The Shalla family of

Shalpora suffered the highest number of casualties, with

four of its members killed. The Sopore massacre, which

serves as a horrific example of brutal Indian military ac-

tions in IIOJK was described by Time Magazine as one of

the worst atrocities in Kashmir's history.-DNA

witness 12.82% surge in 5 months ISLAMABAD : The imports of the overall machinery group experienced a substantial increase of 12.82

Machinery

ISLAMABAD: The imports of the overall machinery group experienced a substantial increase of 12.82 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (July-November) compared to 2023-24. The total imports of the ma-

chinery group during the

five months of the FY 2024-

25 stood at \$ 3,310.154 million against the imports of \$2,934.049 million of the corresponding period the last year, according to official data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The import of agriculture sector machinery and equipment surged by 42.32 percent from \$31.796 million to \$45.251 million; textile machinery 49.93 percent from \$ 56.689 million to \$ 84.993 million; power-generating machinery 40.38 percent from \$ 179.442 million to \$ 251.905 million; construction and mining machinery 39.23 percent from \$34.517 million to \$48.058 million; electrical machinery and apparatus 31.52 percent from \$911.857 million to \$1,199.269 million; and other apparatus 26.05 percent from \$177.859 million to \$

PM pays tribute to Shaheed Hasan for unmatched bravery

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday paid tribute to Shaheed Aitezaz Hasan who sacrificed his life to save his school and classmates from a devastating attack. "Today, we commemorate the martyrdom of Shaheed Aitezaz Hasan, a true son of the soil from district Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, whose extraordinary courage stands as a beacon of hope and resilience," the prime minister said in a social media post on X. He noted that at just 15 years of age, Aitezaz displayed unparalleled bravery, valiantly sacrificing his life to shield his school and classmates from a devastating attack, "His selflessness and unwavering resolve remind us of his lasting impact a single act of courage can have on countless lives," the prime minister added. He emphasized that Aitezaz's legacy will continue to inspire future generations.-APP



ISLAMABAD:Laborers are busy in construction work at F-8 underpass project in Federal

SCP directs govt for comprehensive report on Kachi Abadi

The CDA, he added, has declared 10 localities in the Capital as Kachi Abadi. He complained that the Courts have issued restrain orders against action in such cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has directed the Federal Government to come with a comprehensive report regarding 'Kachi Abadi' and to take action against illegal occupation of land as the laws in this regard are clear; the term Kachi Abadi however needs a proper definition. A seven member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan was hearing miscellaneous petitions regarding removal of Kachi

Abadi from Islamabad and Contempt of Court /Non Compliance of Court Order in Removal of Kachi Abadi from Islamabad etc. Justice Amin ud Din Khan observed that regulating Kachi Abadi is the jurisdiction of local and provincial governments. How can the federal government legislate in the jurisdiction of the provincial government? Justice Jamal Mandokhail asked for a proper definition of the Kachi Abadi and remarked that most of the houses in Baluchistan are made of mud and not concreted. Shall we term it Kachi Abadi? Justice

Azhar Rizvi remarked that land grabbers make construction on the banks of streams and rivers and places dedicated for public service. What action the government has taken against such situations? Counsel for the Capital Development Authority (CDA), while agreeing to the question of the Court, said that a proper definition of the Kachi Abadi should be framed before going ahead. The CDA, he added, has declared 10 localities in the Capital as Kachi Abadi. He complained that the Courts have issued restrain oragainst action

such cases. Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked that apart from Kachi Abadi, the government should take action against illegal land grabbing as the laws are clear in this regard. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that the government should come to the court for removal of the stay orders. How the encroachments turn into concrete construction? The Court directed the Federal Government to produce a comprehensive report with a proper definition of Kachi Abadi in two weeks and adjourned the hearing for a date to be fixed later.

Over 2.6m women,kids benefit under Nashonuma Programme: Rubina

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the importance of meeting the basic health and nutritional needs of over 2.6 million pregnant and lactating mothers, as well as their children under two years of age, through the Benazir Nashonuma Programme. She highlighted the need for greater coordination between BISP and the Population Council to ensure sustainable and impactful health and nutrition outcomes for mothers and children. Speaking during a meeting with Dr. Rana Hajjeh, President of the Population Council, and Dr. Zeba A. Sathar, Country Director of the Population Council, at BISP headquarters today, Senator Rubina Khalid stated, "The PMT (Proxy Means Test) limit for inclusion in the Nashonuma Programme in Balochistan has been increased from 32 to 60, allowing more deserving beneficiaries to avail of

these essential services."

During the meeting, the participants discussed a joint action plan aimed at addressing maternal and child health,

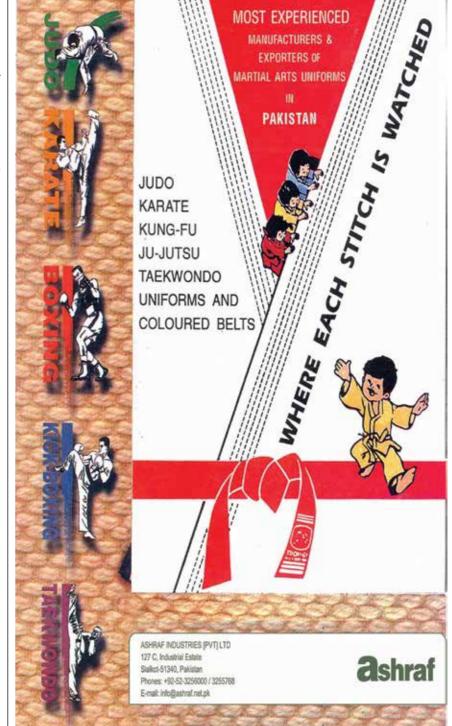
nutrition initiatives, and awareness campaigns under the Benazir Nashonuma Programme. Senator Rubina Khalid stressed the need to create targeted audio and video messages to raise awareness among deserving women about health and nutrition. Additional Secretary BISP Dr. Tahir

ers, including the Health Department, to maximize outreach and program effectiveness.

Dr. Rana Hajjeh lauded the potential of BISP's extensive database in identifying and reaching out to the deserved women and children for health and nutrition interventions. Dr. Zeba



Noor and Director General Dr. Asim Ijaz also attended the meeting. The discussion underscored the importance of engaging with key stakeholdA. Sathar assured full support in providing technical and operational assistance to enhance health and nutrition services for BISP beneficiaries.



Briefs

ANF recovers 1231 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI :Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country recovered 1231 kg drugs worth over Rs 220 million and arrested nine suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday. He informed that 250 grams heroin was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist near Main Korangi Road, Karachi. The arrested suspect confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions, 40 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Bahrain at Lahore International Airport. 64 ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Jeddah through Lahore Airport. 1208 kg hashish was recovered from two different areas of Pishin in Balochistan. 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle intercepted near M-1 Interchange, Islamabad and a suspect was arrested. 3 kg heroin, 2 kg ice and 1.2 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Daska Chowk, Sialkot. 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused held near Sargodha Mor, Mianwali. In an operation, 2.5 kg heroin was recovered from secret cavities of a truck near Kamunki Toll Plaza, Gujranwala and an accused was arrested. In 10th operation, 700 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a drug dealer nabbed near Burhan Toll Plaza, Attock. Separate cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.-APP

Tourists advised to adopt responsible travel practices

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan's breathtaking northern areas beckon tourists to marvel at its majestic snow-capped mountains, renowned tour expert Sheikh Umer cautioned on Monday against the perils of overcrowding, stressing the vital importance of responsible tourism. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, Sheikh Umer, a seasoned tour operator & expert urged local tourists to steer clear of rush spot destinations, particularly during the peak snowing season, adding, it is crucial to heed the advisories issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department to ensure a safe and unforgettable experience. Additionally, the expert urged tourists to maintain a clean environment, respect local communities and conserve natural resources to promote sustainable tourism practices. When asked about the environmental impact of tourism. Sheikh Umer stressed the need for sustainable practices. "As tourists, we have a responsibility to preserve the natural beauty of these areas. We must ensure that our activities do not harm the environment or disrupt the local ecosystem.-APP

ISLAMABAD: Students and faculty members of Quaid-e-Azam university being brified about Senate Museum At Parliament House.

Long-term economic policies crucial for economic growth

Siddiqui specifically criticized the current tax regime, which he said imposes a heavy burden on businesses. He also highlighted the issue of harassment through unjustified tax notices, raids, and fines, which erode entrepreneurs' confidence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, emphasized the pivotal role of the business community in driving Pakistan's economy, particularly in industrial, commercial, and trade sectors. However, he pointed out that numerous challenges are hindering

its progress. He added that the business community remains committed to working diligently for its economic well-being, aiming to reduce the country's reliance on foreign debt by contributing taxes. In turn, the community only expects support, respect, and a conducive environment for conducting

Siddiqui specifically criticized the current tax regime, which he said imposes a heavy burden on businesses. He also highlighted the issue of harassment through unjustified tax notices, raids, and fines, which erode entrepreneurs' confidence. He said that access to essential services like electricity, gas, and reliable infrastructure remains a significant challenge, further complicating business operations. He noted that the inconsistency in government economic policies also discourages investment, as it makes

business people hesitant to invest in the country's future. Siddiqui also expressed concern over the business community's lack of respect and involvement in the formulation of economic policies, further undermining its trust in the system. He stressed the urgent need for political stability and long-term economic policies that could foster the establishment of new industries, create job opportunities, and generate additional

revenue for the government thereby reducing reliance on foreign loans. Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, the acting Vice President of ICCI, emphasized the need for access to low-interest loans and tax exemptions to help new businesses flourish. Both the acting President and the acting Senior Vice President of ICCI pledged their full support to the government to achieve economic progress and prosperity.

Quaide-Azam University delegation visits Senate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 51-member delegation comprising students and faculty from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, visited the Parliament House as part of an academic tour. According to a press release, senior Senate officials warmly welcomed the delegation and facilitated the visit. The group toured the Senate Museum, where they watched a documentary on the history of the Upper House. They showed great interest in the statues of prominent politicians and the historical photographs on display. In the Banquet Hall, the delegation received a detailed briefing on the Senate's working procedures, legislative process, and its role in national governance. They later visited the Senate Hall, where officials further explained the importance of the Senate's functions and its contributions to the country's democratic system. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Senate officials for their hospitality and the informative session, describing the visit as both memorable and educational.

Nagvi condemns terrorist attack on police near Lakki Marwat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on police officers near Lakki Marwat, in which two brave officers embraced martyrdom.

Paying tribute to the fallen heroes, the minister expressed heartfelt condolences to their families, assuring them of the nation's unwavering support during this difficult time. We salute the sacrifices of the martyred officers who have set an example of courage and dedication," said Naqvi. He emphasized the historic contributions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in the fight against terrorism, stating that their bravery and sacrifices will always be remembered and honored. Nagvi reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of law enforcement personnel who continue to protect the nation.

Efforts afoot for promotion of tourism sector in GB

DNA

ISLAMABAD :The development and prosperity of Gilgit Baltistan were the top priority of the Federal Government and in this regard, various projects of development had been launched for the promotion of the tourism sector, health facilities, improvement in the education sector and mitigate the pressure of unemployment in this area. An official source

here on Monday, he said that Federal government had announced a series of mega development projects for the development of the remote areas of the GB. He said the incumbent regime also focused on developing the road network and connectivity of slum areas with each other to facilitate the local community. The local government also upgrading the basic health units in the far-flung areas of the GB.

told sttae run news agency He underlined that tour- ment of camping sites and ism is a lucrative business of the local community and in this regard, GB government provides training facilities to the youth of the area. Tourism is the best source of income for the local population, as millions of tourists visit this area every year. He commended the federal government's efforts in promoting tourism and emphasized the need for its enhancement. He proposed the establish-

tourism facilitation centers across all provinces aimed at facilitating tourists and promoting local attractions. He highlighted the importance of extensive promotion of the Salam Pakistan portal, a dedicated platform designed to guide and assist tourists visiting Pakistan. He stressed the significance of leveraging technology to provide seamless experiences for

Punctuality of trains reached 96pc

ISLAMABAD: The overall punctuality ratio of trains has improved from 76 to 96 percent in four months owing to close monitoring and stern measures taken by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels. "With the punctuality of trains and concrete measures taken by the department in last three months, the number of passengers has increased by over 20 million, which is ample proof of the department's achievement," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said, "Pakistan Railways is also set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to an impressive distance of 700 meters." "The technology aims to enhance the safety, punctuality and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather conditions, particularly in the presence of dense smog and fog," he added. The system, he said, "TDAS is set to revolutionize the way trains navigate through foggy landscapes. It promised not only to avert potential accidents but also to facilitate smooth train travel when visibility is severely compromised." He said, "The capabilities of this digital system extend beyond improved visibility; it can also identify and monitor vital elements such as signals, level crossings, gates, track obstructions, and other potential hazards within the same 700-meter radius." The official said, "This comprehensive approach to training management promises to reduce the risk of accidents significantly." Initially, he said the department was planning to install the anti-fog device in four engines. However, Pakistan Railways has outlined a strategic expansion plan, with the ultimate goal of equipping all trains with this life-saving technology in the coming year.-DNA

Jamali, Zafar discuss Pak's cultural heritage promotion

Ayub Jamali emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to showcase Pakistan's diverse culture, traditions, and arts on the international stage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Meeting between DG Pakistan National Council of Arts Ayub Jamali and President Pakistan Cultural Forum Zafar Bakhtawari, agreement on promoting the country's soft image Islamabad: Director General of Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Ayub Jamali, met with President of Pakistan Cultural Forum, Zafar Bakhtawari, at his office. They held detailed discussions regarding the promotion of Pakistan's cultural heritage, arts, and the projection of the country's positive image. Both dignitaries agreed that Pakistan's cultural heritage plays a pivotal role in highlighting its positive aspects globally.

need for collaborative ef-

Ayub Jamali emphasized the Pakistan Cultural Forum and organize cultural festivals. stressed the importance of



diverse culture, traditions, and arts on the international stage. He highlighted the ongoing projects and activities of PNCA aimed at promoting the arts and culture Zafar Bakhtawari shared details about the activities of the

ies, and active international representation to enhance the country's soft image. He proposed joint projects between PNCA and the Cultural Forum, focusing on music, film, and theater. It was mutually decided to exhibitions, and art workshops across the country. Additionally, they agreed on launching special campaigns and activating cultural delegations to promote Pakistani culture on the international level. DG PNCA stated that the National Council of Arts is committed to providing a platform for the country's artists and creatives. He acknowledged that Zafar suggestions Bakhtawari's would further strengthen the organization's initiatives. He underscored that Pakistan's cultural heritage deserves global recognition, and no effort would be spared in its promotion. Both leaders expressed their resolve to take every possible step to project Pakistan's soft image through culture, art.

UN urged to intervene promptly for Kashmiri leaders' lives

ISLAMABAD : Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik Monday has made an urgent appeal to the United Nations (UN) and the global community to intervene promptly, as the lives of Kashmiri leaders, including her husband hang precariously in the balance. In an interview with a private news channel, has expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating condition of jailed Kashmiri leaders, including her husband, also appealed to the United Nations to intervene and stop the atrocities perpetrated against innocent Kashmiris. She said there is a dire situation in Kashmir, with the Indian government's brutal occupation taking a devastating toll on the region's leaders and civilians. She highlighted the alarming lack of healthcare facilities, exacerbating the suffering of the Kashmiri people.-DNA



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Biden admin's 'steel wall'

N a striking display of economic nationalism, US President Joe Biden blocked Japan's Nippon Steel from acquiring US Steel in a \$14.9 billion deal, citing "national security" concerns and the need to safeguard critical

supply chains. This decision, made in the twilight of the current US adminis-

tration, is more than a rejection of foreign investment; it's a declaration that

the US industrial backbone is not for sale, even to its closest allies. Steel, the

lifeblood of infrastructure and military might, is not just another commodity.

It's the foundation of the US' bridges, tanks and skyscrapers - essential to na-

tional security, just like soldiers and satellites. This underscores the strategic

significance of the Biden administration's decision. By keeping US Steel in

American hands, the Biden administration has drawn a line in the sand, sig-

naling that specific industries are too critical to be controlled by foreign entities. The statement from Biden reads: "Without domestic steel production

and domestic steelworkers, our nation is less strong and less secure." This

sentiment resonates deeply in a country where the decline of manufacturing

has left scars on communities and fueled political populism. The Biden admin-

istration's move aligns with its broader commitment to protecting American

jobs and industries - a promise that has garnered bipartisan support, with even

his successor echoing similar sentiments. However, this isn't just about eco-

nomics; it's about geopolitics. By rejecting Nippon Steel's bid, the US is also

intensifying its efforts to maintain independence in industries where China's

influence looms and attempting to strengthens its position in the ongoing eco-

nomic rivalry with China. For Japan, Biden's decision is a bitter pill to swal-

low. Nippon Steel had promised it would not cut output capacity at US Steel's

mills for 10 years. The Japanese company's pleas are in vain; Washington funda-

mentally treats Tokyo as a subordinate. How could a subordinate be allowed to

control America's strategic industries? The implications extend beyond Japan.

US allies, including the EU, are watching closely. The Biden administration's

move reinforces a growing perception that the US is prioritizing its own eco-

nomic security over the interests of its partners. This could strain alliances and

push countries like Japan, as well as EU members, to seek closer economic

ties with other nations. Washington's protectionist stance may accelerate the

regionalization of the global economy. Countries excluded from US markets

could double down on regional trade agreements like the Comprehensive and

Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). These agreements, which ex-

clude the US, could become platforms for countries to reduce their reliance

on American markets and forge new economic alliances. This could lead to a

more fragmented global economy, with regional blocs becoming increasingly

economically self-sufficient. As the US raises barriers to foreign investment, China could position itself as a more reliable partner for countries seeking to

diversify their economic relationships. While the Biden administration's deci-

sion may protect American jobs and industries in the short term, it carries

long-term risks. By shutting out foreign investment, the US could miss oppor-

tunities to modernize its industries and strengthen its global competitiveness.

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Destruction of Mosques in Gaza

HE Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs reported that the Israeli occupation army destroyed about 1,000 mosques in the Gaza Strip, while settlers stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque more than 250 times, and the call to prayer was prevented at the Ibrahimi Mosque over 670 times last year. The ministry issued a special report on Sunday on the violations of the occupation army against Islamic and Christian holy sites in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the year 2024. In its report, the Ministry of Awqaf said that since the beginning of last year, the occupation has completely destroyed 815 mosques and partially destroyed 151 mosques. It also completely destroyed 19 cemeteries, violating their sanctity, exhuming graves, and removing bodies, and targeted and destroyed 3 churches in Gaza City. The ministry added that the Israeli occupation allowed settler gangs to invade and desecrate the Aqsa Mosque's courtyards and platforms with 256 incursions during the past year. They practiced unusual Talmudic rituals, including "epic prostration," which began for the first time on August 13, 2024, along with blowing the shofar. It clarified that these Talmudic rituals have been conducted at specific places and times to reinforce the temporal and spatial division of Al-Aqsa, under the supervision and protection of occupation police who consistently prevent Al-Aqsa Mosque guards, affiliated with the Awqaf in Jerusalem, from performing their duties during these incursions. The ministry noted that the so-called "Temple groups" facilitated celebrations of the Jewish New Year for settlers inside Al-Aqsa Mosque last year and incited "Temple Mount activists" to burn Al-Aqsa by posting a video showing the Mosque burning, accompanied by the comment: "Soon in these days. On the anniversary of the so-called destruction of the Temple, the ministry indicated that settlers performed collective rituals for the first time in the western area opposite the Dome of the Rock, treating the eastern area of Al-Aqsa as an unofficial "synagogue." The report said that the terrorist Ben Gvir invaded Al-Aqsa, supported by his extreme right-wing government, 7 times since taking office, and 4 times since the start of the war on Gaza. He issued a number of extreme right-wing statements threatening to establish a Jewish synagogue in Al-Aqsa, indicating intent to take control of it, and worked to intensify the Jewish presence by providing government support and legal cover. The report noted that 2,567 settlers stormed the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, during which many violations occurred, the most notable being Ben Gvir's incursion, and Rabbi YisraelShalita's Talmudic rituals, including dancing, singing, and epic prostration. Regarding the Ibrahimi Mosque, the occupation forces committed daily violations, whether by preventing the call to prayer, which reached 674 times since the beginning of the year, or through restrictions on Muslims by closing it 10 times during the same period. The occupation also installed what is known as the "menorah" and Israeli flags on the roof and walls of the Ibrahimi Mosque and held boisterous parties and Talmudic rituals in the occupied section, while beating on doors and shouting insults.

The ruthless accountability...

Qamar Bashir



The power of social media was lately acknowledged by the US President Elect Donald J. Trump when he used TikTok very successfully to reach and influence the young audience across the country and acknowledge the power of the social media as the one major contributing factor towards his unprecedented victory during Election 2024. The power of social media has been instrumental in creating an informal yet highly effective global accountability system

HE democratization and widespread accessibility of social media across the globe have given a loud and clear voice to those who were previously unheard. These individuals, whose voices once had no reach, impact, or influence in their communities, societies, countries, or on a global level, are now empowered. Social media, with its various platforms, has opened up avenues of communication that, until a few years ago, were the exclusive domain of the rich and influential. This newfound freedom has enabled the general populace to develop the skills to ask questions, build followings, and exercise their influence. Social media influencers worldwide have become so powerful that media managers across the globe now systematically engage with them to leverage their reach and connect with their audiences, fans, and followers. During my tenure as a media manager at the Ministry of Information, I played a pivotal role in establishing social media initiatives. I was instrumental in setting up the social media cell for Maryam Nawaz Sharif and later the Digital Media Cell during the PTI government. Both entities effectively utilized social media platforms to amplify their policies and narratives, reaching millions of social media users. As Press Secretary, I curated a list of the country's top media influencers and organized two luncheons with the President. These events provided a platform for the President to share his thoughts on various critical issues of the time, fostering dialogue and understanding between the influencers and the government.

The power of social media was lately acknowledged by the US President Elect Donald J. Trump when he used TikTok very successfully to reach and influence the young audience across the country and acknowledge the power of the social media as the one major contributing factor towards his unprecedented victory during Election 2024. The power of social media has been instrumental in creating an informal yet highly effective global accountability system. This system has become particularly prominent in countries and societies where the rule of law is weak or nonexistent. In such places, the powerful often suppress criticism, control and gag accountability mechanisms, and manipulate the judiciary to serve their own interests. The legal and systemic frameworks in these societies are designed to protect the elite, allowing them to remain

above the law through sheer brute power. One striking example of this global accountability was seen in the case of General (Retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa, the former Chief of the Pakistan Army. General Bajwa wielded immense power over the country, to the extent that he was often described as a "God-like" figure. He had the authority to install or dismantle governments at will. During his tenure, allegations surfaced regarding the accumulation of billions in wealth. When his wealth and tax returns were leaked, the whistleblowers-journalists and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials-were imprisoned rather than commended for exposing illegal financial activities. However, accountability for General Bajwa came in an unusual and public manner. While sitting on the steps of a church with his wife, he was repeatedly subjected to degrading verbal abuse, and the entire humiliating episode was recorded and uploaded to social media. The footage quickly became a viral story worldwide, illustrating how one of the most powerful figures in Pakistan could be reduced to a common, helpless individual in the face of public scrutiny.

Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Qazi Faez Isa played a controversial role in Pakistan's political landscape. Through what were perceived as vindictive and revenge-driven decisions, he deprived the most popular and largest political party of its election symbol, removed its chairman, and barred it from contesting elections as a unified political entity. These actions were widely viewed as a grave disservice to the country and its people. While in Pakistan, Justice Isa appeared to be above the law. However, public accountability eventually caught up with him. First, he was humiliated while buying donuts, and later during a flight to London. Videos of these incidents quickly went viral, providing a sense of satisfaction to those who felt justice had been served for the perceived injustices against the party and its millions of supporters.

On a broader scale, the world has become increasingly hostile to the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N). The PML-N has been criticized for allegedly compromising its principles, aligning itself with the establishment, and using these connections to secure power at both the federal and provincial levels. The party was seen as the primary beneficiary of what has been described as

the most rigged, managed, and engineered election in Pakistan's history on February 8. Despite holding a minority in parliament, the PML-N formed a government with the establishment's support. Once in power, they introduced constitutional amendments and legislative changes that further empowered the already dominant establishment, solidifying their authority. These actions, however, did not go unchallenged. Both domestically and abroad, the leadership of the PML-N has faced relentless backlash. Overseas Pakistanis have publicly confronted and humiliated them, recording these incidents on video. These clips often go viral on social media, amplifying their humiliation globally and serving as a form of public accountability.

When a country's internal accountability mechanisms are stifled and fail to deliver justice, the diaspora of misgoverned nations turns to other power centers in their host countries to hold their leadership accountable for unlawful, undemocratic, and illegal actions. In Pakistan's case, as all pillars of the state have become subservient to the powerful establishment, the Pakistani diaspora has looked to the leadership of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. These countries wield significant influence over Pakistan as its largest aid donors, key importers, business partners, and through their control and influence over international financial institutions like the IMF, which can bring Pakistan's fragile economy to its knees.

This two-pronged accountability is extremely potent and has the potential to shrink the space for dictators and corrupt rulers globally. No matter how powerful a dictator, corrupt ruler, judge, parliamentarian, or businessman may be, they might evade formal accountability processes within their country, but they cannot escape the relentless accountability of the general public wielding the power of social media or the unyielding scrutiny of the country's diaspora worldwide. Rulers and dictators now face a stark choice: either restore the rule of law and allow the pillars of the state to function independently or prepare to face ruthless accountability through social media and the global diaspora. The era of unchallenged impunity is rapidly coming to an end.

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

How dialogue can transform Pakistan's political landscape

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The return to civilian rule in 1988 marked a period of frequent political dialogues between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two dominant political parties. However, these engagements often devolved into personal rivalries, undermining institutional stability. One notable instance was the 1993 dialogue, which resulted in the resignation of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan

N Pakistan's parliamentary democracy, dialogue between the government and opposition plays a pivotal role in ensuring political stability and the smooth functioning of democratic institutions. The country's diverse social, ethnic, and political landscape makes such dialogue essential for bridging divides and promoting inclusive decision-making. Historically, the absence of effective communication between opposing sides has led to political impasses, destabilized governments, and hindered national progress. Constructive dialogue provides a platform to resolve contentious issues such as electoral reforms, economic policies, and constitutional amendments through mutual understanding and compromise. Furthermore, it addresses the grievances of marginalized groups and smaller political entities, ensuring governance reflects the aspirations of all citizens.

Pakistan's political history has often been marked by polarization and mistrust, further underscoring the significance of dialogue. Instances like the Charter of Democracy signed on May 14, 2006, demonstrate how meaningful engagement can pave the way for institutional reforms and political stability. Conversely, failures in dialogue, as witnessed during the political crises of 2014 and 2023, have led to prolonged stalemates, undermining public confidence in democratic processes. Effective dialogue fosters accountability, enabling the opposition to critique government policies constructively while providing the government an opportunity to explain its actions and build consensus. Strengthening Pakistan's democratic foundations requires prioritizing dialogue to address challenges, promote national unity, and uphold parliamentary democracy.

Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, the relationship between the government and opposition has frequently been characterized by mistrust and conflict. This lack of a cooperative political culture has historically hindered efforts at dialogue, resulting in missed opportunities for national consensus. Dialogues have ranged from constitutional agreements to attempts at resolving political crises, yielding varying degrees of success and failure.

In the early years of independence, Pakistan's nascent political system faced significant challenges, including the struggle to formulate a constitution. Efforts for dialogue were evident during the first Constituent Assembly's deliberations, but political rivalries and regional differences marred these attempts. The dismissal of Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin's government on April 17, 1953, set a precedent of political instability,

discouraging meaningful engagement between opposing political forces. This early breakdown in dialogue established a pattern of mistrust that persisted for decades. The political turmoil of the 1970s underscored the necessity of dialogue during one of Pakistan's most severe crises. After the 1971 secession of East Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government initiated the drafting of the 1973 Constitution, a landmark achievement of consensus politics. However, the political environment soon deteriorated. In 1977, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) alleged electoral rigging by Bhutto's government, leading to widespread protests. Attempts at dialogue between the government and the PNA in June 1977 failed, ultimately paving the way for General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law.

The return to civilian rule in 1988 marked a period of frequent political dialogues between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two dominant political parties. However, these engagements often devolved into personal rivalries, undermining institutional stability. One notable instance was the 1993 dialogue, which resulted in the resignation of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, ending a prolonged standoff. While this resolution underscored the importance of dialogue, it also highlighted the recurring inability of political actors to resolve disputes independently. The political dynamics of the 2000s were shaped by the return of exiled leaders and the restoration of democratic processes. The 2006 Charter of Democracy, signed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, symbolized a commitment to democratic norms. Although the charter provided a framework for cooperation, its practical implementation often fell short as both parties prioritized their interests over institutional reforms. Nevertheless, the document remains a reference point for proponents of democratic dialogue in Pakistan, Meanwhile, Dharna (sit-in) politics emerged as a significant phenomenon in Pakistan's political landscape, often reflecting a deadlock between the government and opposition. Early instances, such as Qazi Hussain Ahmed's dharnas in 1993, set a precedent for mass mobilization to challenge government policies. Rooted in ideological opposition to corruption and perceived misgovernance, these protests highlighted the frustration of opposition parties unable to achieve their goals through parliamentary mechanisms. In subsequent years, dharna politics gained prominence with Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's Pakistan Awami Tehreek sit-ins and

Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests.

Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's 2013 dharna demanded electoral reforms and accountability, while the 2014 PTI sit-in reshaped the political narrative. Lasting 126 days, the PTI sit-in in Islamabad called for an investigation into alleged rigging in the 2013 elections. While these protests demonstrated the power of large-scale mobilizations to disrupt governance and draw national attention, they also deepened political polarization, as seen in the growing mistrust between the PTI and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) during that period. These protests underscored both the strength of democratic expression and the limitations of dialogue and institutional mechanisms in resolving political crises, often pushing disputes from parliamentary halls to the streets.

The political dynamics following the 2018 general elections brought new challenges. The PTI's ascension to power was met with resistance from opposition parties, which accused the government of political victimization. Deadlocks over issues such as electoral reforms and accountability highlighted the persistent lack of trust. Despite occasionovertures for dialogue, meaningful progress remained elusive. The removal of Imran Khan as Pakistan's Prime Minister through a no-confidence vote on April 10, 2022, was a historic and polarizing event. While opposition parties hailed it as a victory for democracy, Khan's supporters protested, claiming it was a foreign conspiracy. Negotiations began again in earnest in May 2023, mediated by civil society groups and political actors concerned about Pakistan's stability. Discussions revolved around a roadmap for electoral reforms and a consensus on the timing of the next elections. However, the talks collapsed, over disagreements on key issues, including the composition of the caretaker government. This impasse further polarized the political environment, with both sides accusing each other of insincerity. Currently, PTI and the government, facilitated by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Avaz Sadiq, have initiated dialogue to ease political tensions, with the first session held on December 23, 2024. The government has urged PTI to present a formal charter of demands. Both sides recognize the importance of dialogue for political and economic stability, making these talks a pivotal step toward reducing polarization in Pakistan. Pakistan's history underscores that constructive dialogue between the government and opposition is not merely an option but a necessity for democratic stability. Moving forward, fostering a culture of dialogue and compromise is essential to bridging political divides and ensuring that the country's democratic institutions can effectively address the challenges of governance and representation.



Briefs

Inability to present written demands...

From Page 01 Sources say that apart from presenting a written charter of demand after meeting Khan, the PTI would have to ink an agreement with the government if the demands are accepted. Despite the conducive environment in two of the sittings so far, neither side has approached the NA speaker's office to convene the third meeting. On the issue of written demands, PTI negotiator Asad Qaiser has maintained that the verbal demands presented in the two meetings had now become minutes and should be considered their written demands. Talking to the media outside Adiala jail on Monday, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar said that it was necessary to meet Khan before the third round of talks. Noting that they had informed the government's negotiation panel that they had to meet the party's incarcerated founder, Gohar said that they had hoped to do so by today but there has been no confirmation in this regard so far. "Hopefully we will be able to meet Khan tomorrow," remarked the PTI chairman. Refuting reports claiming that back-door negotiations were underway with Khan's wife and former first lady Bushra Bibi, he clarified that no meeting had taken place other than the two rounds of talks and that only the committee, formed by the party founder, was holding dialogue. Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief and PTI's negotiation committee member Sahibzada Hamid Raza has said that the government has not vet confirmed the permission to meet Khan. Speaking to a private news channel, PTI's Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said that the party did not raise any objection regarding presenting its demands in writing However, he added that they could not do so without meeting Khan.

PML-N claims PPP still on...

From Page 01 the CCI was convened in the last 11 months. "There's always a bit of a musical rhythm within a coalition government, just like with in a family. Within a family, siblings or family members might have their disagreements. "But that doesn't mean there's a serious rift. Whatever the issue is, we handle it internally in a mature manner," the planning minister told reporters in Karachi, speaking alongside PPP leader and Sindh Minister Nasir Hussain Shah. Explaining further, the federal minister said that the PML-N and the PPP are the country's major political parties with their distinct ideologies. However, he maintained, that they are in agreement on Pakistan's development - to stand on one page for the country's interest. "This understanding was the foundation of the Charter of Democracy signed by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. It reflects the essence of democracy, where two mature political parties collaborate for the country's betterment."

PM directs property...

From Page 01 racket abroad and take measures for their extradition to Pakistan. He also advised the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to run an awareness campaign, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, to inform the public about using only legal channels for overseas employment. He said technical training institutions should be promoted in the country to provide certified professionals to the overseas market as per the needs of the day. He also instructed to make the screening process for individuals traveling abroad more effective. Regarding facilitators and abettors of human traffickers, the Prime Minister said strict punitive measures, along with disciplinary action, should be taken against such elements.

South Africa whitewash Pakistan, win Test series 2-0

Aiden Markram and David Bedingham easily chase 58-run target in seventh over

SPORTS DESK

CAPE TOWN: South Africa chased down the paltry 58-run target in 7.1 overs to thump Pakistan by ten wickets and complete the series sweep on the fourth day of the second Test here at Newlands on Monday. David Bedingham struck a quick 44* off 30, laced with four boundaries and two sixes, while Aiden Markram scored 14 runs to help South Africa chase the target without any damage. Earlier in the evening, Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Rizwan came out to bat in the third session and extended their partnership to 88 runs before the latter fell prey to Keshav Maharaj. The wicket-keeper went back to the pavilion after scoring 41 off 75. Maharaj struck again after a few overs to remove Agha, who was playing at 48, leaving Pakistan struggling at 441-7. Aamir Jamal then played a crucial 34-run knock and added a valuable 37 runs for the eighth wicket with Mir Hamza (16) before Pakistan were bundled for 478, setting a target of 58 runs. For South Africa, Kagiso Rabada and Maharaj claimed

three wickets each, while Marco Jansen and Mphaka took two and one wickets respectively. Earlier in the day, Shan Masood and Saud Shakeel extended their partnership to 51 runs, after coming from Lunch, to take the total to 329-4 before Pakistan faced a double blow. Rabada struck again to dismiss Shakeel, who scored 23 runs from 51 balls. Meanwhile, Masood fell prey to debutant Kwena Maphaka in the next over after playing a stellar knock of 145 runs from 251 balls, laced with 17 boundaries. After backto-back wickets, Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Rizwan joined hands to launch recovery for Pakistan. They forged an unbeaten 69-run stand to take the team's score to 398-5 at the end of the second session. Pakistan started Day 4 with captain Shan Masood (102*) and nightwatchman Khurram Shahzad (8*) on the crease at the score of 213-1 in their second innings after they were forced to follow on. However, Shahzad fell prey to Marco Jansen after extending his overnight score to 18 runs, which came off 47 balls, leaving Pakistan reeling at 235-2.



Ghulam (28) and together they forged a gutsy partnership of 43 runs for the the third wicket. South Africa pace spearhead castled Ghulam to bring Saud Shakeel out to bat, who stayed resilient with Masood to ensure no further

on 312-3 with Masood (137*) and Shakeel (16*) on the crease when the umpires called for Lunch on Day 4. Pakistan Playing XI: Shan Masood (c), Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Aamir Jamal,

Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Khurram Shahzad. South Africa Plaving XI: Aiden Markram, Rvan Rickelton, Wiaan Mulder, Tristan Stubbs, Temba Bavuma (c), David

Bedingham, Kyle Verreynne (wk), Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada, Kwena Maphaka.

Naqvi inspect rapid progress of Gaddafi Stadium renovations

Masood was joined by Kamran

Naqvi expressed his satisfaction with the speed at which the project is progressing

BUREAU REPORT

Lahore: In less than three months, Gaddafi Stadium has undergone a remarkable transformation, with significant strides made in the construction and renovation process. The grey structure is now 100% complete, and the finishing work is progressing rapidly. The stadium, which boasts a capacity of over 34,000 spectators, is set to offer a completely revamped experience. The installation of modern lighting is nearing its final stages, adding to the stadium's contemporary appeal. Notably, the view of the ground from the general enclosures has significantly improved, offering spectators an enhanced match-day experience.

Additionally, the installation of new scoreboards on both sides of the ground is currently underway, further enhancing the venue's appeal. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, recently visited Gaddafi Stadium for a detailed inspection of the ongoing reconstruction work. He reviewed the proof the stadium, including the general enclosures and the main building. Despite the challenging weather conditions, including severe cold and fog, Naqvi expressed his satisfaction with the speed at which the project is progressing. "I am pleased with the progress made so far, and I am confident that the stadium will be ready with state-ofthe-art facilities well ahead

of the Champions Trophy," Naqvi remarked during the inspection. He also took the opportunity to meet with the workers on-site, gress across all sections congratulating them for

their hard work. He instructed the team to maintain their momentum and complete the project within the set timeline. The Project Director of FWO also briefed the PCB Chairman on the developments, highlighting the commitment to meeting deadlines.

Chief Operating Officer PCB, Sameer Ahmed; Advisors: Aamir Mir; Director of Infrastructure; Director of Domestic Cricket; and officials from NESPAK and FWO were also present on this occasion. It is pertinent to mention that the International Cricket Council (ICC), on December 24, 2024 announced the highly anticipated schedule for the men's Champions Trophy 2025, which will be hosted by Pakistan and Dubai. The eightteam tournament, consisting of 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9 across three venues: Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi in Pakistan, as well as Dubai. The eight participating teams are divided into two groups. Group A comprises Pakistan, India, New Bangladesh, Zealand, and while Group B includes Afghanistan, South Africa,

PCB neglects U19 cricket amid domestic revamp

PCB neglects domestic *U-19 cricket, raising* concerns over future talent

DNA

LAHORE: In Pakistan cricket, it has become a longstanding tradition that every time a new chairman takes the reins at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the board's direction changes according to their personal approach. The current administration, under the leadership of PCB Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, appears eager to accelerate progress in the game. Naqvi introduced the "Champions Cup" tournaments and expanded domestic cricket by assigning additional responsibilities to five mentors. However, amidst these changes, one crucial element seems to have been overlooked-Pakistan's Under-19 cricket. Between September 2024 and January 2025, the PCB organised Pakistan's largest domestic tournaments-the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (First-Class), the President's One Day Cup and the Regional Inter-District Senior (three-day) tournament. However, during this period, there has been a notable silence surrounding the domestic Under-19 scene. On September 10, 2024, the PCB unexpectedly halted the domestic Under-19 tournament. Since then, no updates or actions have been announced regarding junior-level cricket. Despite this, Pakistan's Under-19 team has remained active on the international front. However, the lack of a structured domestic Under-19 tournament has meant that selections have largely been made based on past performances or personal preferences, without the backing of current domestic data. This has raised concerns, with the board justifying the selections by claiming there was no recent domestic data available. In January and February 2024, Pakistan's Under-19 team, led by wicketkeeper Mirza Saad Baig, competed in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in South Africa.

Street child football team trials begin nationwide

The maximum age limit for participants has been set at 17 years

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Trials for the Pakistan Street Child Football Team are currently underway across the country, with the aim of selecting young talent for the prestigious Norway Cup 2025 and the Street Child World Cup 2026. In the first phase, trials successfully concluded in 12 cities across Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The cities that participated include Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Peshawar, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, among others. These trials received an overwhelming response, with a large number of enthusiastic young players taking part. The next phase of trials will focus on Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Young athletes from these regions will have the chance to showcase their skills and secure a place in the national team. To ensure a fair competition, the maximum age limit for participants has been set at 17 years. The Norway Cup 2025 will take place in Oslo, Norway, from July 26 to August 2, while the Street Child World Cup 2026 is scheduled to be held in the United States in February and March.

Jay Shah pushes for two-tier system in Test cricket

In 2016, former BCCI president Anurag Thakur had dismissed idea

WEB DESK

DUBAI: India, Australia, and England are reportedly in advanced discussions to introduce a two-tier structure for Test cricket, with the "big three" nations playing each other more frequently in high-profile series. The proposal is gaining significant momentum, fueled by record crowds for the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which saw an attendance of 837,879 spectators. With a large following in these countries, the idea is now being seriously considered by the International Cricket Council (ICC), led by chairman Jay Shah. A meeting is scheduled later this month with Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird and England Cricket Board chairman Richard Thompson to discuss the implementation of the two-tier structure. This comes after growing calls for more "best versus best" encounters in Test cricket, a sentiment echoed by former India coach Ravi Shastri, who has long been critical of the current, overcrowded international schedule. "I've been a firm believer in that if you want

that's the way to go," Shastri said on SEN during the SCG Test. "The top teams play against each other more often, so there is a contest; you want contests." According to reports, the proposed top division of Test cricket would consist of seven teams: South Africa, Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The second division would include West Indies, Bangladesh, Ireland, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. This model, initially proposed in 2016, was met with resistance from smaller cricketing nations who feared losing their status as Test-playing countries. Back then, the plan was dropped, largely due to opposition from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). In 2016, former BCCI president Anurag Thakur had dismissed the idea, stating, "The BCCI is against the two-tier Test system because the smaller countries will lose out and the BCCI wants to take care of them.' "It is necessary to protect their interests," he had said. Despite the earlier opposition, the growing popularity of Test cricket, particularly in countries with strong cricketing traditions, has revived the debate. The success of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which showcased thrilling cricket and attracted massive crowds, is seen as a catalyst for discussions on how to elevate the status of the game.

PM Shehbaz, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Nagvi, directing them to appear before the court on January 15. The petitioner, in an application, claimed that the unemployed Pakistanis were "poised to leave the country due to the government's negligence. "The government writ has ended as 75 Pakistanis lost their lives in the incidents," it added. The petitioner asked the court to issue directives for the registration of a case against government officials at Rohri police station. The development came as more than 80 Pakistanis had drowned after boats carrying them capsized near Greece on the night be-

German diplomat found dead...

From Page 01

absent from work for two

days, Express News reported. They broke into his apartment and found him unresponsive. Islamabad Police were notified immediately and transported the body to a local hospital for a post-mortem examination. Police officials stated that while the cause of death is not yet confirmed, initial investigations indicate that Thomas Fielder had previously suffered a minor heart attack, which could have played a role. A post-mortem report will determine the exact cause of death, and police are continuing their investigation into the circumstances surrounding the

incident. The German Em-

bassy has been informed,

and further details are

awaited. Fielder had been

residing in the Diplomatic

Enclave, a high-security

area where many foreign

diplomats live and work.

Rashid Khan powers Afghanistan to Test series win

This is Afghanistan's fourth win in Test cricket history

WEB DESK

KABUL: Rashid Khan's exceptional seven-wicket performance led Afghanistan to a 72-run victory over Zimbabwe in the second Test in Bulawayo, securing a 1-0 series win after the first match ended in a draw. Zimbabwe, facing a daunting target of 278, were already on the brink of defeat heading into the final day at 205 for 8. They lost their last two wickets without adding to their overnight score. Rashid could have claimed a wicket in his first over of the day, dismissing Richard Ngarava, had captain Hashmatullah Shahidi not dropped a chance at point after running in from cover. However, it did not matter as Ngarava was dismissed in the following over, run out by Shahidullah Kamal following a miscommunication with Craig Ervine.

Ervine, who had kept Zimbabwe's hopes alive in the first innings with his 75, was then trapped leg before, handing Rashid



his seventh wicket and Afghanistan their victory. Earlier in the match, Afghanistan had turned the tide through brilliant centuries from Rahmat Shah (139) and Ismat Alam (101), posting a challenging total for the hosts, despite trailing Zimbabwe's first-innings score. Zimbabwe's first innings relied heavily on three senior batters, Sikandar Raza (61), Ervine (75), and Sean Williams (49), who led their charge past Afghanistan's first-innings total. However, Zimbabwe's resistance faltered in the second innings as Rashid struck with crucial wickets on Day 4. Although Raza, Ben Curran, and Takudzwanashe Kaitano got starts. Rashid removed each of them. Ervine attempted a defiant knock, but the middle and lower order crumbled under the pressure, and Zimbabwe were bowled out, with Rashid claiming his 11th wicket of the match to seal the victory. This is Afghanistan's fourth Test win, with one victory each against Bangladesh and Ireland, and two wins over Zimbabwe.

Verdict in 190m pound...

From page 01 At first, it was pronounced that the decision would be announced on December 23.Later, it was delayed to January 6. £190 million case involves a reference filed by NAB against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and others in December 2023.

PPP decides to openly oppose...

From Page 01 criticise the government's decisions and directed them to challenge its policies, especially in federal and provincial governments. PPP leadership has reportedly issued detailed guidelines for its members, advising them to actively criticise the government's ineffective and flawed policies. The party has expressed concern that remaining silent on the government's actions would be seen as tacit approval, thus instructing party officials to raise their voices against what they see as detrimental policies. According to party sources, the PPP believes that silence on critical issues could lead to political damage, with the blame for the government's poor decisions potentially falling on the opposition party. The leadership is determined not to let the government's failures

Türkiye condemns Trubat...

tarnish the party's image.

From Page 01 read the ministry's press release on Monday. Expressing solidarity with the victims and their families, the ministry added, "We wish Allah's mercy upon those who lost their lives in the attack and a speedy recovery to the injured." Reaffirming its unwavering support for Pakistan in combating terrorism, the statement concluded, "Türkiye will continue to support Pakistan in its fight against terrorism." This declaration highlights Türkiye's commitment to its close ally, Pakistan, in addressing shared challenges related to security and regional stability. (ILKHA)

Sukkur court summons PM, other...

FROM PAGE 01 judge-II issued notices to tween December 13 and 14.

Business / World



PSX witnessed bearish trend, loses 1,331 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-In dex of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 1,331.86 points, a negative change of 1.13 percent, closing at 116,255.13 points as compared to 117,586.98 points on the last trading day. A total of 819,805,715 shares were traded during the day as compared to 935,783,268 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 38.326 billion against Rs.39.620 billion on the last trading day. As many as 458 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 113 of them recorded gains and 291 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 54 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Cnergyico PK with 83,169,417 shares at Rs 7.41 per share, Fauji Foods Limited with 47,302,289 shares at Rs.18.41 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 41,293,698 shares at Rs.1.65 per share. -APP

Rupee sheds 06 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 06 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.62 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.56. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.50 and Rs 280.00 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.28 to close at Rs 287.85 against the last day's closing of Rs286.57, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs1.76, whereas an increase of Rs 1.52 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs347.07 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs345.55. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 and 02 paisa to close at Rs75.85 and Rs74.19, respectively.-APP

Gold prices dip by Rs700 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.700 and was sold at Rs 275,000 on Monday against its sale at Rs 275,700 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.600 to Rs.235,768 from Rs 236.368 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went down to Rs.216,121 from Rs 216,671. The prices of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs3,350 and Rs. Rs.2,872.08 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$7 to \$2,632 from \$2639, the Association reported.

SECP Introduces regulatory framework to facilitate mutual fund industry

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has further strengthened the regulatory framework for the mutual fund industry by specifying detailed requirements for "Investment Plans." This initiative builds upon the enabling provisions previously introduced via amendments to the Non-Banking Fi-Companies and nance Notified Entities Regulations, 2008 (NBFC Regulations), said a press release. The framework aims to enhance governance, streamline operations, and ensure secure investment horizons, thus fostering retail penetration in the mutual fund industry.-APP

Briefs Pak HC presents credentials to Maldivian President Muizzu

The President and the High Commissioner both underscored the significance of deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and Maldives which are based on religious affinity

DNA

The High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Maldives, Vice Admiral (Retd) Faisal Rasul Lodhi, presented his Letters of Credence to the President Dr Mohamed Muizzu, at a ceremony held this morning at the President's Office. The event commenced with a traditional "Haivkolhu" cultural procession, featuring the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) Drum and Trumpet Band, as the High Commissioner was ceremonially escorted from the Republic Square to the President's Office. Following the formal presentation of credentials, President Dr Muizzu welcomed the new High Commissioner and expressed optimism for the continued strengthening of ties between Maldives and Pakistan. After the presentation of the credentials, the High Commissioner paid courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Maldives. Deputy Head of Mission Zulqurnain Ahmad, also accompanied the High Commissioner. The Call was also attended by H.E. Abdulla Fayaz,





Office; H.E. Mohamed Naseer, Principal Secretary to the President on Foreign Relations and H.E. Ms. Fathimath Inaya, Foreign Secretary of the Maldives. During the meeting; H.E. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu congratulated H.E. Vice Admiral (R) Faisal Rasul Lodhi, for appointment as the High Commissioner

The High Commissioner conveyed warmest greetings and best wishes of the Honorable President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to the Honorable President of the Maldives. The President and the High Commissioner both underscored the significance of deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan



based on religious affinity, commonality of culture, converging interest and a profound mutual trust. President Dr. Muizzu and the High Commissioner discussed enhancing bilateral relations and collaboration in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, health, education, climate change, defense.

strengthening the cordial relations between the two countries. President's Office stated that the High Commissioner and President Muizzu engaged in discussions focused on enhancing bilateral relations and deepening cooperation in key areas, including climate change,

healthcare, tourism, and trade. The High Commissioner praised Maldives for its unwavering support of Palestinian rights, a stance he commended as a testament to the nation's commitment to global justice. The day also saw the presentation of credentials by the new High Commissioner of India to Maldives as well.

Syrian universities reopen

DAMASCUS: Universities in Syria, which had been closed

since Dec. 8 due to uncertainty following the fall of the

Bashar al-Assad regime, resumed education on Monday.

After suspending education for two weeks on Dec. 8, uni-

versities remained closed due to the Christmas holiday.

Following a break of approximately one month, education

activities have resumed, with many students returning to

campus to take their final exams. Students and teachers,

excited to return to their universities, shared their experi-

ences and emotions about the recent events in Syria with

Anadolu. Reem Al Zohaili, a graduate of Damascus Uni-

versity's Faculty of Architecture and Higher Institute of

Languages, who now works as a teacher, expressed the joy

and relief felt after the regime's downfall. "Under Assad's

regime, people were not allowed to do anything or speak

about anything, even political topics. Now, people are free

to speak and act as they wish - it feels like being released

from prison," she said. Highlighting the newfound freedom,

Zohaili noted: "In the past, I used to push my students to

participate in the class to give opinions about things, even

though we never talk about politics." "I can feel that stu-

dents are now more open. They participate, they give their

own opinions," she stressed.—APP

CAIR calls US' new \$8b arms sale for Israeli genocide 'racist. sociopathic'

WASHINGTON: The Counon American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a leading Muslim advocacy group, , has called President Joe Biden's new \$8 billion arms deal in support of Israel's genocide in Gaza 'racist' and 'sociopathic'. The US State Department has notified Congress 'informally' of an \$8 billion proposed arms deal with Israel that will include munitions for fighter jets and attack helicopters as well as artillery shells, according to Axious, an American news website. CAIR's condemnation comes as Israel is planning to step up its forced starvation of the civilian population in Gaza after President-elect Donald Trump is inaugurated. Multiple human rights organizations and international bodies have accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza. The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for committing war crimes. Israel has slaughtered more than 45,000 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, including seven children murdered today in an Israeli strike on a residential building in Gaza. "We strongly condemn the Biden administration for its unbelievable and criminal decision to send another \$8 billion worth of American weapons to the government of indicted war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu instead of using American leverage to force an end to the genocide in Gaza," CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said. -APP

Indonesia launches free meals to combat malnutrition

JAKARTA: Indonesia's new

government launched an ambitious \$4.3 billion free meal program on Monday to fight malnutrition and stunting, a key election promise of President Prahowo Subianto. The Free Nutritious Meal Program, a centerpiece of Prabowo's election campaign that catapulted him to power last year, plans to reach more than 82 million students and pregnant mothers across Indonesia in five years. It is part of a longer-term strategy to develop human resources to achieve a "Golden Indonesia" generation by 2045 and to significantly reduce the problem of stunting that currently afflicts around 21.5 percent of children younger than 5 years old in the country. "This is a historic moment for Indonesia. For the first time, Indonesia is conducting a nationwide nutrition program for toddlers, students, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers," Hariqo Wibawa Satria, head of the presidential communications office, said late on Sunday.—APP

New Orleans attacker travelled to Egypt, Canada:US

NEWYORK: US Army veteran also visited the city twice in months leading up to truck attack, law enforcement officials say. Authorities in the United States are investigating the potential significance of overseas trips made by the man responsible for driving a truck into New Year's revellers in New Orleans, law enforcement officials have said. Shamsu -Din Jabbar, a US Army veteran who proclaimed his support for ISIL (ISIS) in videos posted online before the attack, visited Egypt and Canada in the summer of 2023, an FBI official said on Sunday. "Our agents are getting answers as to where he went, whom he met with, how those trips may or may not tie into his actions in our city." Lyonel Myrthil, special agent in charge of the bureau's New Orleans field office, told reporters. Jabbar also made at least two trips to New Orleans, in October and November, officials said. On his first visit, he rode a bicycle around the city's French Quarter, where the attack was carried out, while recording the scene with Meta smart glasses, according to police. Myrthil said Jabbar was wearing the glasses, but did not turn them on, when he carried out the New Year's Day attack, which killed 14 people and injured 35 others. FBI Deputy Assistant Director Christopher Raia said that all evidence indicated that Jabbar, a US citizen, had acted alone in carrying out the attack, though investigators were looking into his contacts in and outside the US. "We have not seen any indications of an accomplice in the United States, but we are still looking into potential associates in the US and outside of our borders," Raia told reporters. Jabbar drove a rented pick-up truck around a barrier and sped down the famed Bourbon Street before being shot dead by responding police officers, according to authorities. US President Joe Biden is set to visit New Orleans with first lady Jill Biden on Monday to pay his respects to the victims of the attack.-DNA

FCAS to expand knowledge-based economy: Mailk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaiz Malik Monday stated that Pakistan, under the Prime Minister's vision, is taking a giant leap in digitalization with the Faceless Customs Assessment System (FCAS) to expand the knowledge-based economy, ensure universal connectivity and promote digital literacy. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, minister unveiled plans to integrate the Faceless Customs Assessment System into the Federal Board of Revenue's transformation strategy, aligning with the Prime Minister's vision for a Digital Pakistan which aims to harness digitalization. streamlining business processes and bolstering tax collection documentation. He explained that the Faceless Customs Assessment System aims to facilitate trade by reducing clearance time, inducing efficiency and promoting transparency in assessments, adding, this system is expected to bring a significant change in the overall culture and working of the Customs department. By automating the customs assessment process, the system eliminates the need for physical interaction between customs officials and traders, reducing the risk of corruption and increasing the speed of clearance, he added. Minister further said that the "Faceless Customs Assessment System" is set to revolutionize Pakistan's economy, adding, this System is a key milestone in Pakistan's journey to digital transformation. Responding to a question, he revealed that the system is expected to be fully functional within the next 2 to 3 months. Addressing concerns about slow internet speeds, the Minister stated that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the IT Ministry are taking emergency measures to resolve the issue. Once resolved, Pakistan's internet services are expected to resolve national security issues and will meet international standards, ultimately contributing to the country's pro-

Iran, Russia to sign comprehensive cooperation agreement

MOSCOW: The presidents of Iran and Russia will sign a comprehensive agreement for long-term cooperation in Moscow in mid-January, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei says. Speaking to reporters at his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday, Baghaei said the agreement has different aspects. "An important part of the agreement includes trade, economy, energy and the environment sectors as well as issues pertaining to defense and security matters," he added. He noted that Iran and Russia had approved the document in early summer and were waiting for the right time to sign the deal by the two countries' presidents. Pointing to bilateral negotiations about the agreement at different times in the past, Baghaei stressed the need to update the previous document to further strengthen Tehran-Moscow relations. Iran and Russia, as two close and strategic allies, have over the past years deepened their relations in various fields, despite being under heavy Western sanctions. In 2001, Tehran and Moscow signed a long-term cooperation deal, officially known as the Treaty of the Foundation of Mutual Relations and the Principles of Cooperation. It was initially set for 10 years but was extended up until 2026. Now, the two capitals are making final arrangements for the comprehensive partnership pact, which may determine their bilateral ties in all fields for the next 20 years. The spokesperson said Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani is scheduled to visit Tehran at the invitation of President Masoud Pezeshkian in line with diplomatic interactions between the two countries. The Iraqi premier and Iranian president will discuss ways to promote mutual relations in various fields and the implementation of the agreements previously signed by the two countries, he added. "The developments in the region, especially in Syria, will definitely be among the topics on the agenda of this trip given their importance and sensitivity," Baghaei explained. Baghaei affirmed Iran's "clear" stance on the latest developments in Syria after the fall of former president Bashar al-Assad and said Tehran has always emphasized that it respects the Syrian people's decisions. He emphasized that all regional countries should also respect the decisions being made by the people of Syria. The spokesman said maintenance of Syria's integrity and territorial integrity is important for Iran and the whole region "while we have expressed common concerns." "Syria must be able to make decisions about its own destiny and future without destructive interference of regional or international parties. It must not become a place for the growth of terrorism and violent extremism at all," Baghaei noted. As Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced, stability, peace and prevention of any chaos in Syria will be beneficial for Iran and the entire region, he said. In response to a question about possible negotiations between Iran and the United States, Baghaei said Tehran has never left the negotiating table and always believes in dialogue. He added that Iran is ready for "dignified" negotiations to remove sanctions and allay concerns of the sides about the country's nuclear program and emphasized, "This is Iran's fixed stance." Baghaei, however, noted that more decisions should be made in this regard based on the opposite side's approach and performance. Baghaei said the international community expressed its protest over the Israeli regime's ban on the operations of UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, and called on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to investigate the issue. He added that the ICJ must rule on Israel's breach of its commitments to international organizations. In a statement in November, the regime's foreign ministry said, "On the instruction of Foreign Minister Israel Katz," it had notified the UN of the "cancellation of the agreement" between the regime and the agency.-DNA

Winter storm causes massive flight disruptions, snarling U.S. travel

WASHINGTON, DC: A deadly winter storm is pummeling Washington, DC, and the mid-Atlantic Monday after causing hundreds of crashes and flight cancellations and knocking out power to hundreds of thousands in the central United States over the weekend. Five inches of snow had fallen in the area by sunrise - marking its snowiest day in two years - with more on the way through the day. US federal government offices in Washington are closed Monday due to the weather, but the closure will not affect Congress where certification of the 2024 Presidential Election results will take place, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser said the top priority is getting the city fully opened as soon as possible and urged people to give snowplow teams space to work. "If you don't need to be on the roads tonight and tomorrow, stay home. Please stay off our roads," she said Sunday

At least three people died in traf-

Two people in Wichita, Kansas. died Sunday when their SUV slid and went down an embankment, according to the Kansas Highway Patrol. A dump truck slid out of control in Independence, Missouri, Sunday night and struck a 61-year-old pedestrian who died at the scene, according to the state's highway patrol. Major highways were shut down by snow and ice in multiple states over the weekend, including Missouri where at least 600 motorists were stranded amid extreme conditions. Hundreds of car crashes occurred in Virginia, Indiana, Kansas and Kentucky, the Associated Press reported. The National Guard was deployed across major roads in Kansas, western Nebraska and parts of Indiana, where hundreds of motorists were stranded, according to the AP. In northwestern Missouri, the State Highway Patrol is "working with tow companies to remove countless stranded vehicles" on I-29, the Missouri Department of Transportation said. The interstate reopened Monday morning, but officials strongly encouraged drivers to stay clear of it. More than 350,000 people from Missouri to Virginia are without power Monday morning, according to PowerOutage.us. Thick ice, snow and gusty winds took down trees and power lines over the weekend. The utility that serves Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky, does not yet have an estimate of when its more than 20,000 outages can be restored. "It's definitely a multi-day event here in Kentucky," LG&E and KU Energy spokesperson Daniel Lowry told CNN Monday. Conditions will remain hazardous conditions for crews trying to restore power. A new Arctic blast with dangerously low temperatures will impact the same areas after the storm. It will lock in snow and ice and create life-threatening conditions for those without power who don't have access to heat. More than 1,300

flights into and out of the US were cancelled as of 7 a.m. Monday, according to flight data tracker Flight-Aware. This comes after more than 1,800 flights met the same fate on Sunday. All public schools in Washington, DC, are closed Monday due to weather conditions. Alexandria City Public Schools and Arlington Public Schools in Virginia are also closed. Cincinnati Public Schools, one of Ohio's largest school districts, are also closed on Monday due to inclement weather, while some schools in Louisville, Kentucky and Springfield, Missouri, will also shut due to dangerous road conditions brought by icy rain and sleet. Major universities - including Ohio State and the University of Pennsylvania - announced they were canceling in-person classes Monday. The major winter storm barreling through the East Monday will dump snow, ice and rain over the region throughout the day before it pushes off the coast in the evening. The most intense

snow will happen in the morning, though some will linger in parts of the mid-Atlantic - including Washington, DC - through the evening hours before finally coming to an end. Brutally cold air and strong winds will rush over the East Monday night and Tuesday in the wake of the storm. Temperatures plummeted Monday in the Central US as the coldest air of the season arrived, locking in the mounds of snow and plenty of treacherous ice that fell over the weekend. The storm has already proven prolific in the Central US. A foot and a half of snow fell in Chapman, Kansas, the storm's top total so far. Blizzard conditions hit Topeka, Kansas, on Sunday, as strong winds blew snow and caused whiteouts. Topeka's 14.1 inches of snow - recorded on Sunday - is the third largest calendar day of snowfall on record, while 11 inches of snow in Kansas City, Missouri, marks the snowiest day on record at the city's official reporting station.—Agencies

UN: Over 30m in need of aid in wartorn Sudan

PORT SUDAN, Sudan: More than 30 million people, over half of them children, are in need of aid in Sudan after twenty months of war, the United Nations said on Monday. The UN has launched a \$4.2 billion call for funds, targeting 20.9 million people across Sudan from a total of 30.4 million people it said are in need in what it called "an unprecedented humanitarian crisis." Sudan has been torn apart and pushed to the brink of famine by the war that erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Tens of thousands of people have been killed and more than eight million internally displaced, which, in addition to 2.7 million displaced before the war, has made Sudan the world's largest internal displacement crisis. A further 3.3 million people have fled across Sudan's borders to escape the war, which means over a quarter of the country's pre-war population, estimated at around 50 million, are now uprooted.–APP



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Briefs

2 police officers martyred in Lakki Marwat

SHAMIM SHAHID

LAKKI MARWAT: Two police officers were martyred in a terrorist attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's LakkiMarwat district. According to police officials, the incident occurred in Khairo Khel Paka area near Jabukhel within the jurisdiction of Ghazni Khel police station, where terrorists opened fire on the officers. The martyred officers, Hikmatullah and Khan Bahadur, were on duty at the time of the attack.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the incident and paid tribute to the martyred officers. He also expressed his condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families.

Mohsin Naqvi stated, "We salute the sacrifice of our martyred officers and stand with their families during this difficult time. The brave heroes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have made history with their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism."

North fires missile as Blinken in South Korea

SEOUL: North Korea has fired a ballistic missile into the sea at the same time the top United States diplomat was holding meetings in the South Korean capital, Seoul. South Korea's military said the missile was launched eastward at about noon (03:00 GMT) shortly after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with South Korean Acting President Choi Sang-mok.

"Our military detected one projectile presumed to be an intermediate-range ballistic missile," the military said. After the missile flew about 1,100km (680 miles), before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, the military said Seoul "strengthened surveillance and vigilance" for any more launches.

The missile appeared to have fallen into the water, according to Japan. Seoul was "in close coordination with the US and Japan" about the launch, the South's military added.

Japan's Ministry of Defense said the missile landed outside its exclusive economic zone and that there were no reports of damage to vessels or aircraft.

Both Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul condemned the launch at a joint news conference, with Washington's top diplomat calling it "another violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions". Monday's launch was Pyongyang's first since November 5 when it fired at least seven short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast. Patrick Fok, reporting from Seoul, said the timing of the missile firing was "significant" for several reasons. - Agencies

Court orders arrest of Gandapur

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad District and Sessions Court has ordered the arrest and production of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in connection with an illegal arms and liquor recovery case. During a hearing presided over by Judicial Magistrate Mubashir Hassan Chishti, neither Ali Amin Gandapur nor his lawyer, Raja Zahoor-ul-Hassan, appeared in court.

Furthermore, the SSP Operations failed to present a compliance report regarding the previous arrest warrant issued against Gandapur, prompting the court's displeasure. Judge Mubashir Hassan expressed frustration on the continuous absence of both the accused and his legal representative. The court directed SSP Operations to ensure Ali Amin Gandapur's arrest ordered his production in the next hearing, scheduled for January 21.

Toshakhana case 2 required further inquiry: IHC

FIA prosecutor submitted very fairly that cabinet memorandum doesn't have retrospective effect, observes IHC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a detailed verdict of granting bail to PTI founder Imran Khan in new Toshakhana case, stating that prima facie. the non-deposit of gifts in state depository does not entail "appropriate action" under the relevant rules. IHC's Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb issued the detailed verdict on the bail application of incarcerated former premier - who has been behind bars since August last year after he was sentenced in Toshakhana case-1, one of the dozens of cases registered against Khan since his ouster from power in April 2022. In the detailed ruling, Justice Aurangzeb stated: "Prima facie such non-deposit does not entail appropriate action under the relevant rules in terms of the O.M. [Cabinet Division's Office Memorandum] dated 18.12.2018." The court noted that the Cabinet Divisions' OM dated March 18, 2023 was to have effect from February 22, 2023. "FIA special prosecutor submitted very fairly that the said OM dated 18.03.2023 does not have retrospective effect so as to be made applicable to the case against the petitioner which took place almost two years before the said O.M. was issued." The court further noted: "The fact that the OM does not make the non-deposit of the

gift with the Toshakhana /Cabinet Division

liable to "appropriate action" under "the

relevant rules," this would, in my tentative

Imran Khan not seeking any NRO, says Aleema

Khayam Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, has stated that the ongoing negotiations give the impression that the former prime minister also wants to get out of jail through an NRO. Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, Aleema Khan said that Imran Khan had been facing legal cases for over a year and a half. He wants the decision on the Al-Qadir Trust case to be announced so the world knows what this case is about, she added. She mentioned that the government's negotiations give the impression that Imran Khan, like them, wants to get out of jail by getting an NRO. She reminded everyone that Imran Khan had been facing cases for two and a half years. Aleema Khan further stated that there were efforts made for Imran Khan to leave the country, with attempts to have him go abroad for three years,

view, make the case against the petitioner as one of further inquiry." In November last year, the IHC approved the bail plea of the PTI founder in the new Toshakhana case. The court accepted Khan's bail plea against

then two years, and finally for six months. There were also suggestions to place him under house arrest or have him remain silent while the government continued its work. Aleema Khan clarified that Imran Khan had sent a clear message to the negotiating committee, which had met the government two or three times. Imran Khan's two main demands are that a judicial commission be formed to investigate both the events of May 9 and November 26, and that investigations be conducted into the FIRs filed against 10,000 to 12,000 people. His second demand is the release of innocent people imprisoned in jails, she added. Talking about Al-Qadir Trust case, she said, Imran Khan had clearly stated that it was a misunderstanding that the case was being used as a sword hanging over his head. She further mentioned that Imran Khan had told the authorities to issue a verdict in this case just as they did in the Iddat and cipher cases.

two surety bonds worth Rs1 million each. Khan and the former first lady Bushra Bibi were taken into custody in the case on July 13, 2024, the same day the couple was acquitted in the Iddat case. However, Khan's wife

secured bail in the case from the IHC in October last year. Toshakhana 2.0: The reference filed by the NAB was related to a jewellery set gifted to Bushra by the Saudi royal family when her husband Imran was the prime minister of the country from 2018 to 2022. The anti-graft watchdog further alleged that during his term as prime minister, Imran and his wife had received a total of 108 gifts from different heads of state and foreign dignitaries. The anti-graft watchdog alleged that the former first lady received the jewellery set - comprising a ring, bracelet, necklace a pair of earrings - on her visit to Saudi Arabia in May 2021. It said the PTI founder and his wife illegally kept the jewellery set. The reference states that the deputy military secretary briefed the Toshakhana section officer to estimate and declare the price of the jewellery set, which it mentioned, was not deposited in Toshakhana. The jewellery company sold the necklace for $\leq 300,000$ and earrings for $\leq 80,000$ on May 25, 2018. The information regarding the price of the bracelet and ring could not be obtained from the company. On May 28, 2021, the price of the jewellery set was estimated at Rs70.56 million; the price of the necklace was Rs50.64 million and the price of the earrings included in the jewellery valued at Rs10.50 million back then. According to the rules, the 50% price of the jewellery set is approximately Rs35.28 million. The national exchequer suffered a loss of approximately Rs35.28 million after the jewellery was undervalued.

Pakistan-China trade

suspended as protest

SKARDU: A protest sit-in against the power crisis in

Hunza district's Aliabad area continued for the fourth

consecutive day on Monday with the Karakoram High-

way (KKH) remaining blocked, paralysing Pakistan-China

tourism and trade. The protest has been launched on the

call of the HunzaAwami Action Committee and the All

Parties Traders Association. While the government has

failed to find any solution despite its efforts, Gilgit-Bal-

tistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President

Imran Ali said that 700 trucks, including vehicles loaded

with imports and exports, have been stuck at the Chi-

na-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) dry port due to

the sit-in. "Trucks carrying goods from China are stuck

at the dry port, while Pakistani trucks meant to trans-

port goods within the country are stranded at different

places within Hunza," Ali said. Earlier, government offers

were rejected and residents had announced to continue

protesting till the resolution of the issue. They had spent

Saturday night at their protest camp despite the freez-

ing temperatures and announced to continue it until the

government fulfilled their demand. On Sunday, a protest

rally was also held in Ganish village, while participants

later joined the sit-in. According to a statement issued by

the Hunza deputy commissioner on Sunday, a meeting

was held at his office with representatives of the protest-

ers. The deputy commissioner assured the protesters

that the Gilgit Baltistan government would immediate-

ly take measures to improve the electricity supply to

Hunza. However, the protesters rejected the offer and

termed it a "fake promise," saying such promises were

Starmer hits back at Elon Musk

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has criticized those "spreading lies and misinformation" about child sex grooming gangs in the United Kingdom, responding to an online storm whipped up by Elon Musk. "Those that are spreading lies and misinformation, as far and as wide as possible – they're not interested in victims, they're interested in themselves," Starmer

told reporters Monday. For days, Musk - the world's richest man and the owner of X - has used his social media platform to dredge up a years-long scandal over historic child sex abuse in parts of England. In one post, Musk called on King Charles III to dissolve parliament and order new elections in Britain. In another, he called for Starmer's safeguarding minister, Jess Philips, to be imprisoned, calling her "pure evil" and "a wicked creature." On Monday, he also said Starm-

er should be in prison.

"We've seen this playbook many times, whipping up of intimidation and threats of violence, hoping that the media will amplify it," Starmer said. "When the poison of the far right leads to serious threats to Jess Phillips and others, then in my book, a line has been crossed," he added. - Agencies

CJP discusses judicial reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi chaired a high-level meeting focused on judicial reforms in a significant step toward modernising Pakistan's judicial system.

At the start of the session, the Supreme Court registrar welcomed the participants. The agenda revolved around various reforms, including the adoption of digital technologies, the reduction of case backlogs, and the expansion of public access to justice.

Main goals identified during the meeting included ensuring judicial transparency and expediting case resolutions. To support these objectives, an "online feedback form" was launched, enabling citizens to provide suggestions and share their opinions on judicial matters. The participants also discussed measures to improve Pakistan's standing in the World Justice Index by restoring public trust in the judiciary.

ECC approves over Rs8 bln for various ministries

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also presented a proposal to clear outstanding liabilities for the "Korean Culture Week" event and the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held in 2024



MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet today. The meeting was attended by Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, Minister for Petroleum; SardarAwais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Power; Mr. Ali Parvez Malik, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue; and Federal Secretaries and senior officers from relevant ministries and divisions. The ECC reviewed and approved a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of PKR 1.945 billion in favor of the Ministry of Defence. The Economic Coordination Committee also approved a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of Rs. 5.276 million for the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), which involves the reallocation of funds from the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR). This decision is aimed at supporting NCSW's efforts in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. The ECC considered and approved a proposal from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of PKR 2,462.302 million to facilitate the execution of 15 projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for FY 2024-25. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also presented a proposal to clear outstanding liabilities for the "Korean Culture Week" event and the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Or-

ganization's (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held in 2024. Due to insufficient budgetary allocations under operational heads, liabilities amounting to Rs. 25 million for the Korean Culture Week and Rs. 95.822 million for the SCO CHG meeting remain unpaid. The ECC approved the reallocation of Rs. 120.822 million as a Technical Supplementary Grant. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training presented a request for a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of Rs. 1.5 billion. The funding is intended to increase the salaries of faculty members under the Tenure Track System, which has not been revised since 2021. The ECC approved the request. The Ministry of Interior requested a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 650.357 million to cover security arrangements and maintain law and order during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit 2024, repair safe city cameras damaged during violent protests, and address other law enforcement needs. The ECC approved the request. Additionally, the ECC approved a request from the Ministry of Interior to settle outstanding liabilities of US\$ 6.170 million (approximately Rs. 1.72 billion) with M/s Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. This payment is to clear the remaining 5% of the contract cost for the Safe City Project Islamabad, as directed by the Islamabad High Court. The Ministry of Industries and Production proposed declaring the Warehousing and Logistics Sector as an industry. The ECC reiterated its previous decision made on August 15, 2024 whereby the Summary containing proposal of declaring Warehousing as Industry was approved.

Trudeau announces plan to resign as prime minister

Former Deputy PM Chrystia Freeland has long been considered as a possible successor to Trudeau. She is a Toronto MP who is originally from the western Canadian province of Alberta

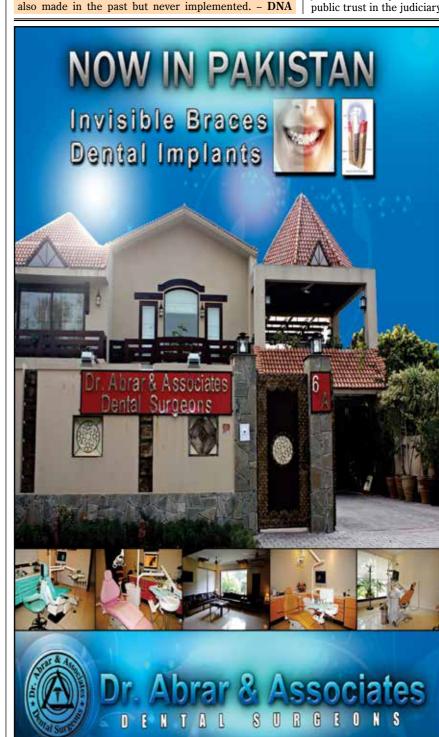
Foreign Desk

OTTAWA: The prime minister has confirmed he is stepping down as head of the Liberal Party of Canada. Speaking to reporters in Ottawa, Trudeau said he will stay on until the party can appoint his replacement. "I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader through a robust nationwide competitive process," Trudeau said. "Last night, I asked the president of the Liberal Party to begin that process. This country deserves a real choice in the next election." "This country deserves a real choice in the next election and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," Trudeau says. Trudeau also told reporters that he received approval from the governor general - the representative of the British Crown in Canada - to prorogue Parliament until March 24. That means that parliamentary activities will be suspended. The prime minister says he is "excited" to see the Liberal Party leadership process unfold in the months ahead. "We were elected for the third time in 2021 to strengthen the economy post-pandemic and advance Canada's interests in a complicated world; that is exactly the job that I - and we - will continue to do for Canadians," Trudeau said. The shock resignation of Freeland, Canada's former finance minister, last month is widely seen as delivering the final blow to Trudeau's attempts to stay on as leader. He repeats that he is a fighter, and not someone who backs away from a fight. But, he says, he has always been driven by a love for Canada and the best interest of Canadians. Canadians deserve a real choice in the next election, Trudeau explains, and says because of "internal battles" he can't be the leader of the Liberals in the next election. Trudeau says that Canada is a better country today than when he took office as prime minister in 2015.

He says his government made the economy work for everyone, not just a few - he says reduced poverty and got more people into the workforce. Answering questions from reporters while speaking in Ottawa, Trudeau says "Parliament has been entirely ceased by obstruction" as well as a "total lack of productivity over the past few months". He said "it's time for a reset" and for the "temperature

to come down" in Canadian politics. Trudeau, who is in his third term as prime minister, said it was time for a "fresh start in parliament" in order for the country to navigate "complex" times domestically and internationally. He added the reset will constitute two parts - the prorogation of parliament until late March and Trudeau's resignation which, he believes, will "decrease the level of polarisation" in politics. Asked about her decision to step down, Trudeau hailed Freeland as "an incredible political partner through just about everything we have done as a government and as a party over the past decade".

"I had really hoped that she would agree to continue as my deputy prime minister and take on one of the most important files that not just this government, this country is facing. She chose otherwise," Trudeau told reporters. "In regards to what actually happened, I am not someone who is in the habit of sharing private conversations."



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