



# Islamabad POST

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**Jos Buttler opposes boycott of Afghanistan amid controversy**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Don't single out China in sea tensions**

Detailed News On Page-08



**CPEC-2 to open immense opportunities**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Pledges education for all**

## Pak steadfast in support of Kashmiris

COAS Gen Asim Munir committed to supporting our Kashmiri brothers, says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his meetings with the Kashmiri leaders

NEWS DESK

BHIMBER: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for occupied Kashmir and its people until the achievement of their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in United Nations Security Council resolutions. "As long as the people of Kashmir do not get their right to self-determination according to the United Nations resolutions, we will continue our political, moral, and diplomatic support," the premier said during the groundbreaking ceremony of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir's first Daanish School Center of Science and Technology Center of Excellence in Bhimber on Wednesday. The event was also attended by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Prime Minister's Advisor for Political Affairs Rana Sanaulah, Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, ministers and members of Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly, and the leadership of the Hurriyat Conference. He also condemned India's ongoing atrocities in the illegally occupied territory, reiterating that the sacrifices of Kashmiris would not go in vain. "Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, is committed to supporting our Kashmiri brothers," added the premier. Referring to the establishment of a Daanish School in AJK, he said that the project was the brainchild of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and was initially aimed at providing quality education to the talented and intelligent children of the less developed areas of Punjab whose parents were unable to bear their education expenses.

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## Hafiz Naeem meets Hamas leaders in Qatar

The Hamas leader expressed gratitude for Pakistan's leadership in addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah

FOREIGN DESK

DOHA: Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, the Amir (leader) of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), met with Hamas leader Hasan Darwish in Doha, the capital of Qatar. According to reports, during the meeting held in Qatar's capital, Hafiz Naeem praised the strong resistance of the people of Gaza and Hamas, acknowledging their steadfastness and struggle. He also stated that the ceasefire agreement was a victory for Hamas, as Israel had failed to achieve its military goals. Hafiz Naeem emphasised that the people of Pakistan would contribute to the rebuilding of Gaza. He expressed that the people of Pakistan are

Continued on Page 06



**BHIMBER:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Hurriyat Leaders on the occasion of founding ceremony of Daanish School. - DNA

## PM grieved over Indonesia flash floods

He said that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Indonesian govt and its people

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed profound sorrow as tragic landslides and flash floods had struck Indonesia's Java island, resulting in the loss of precious lives and leaving some individuals missing. "On behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan, I extend my deepest condolences to President Prabowo Subianto, the families of the victims and to the people of Indonesia during this difficult time,"

Continued on Page 06

## Another aid convoy dispatched to Kurram

Kurram DPO says a total of 61 vehicles carrying food supplies entered crisis-hit district today

SHAMIM SHAHID

HANGU: Another aid convoy carrying food and other vital goods has been dispatched to Kurram from the Torpul check-post in Tal, the district administration said on Wednesday. The officials said that convoy consisted of 45 goods-laden trucks. District Police Officer Muhammad Khalid said that another

Continued on Page 06

## Biggest corruption case

## 190m pounds scam was an open and shut case: Ata Tarar

PTI founder Imran Khan failed to prove his innocence in the case

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that the 190 million pounds scam was a mega corruption case in the history of Pakistan. In a televised media talk, he said that during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf rule, Shahzad Akbar who headed the then Asset Recovery Unit had shown £190 million handed over by the National Crime Agency of the United Kingdom as confiscated money. He said that a note was put up to the then Prime Minister regarding 190 million pounds recovery. But in gross violation of law, he added, the amount was transferred to the Supreme Court account and used for payment of the fine imposed on the tycoon by the apex court. The international media also headlined the 190 million pound case verdict as punishment for corruption

Continued on Page 06

## Latest Peca changes draft lowers jail term

The amendments also outline the establishment of a Digital Rights Protection Authority (DRPA)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has moved to strengthen the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) with new amendments targeting fake news and unlawful online content. The draft legislation, titled the Electronic Crimes Prevention (Amendment) Act 2025, proposes stringent penalties, including up to three years in prison and fines of Rs2 million for

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## Briefs

### PTI getting taste of its own medicine

PTI leadership was caught red-handed in the mega corruption scandal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Senator Talal Chaudhry has said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is getting a taste of its own medicine. Talking to media in the capital, he said the PTI launched a vicious campaign against its political opponents during its tenure. He said his leadership faced fake cases and were successful at last. Declaring the 190 million pounds case as mere open and shut one, he said the PTI leadership was caught red-handed in the mega corruption scandal. The PML-N leader said the PTI has a habit to lie about every topic and issue.

### 'Verdict has not affected Imran Khan'

He quoted Imran Khan, saying, "Decisions are made in the heavens"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Wednesday the verdict in the 190-million-pound case had no impact on the health of Imran Khan. Speaking to media outside the Supreme Court, Sheikh Rashid emphasised that he would not lie about the 190-million-pound case. He quoted Imran Khan, saying, "Decisions are made in the heavens," and reiterated that negotiations hold no significance without the formation of a judicial commission. He further added that he had no direct contact with anyone and that judicial commission approval was essential for any talks to move forward.

## Sans judicial commission

## PTI refuses to continue talks with government

Senator Siddiqui, said that the ruling coalition have not yet decided about forming the judicial commission so far

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Calling the ongoing negotiation process "useless" without the formation of judicial commission, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Omar Ayub on Wednesday announced that they would not attend the upcoming fourth round of talks with the ruling coalition. His statement came shortly after, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui, spokesperson for the government negotiation team, announced that the fourth round of talks between the ruling alliance and the embattled PTI would be held on January 28. He further said the government has yet to decide about the judicial commission, one of the key demands of PTI for continuing talks. The PTI, during the third round of talks held on January 16, finally presented its demands in writing, seeking probes into the May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024 events, as well as the release of "political prisoners". PTI's "charter of demands", seen by Geo News, also mentioned that if the government failed to constitute two separate commissions on

Continued on Page 06

## Opp. considering APC in February

Opposition leaders are advocating a united platform of democratic forces to address pressing challenges facing nation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The opposition parties are considering to convene an all-parties conference (APC) in February to deliberate on critical political, economic, constitutional, and security matters, sources revealed on Wednesday. Opposition leaders are advocating a united platform of democratic forces to address the pressing challenges facing the nation. The alliance has outlined its agenda as prioritising constitutional supremacy and the restoration of the rule of law. According to insiders,

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## FIA starts airport monitoring of passengers from 9 districts

The measures are particularly focused on passengers from nine Pakistani cities and specific foreign airlines, marking a significant step in the country's efforts to address the growing issue of human trafficking

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Wednesday issued a comprehensive advisory after a gap of 20 years aimed at curbing human trafficking and ensuring stricter monitoring of passengers traveling to and from Pakistan. The move comes in light of rising concerns about the exploitation of vulnerable individuals for forced labor and trafficking purposes. The advisory, based on a detailed analysis of the Immigration and Border Management System (IBMS) database from July to December, highlights the increasing need for tighter surveillance on travelers from 15 countries. The measures are particularly focused on passengers from nine Pakistani cities and specific foreign airlines, marking a significant step in the country's efforts to address the growing issue of human trafficking. The nine Pakistani cities identified in the advisory include Mandi Bahaudin, Gujarat, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Toba Tek Singh, Hafizabad, Sheikhpura, and Bhimber. For the first time, the advisory has specifically directed authorities to intensify scrutiny on passengers aged 15 to 40 who are traveling abroad.

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## Retired Justice Faqir to head Missing Persons Commission

Justice Mandokhail noted existing laws already outlaw enforced disappearances

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday appointed retired Justice Faqir Muhammad Khokhar as the new head of the Missing Persons Commission, replacing retired Justice Javed Iqbal, the Additional Attorney General informed the Supreme Court. During the hearing of the missing persons case, Justice Aminuddin Khan chaired the constitutional bench. The Additional Attorney General revealed that the government planned to establish a Missing

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# Azerbaijan envoy for enhanced trade, economic ties with Pak

He further stated that Pakistan is an important partner, and such investments would prove mutually beneficial for both nations. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries and expressed his wish to expand trade relations further. He stressed the urgent need for immediate steps to increase the trade volume and strengthen economic relations

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, has emphasized the need to further strengthen the deep historical, cultural, and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He stated that new initiatives and projects must be undertaken to promote trade cooperation between the two countries. He expressed these views during a meeting with the Secretary General of the UBG, Zafar Bakhtawari, at his office yesterday. Also present at the meeting were Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, a member of the UBG Central Core Committee, and Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, an Executive Member of FPCCI.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on enhancing trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Khazar Farhadov revealed that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, is scheduled to visit Azerbaijan next month, a visit expected to play a vital role in strengthening bilateral relations. He expressed his desire for prominent Pakistani business personalities to be part of this visit so that opportunities for mutual trade and investment could be explored. The ambassador shared that the Azerbaijani government is interested in investing \$2 billion in Pakistan and is evaluating various projects in this regard. He further stated that Pakistan is an important partner, and such investments would prove mutually beneficial for both nations. Ambassador Khazar

Farhadov highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries and expressed his wish to expand trade relations further. He stressed the urgent need for immediate steps to increase the trade volume and strengthen economic relations. Zafar Bakhtawari noted that Azerbaijan and Turkey are among Pakistan's great allies. He emphasized the need for these three countries to take further steps to enhance trade and economic ties. He stated that these three nations are like one family and should work on joint ventures to deliver the benefits of trade cooperation to their people. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari announced that he would visit Azerbaijan in February and meet with business personalities there to take steps toward promoting mutual trade.

## ISSI hosts KIIR interns for session on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: The India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a group of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) Interns, hailing from students from Islamabad's leading Universities. The group was led by KIIR Chairman Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani. The interaction was part of ISSI's initiative of engaging the youth, particularly on issues of national importance and Pakistan's foreign policy. In his introductory remarks, Dr. Khurram Abbas, Director ISC, stressed the importance of precise academic discourse on the Kashmir issue, emphasizing alignment with Pakistan's official stance based on UNSC resolutions enshrining the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

In his detailed expose, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the importance of effective narrative-building in shaping global perceptions and stressed the imperatives of clarity, accuracy and consistency while presenting Pakistan's case. He highlighted the distinct legal, human rights, and peace and security dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and elaborated on India's detrimental actions on each of those counts. He also noted that the 'Hindutva' ideology posed a formidable structural constraint in the way of any forward movement both on the Kashmir dispute and on Pakistan-India relations. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized that the youth must maintain full faith in the justness of the Kashmir cause; fully familiarize themselves with the history and facts of the Kashmir dispute; recognize the massive onslaught of misinformation and disinformation by hostile elements to create confusion and disaffection.—APP

## CS Punjab directs admin Attock to ensure road management for prevention of accidents

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK : The Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza while reviewing the overall performance of special task force has directed all the law enforcement agencies to ensure implementation of recent directives of the Chief Secretary Punjab on traffic management, axle load, accident prevention during the monthly Regional Transport Authority (RTA) held here on Wednesday in his office. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, and attended by District Police Officer Sarfaraz Ghasay Gul alongside police and administrative officials. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed, Assistant Commissioner Attock

Madam Shagufta, Deputy Director Public Relations Shehzad Niaz, EXEN Punjab Highways Attock, DSP Traffic Attock, Motorway Police, Emergency Services Department 1122, and other relevant officers participated. Secretary Regional Transport Authority Zaher Ahmad Khan briefed the attendees on axle load management and shared the measures taken in this regard. The Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the Mines Department Attock, along with leaseholders and representatives of the Dumper Association, also attended and assured their cooperation. The Deputy Commissioner instructed the removal of illegal rickshaw stands and the relocation of heavy vehicle points outside the city to reduce congestion. He emphasized that no commercial

vehicles should be allowed to park on the roads and that overloaded vehicles should be offloaded on-site to prevent road damage caused by excessive weight. He directed the DSP Traffic to reduce traffic load through effective traffic management. Operations against encroachments will continue uninterrupted to ensure all roads and markets remain clear. A special task force, comprising traffic police, highway police, motorway police, and RTA staff, has been assigned the responsibility to eliminate overloading. Different departments presented their governance initiatives during the meeting. Chief officers were directed to provide all basic facilities to passengers at bus terminals and to improve their condition, DC ATTOCK added.

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## PTCL, PPAF celebrate empowerment, success through Ba-Ikhtiar project

PTCL expands Ba-Ikhtiar Program to 20 districts to empower women entrepreneurs

DNA

ISLAMABAD : PTCL Group, in collaboration with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), hosted an inspiring event to celebrate the remarkable achievements of women entrepreneurs empowered through the Ba-Ikhtiar Project under Group's Social Impact platform 'Dil Se'. The initiative is fostering financial independence and paving the way for sustainable growth of women entrepreneurs through building successful e-commerce stores. PTCL Group is committed to empowering these women by supporting them in registering their startup and providing mentorship until they can run their business independently. Additionally, the program's expansion to 20 districts under the

Ba-Ikhtiar initiative aims to transform communities across Pakistan. This expansion will broaden the project's scope to encompass diverse skill sets, including pottery, arts and crafts, food preservation, online tutoring, organic cosmetics, and more. The event celebrated the resilience and determination of women entrepreneurs, who have successfully turned challenges into opportunities. His Excellency, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi - Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan graced the event as chief guest. Corporate partners, development sector organizations, and academia were present at the event, along with prominent figures from the entertainment, fashion, sports, and industry sectors. Esteemed personalities such as Kubra Khan,

Hareem Farooq, Sana Mir, Ali Xeeshan, and Naseem Hameed added a touch of glamour and prestige. Their support further highlighted the event's significance, which was already brimming with inspiring stories of transformation, growth, and success. The event also featured a thought-provoking panel discussion, bringing together renowned personalities from diverse fields, including Sania Saeed, Jehan Ara, Azima Dhanji and Zarene Asif, who shared key insights on global best practices in women empowerment, the role of technology in solving societal challenges, and the strategies needed for women to successfully navigate the entrepreneurial landscape. The highlight of the day was Pakistan's first-ever AI-powered fashion show, where the women entrepreneurs showcased cloth-

ing designs created in collaboration with artificial intelligence. This innovative segment underscored the Ba-Ikhtiar Project's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology to drive social change, reflecting how creativity and technology can unite to inspire new possibilities. Speaking at the grand event, Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, emphasized on the program's broader significance, stating: "The Ba-Ikhtiar Project is more than just a program; it is a movement that empowers women to unlock their potential by providing them with the necessary resources and skills to succeed. Today, we celebrate not just their achievements but also the ripple effect of hope, resilience, and progress that they bring to their families,



ISLAMABAD: A large number of the activists of All Government Employees Grand Alliance (Federal) holds placards during protest in the favor of their demands at Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.

## BHC hosts 60th Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI: The British High Commission is organizing Natural History Museum London's 60th Wildlife Photographer exhibition 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' in Karachi and Lahore respectively to share the 'story of a planet under pressure.' The images will be selected for the exhibition after the most prestigious wildlife photography competition of its kind, providing a global platform that showcases some of the best photography talent from around the world. In Karachi the exhibition is taking place at the British Council Karachi Library from January 25 to January 31, 2025 (11.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) while in Lahore the exhibition will take place at the BC Library from Feb 11 to Feb 21, 2025 (11.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The exhibition features the 18 winning images across categories including underwater, photojournalism, mammal behaviour and urban wildlife in addition to the resulting Grand Title winners. With Pakistan facing significant climate challenges, the British High Commission is hosting the exhibition to encourage dialogue on protecting the environment and inspire individuals and communities to act.

## Lahore police arrests 102 fugitives, 20 court absconders

LAHORE: The Lahore police have arrested 102 proclaimed offenders (POs) and 20 court absconders in 2025 so far with the help of advanced technological tools. A police spokesman highlighted the role of the Smart Eye App in these operations, underscoring its effectiveness in modern law enforcement. This year, over 596,400 individuals were screened through the Travel Eye Software, while more than 83,000 people were checked via the Hotel Eye Software. The Smart Eye Software also facilitated the review of records of over 2,400 foreigners.—APP

## Punjab, Argentina join hands to promote cultural exchanges: Azma

Bokhari further remarked that both countries could collaborate across various sectors, with cultural exchange being a key area of focus

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari held a meeting with Argentina Ambassador to Pakistan during which the two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties and initiate cultural collaborations. During the meeting, minister emphasised the potential for both Punjab and Argentina to enhance their relationship through cultural exchange. She highlighted that Punjab's culture is

globally recognised and that cultural initiatives can transcend borders, fostering stronger ties between the two nations. Bokhari further remarked that both countries could collaborate across various sectors, with cultural exchange being a key area of focus.

The Argentine Ambassador lauded the rich cultural heritage of Punjab, particularly its traditional cuisine,

which enjoys worldwide recognition. Both sides expressed mutual interest in deepening their cooperation and strengthening the cultural ties between Punjab and Argentina. The meeting was also attended by Punjab Information Secretary Syed Tahir Raza Hamdani, Parliamentary Secretary Shazia Ahmad, and Chairman of the Alhambra Arts Council, Razi Ahmad.—APP

## CDA chief opens Day Care Centre, Pediatric Emergency at Capital hospital

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa formally inaugurated state-of-the-art Day Care Centre and Early Childhood Development Centre, dedicated to providing exceptional care for children aged 0 to 3 years. The Day care has been developed in collaboration with UNICEF. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa also inaugurated the newly established Pediatric Emergency Department at the hospital. On this occasion, Member Administration CDA, Executive Director Capital Hospital, representatives of UNICEF and senior officers of authority were also present. Chairman CDA Muhammad

Ali Randhawa was briefed that live monitoring system within the Day Care Centre has been established allowing parents to continuously view their children. He was informed that this innovative feature has never been implemented before in any childcare facility in Pakistan. He said that this advancement will not only enhance parental peace of mind but also sets a new standard for childcare services in the country. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that this initiative marks a significant step forward in promoting early childhood development and ensuring that working parents have access to quality childcare, ultimately contributing to the overall

enhancement of healthcare services in the capital. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa thanked UNICEF for collaborating CDA in this initiative and urged collaboration in establishing similar day care centres at CDA headquarters and other healthcare facilities. Dr. Muhammad Naem Taj, Executive Director of Capital Hospital, briefed Chairman CDA that the centre is designed to facilitate breastfeeding, providing an environment where working mothers can comfortably nurse their infants. Chairman CDA was further apprised that the centre aims to support the healthy development of children, focusing on their physical and emotional well-being.—DNA

**"SAY NO TO CORRUPTION"**

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY**  
(PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION SECTION)

TENDER NO. 6(652)

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY (TECHNO ECONOMIC + COMMERCIAL) & DETAILED DESIGN FOR ADDITION OF LANES ON**

**PINDI BHATTIAN - FAISALABAD - MULTAN MOTORWAY (M-4) (292 KM APPROX.)**

- The National Highway Authority intends to hire/engage a Consultant (Engineering Organization/Firm) for "Consultancy Services for Feasibility Study (Techno Economic + Commercial) & Detailed Design for Addition of Lanes on Pindi Bhattian -Faisalabad-Multan Motorway (M-4) (292 KM Approx.)"
- Proposals are invited from reputable Consultants (Engineering Organizations/ Firms) having valid Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) registration certificate in relevant field along with enlistment on Active Tax Payer List of Federal Board of Revenue and the detail eligibility criteria mentioned in the RFP documents.
- RFP documents can be downloaded from NHA's website ([www.nha.gov.pk](http://www.nha.gov.pk)) free of cost or the same can be purchased from the office of General Manager (P&CA), NHA-HQ, Islamabad during working hours and working days on written request of firms' letter head accompanied with pay order/demand draft amounting to Rs.1,000/- (Non-Refundable) in favor of National Highway Authority.
- A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on **January 29, 2025 at 1100 Hours** in the office of General Manager (P&CA), National Highway Authority, Islamabad.
- Procurement will be carried out by adopting "Single Stage Two Envelopes" procedure. The Proposals complete in all respects, in accordance with the instructions provided in the RFP document, in sealed envelopes should reach on or before **February 25, 2025 till 1130 Hours** in the office of General Manager (P&CA), NHA-HQ, 28-Mauve Area, Sector G-9/1, Islamabad and be clearly marked "Consultancy Services for Feasibility Study (Techno Economic + Commercial) & Detailed Design for Addition of Lanes on Pindi Bhattian -Faisalabad - Multan Motorway (M-4) (292 KM Approx.)"
- Consultants are required to submit their proposal strictly in accordance to Instructions to Consultants (ITC), Data Sheet of ITC and RFP Notice. Proposals must be prepared in hard book binding form to deny the possibility of addition or removal of page(s).
- The Technical Proposals shall be opened on the same day at 1200 Hours, whereas the Financial Proposals of the technically qualified firms shall be opened after finalization of technical evaluation. Other details are provided in the RFP.
- The Firms/Consultants providing unsubstantiated and/or incorrect information are liable to legal action and/or disqualification.
- The Authority reserves the right to reject all the proposals as per PPRA Rules.
- All Firms are advised to get EPADS (PPRA) registration at [www.eprocure.gov.pk](http://www.eprocure.gov.pk) immediately, as Manual Bid/Proposal/Application (Hard Copy) will be eliminated in upcoming Procurements.
- This Advertisement is also available on PPRA website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

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Phone: 051-9032727, Fax: 051-9260419 & Email: [gmcca.nha@gmail.com](mailto:gmcca.nha@gmail.com)

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA	Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Palestine	Palestine Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Sudan	National Day
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



## Emergency

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



## Enquiry

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



## Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# State-of-the-art mobile App 'RAAHGUZAR' launched

The launching ceremony, held at OGRA head office in Islamabad, was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), FBR, Customs, the Explosives Department, and representatives from OCAC and the Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP)

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), in collaboration with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC), has launched a state-of-the-art mobile application, 'Raahguzar.' This innovative app, utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, enables users to pinpoint legal petrol pumps and outlets across the country, marking a significant step in the digitization of Pakistan's oil supply chain. The launching ceremony, held at OGRA head office in Islamabad, was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), FBR, Customs, the Explosives Department, and representatives from OCAC and the Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP). The 'Raahguzar' app offers a user-friendly platform for consumers, district governments, and law enforcement agencies to identify ille-



gal outlets or "dabba stations." Additionally, consumers can use the app to lodge complaints related to illegal outlets, over-

charging, or quality concerns, ensuring transparency and empowering stakeholders. The event was chaired by Chairman OGRA, Mr. Masroor Khan, alongside Member Oil and Finance. In his address, Mr. Khan emphasized the transformative potential of this initiative. "This journey began with discussions between OGRA and FBR in August 2024, highlighting the urgent need for digitizing the oil supply chain. The launch of 'Raahguzar' is the first phase of a broader track-and-trace system aimed at promoting accountability, preventing economic leakages, curbing illegal activities, and enhancing the oil industry's integrity," he stated. Mr. Khan further added, "This initiative will serve as a game-changer in addressing the challenges posed by illegal petrol pumps and malpractices, contributing significantly to the growth and sustainability of the oil sector in Pakistan." The launch of 'Raahguzar' reflects OGRA's commitment to leveraging technology for effective governance and fostering a transparent and accountable energy ecosystem. For further details or to download the 'Raahguzar' app, visit OGRA's official website or contact the OGRA helpline.

# 3rd annual 'Gandhara Citrus Festival' 2025 to celebrate culture

For more information about the festival or to get involved, interested parties are encouraged to reach out to the Gandhara Resource Center. Together, they aim to promote environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and the empowerment of local communities

ISLAMABAD: The Gandhara Resource Center on Wednesday expressed deep gratitude to its sponsors for their unwavering commitment to fostering community empowerment, sustainability, and innovation. With the support of key sponsors such as UPhone/PTCL, Green Tourism, Agriculture Tourism, ACM Group of Companies, and Heavy Industries Taxila, the festival is poised to offer a unique blend of cultural festivities, sustainable development discussions, and agricultural innovation. The stage is set for the 3rd Annual Gandhara Citrus Festival 2025, a flagship event by the Gandhara Resource Centre Pakistan, under the Centre for Culture and Development (C2D). "The support of our sponsors is instrumental in transforming our vision into reality. Their dedication to innovation, sustainability, and community empowerment reflects their commitment to driving meaningful change," a representative from C2D told media. Scheduled for January 26, 2025, the festival promises to be a vibrant celebration of the Gandhara region's rich cultural heritage and agricultural wealth, with a special spotlight on its world-famous citrus fruits. Over the years, the Gandhara Citrus Festival has become a signature event, bridging the gap between the region's agricultural richness and its historical legacy. It offers a platform to promote sustainable agricultural practices, eco-friendly tourism, and community-driven development. This year's festival will feature an exciting array of activities, including, Exhibitions showcasing diverse local citrus varieties, Interactive workshops and discussions on sustainable farming. Cultural performances celebrating the traditions of Gandhara, Networking opportunities for farmers, businesses, and investors. The festival serves as a beacon of hope for local farmers, connecting them with national and international stakeholders to explore avenues for growth and collaboration. It also underscores the importance of public-private partnerships in addressing the region's modern challenges while preserving its ancient heritage. With only days to go, anticipation is building across the community, and the Gandhara Resource Center is calling on individuals, businesses, and organizations to join hands in celebrating the Gandhara region's cultural, historical, and agricultural legacy. For more information about the festival or to get involved, interested parties are encouraged to reach out to the Gandhara Resource Center. Together, they aim to promote environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and the empowerment of local communities.—DNA

# Minister, Turkish envoy discuss job opportunities for Pakistanis in Turkiye

Several Turkish companies are successfully operating in Pakistan; however, there remains significant potential to increase joint investment and trade volume, he said adding that there are sincere fraternal relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, and both countries can achieve many milestones in the economic field



## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday held a meeting with the Turkish Ambassador, Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu and discussed various proposals regarding religious harmony, respect for humanity, and providing more job opportunities for Pakistani workers in Turkiye. Minister Salik said Pakistan and Turkiye are like one soul in two bodies, bound by the eternal ties of religion, history, and culture. Both brotherly countries share a similar stance on regional and global issues and have always supported each other's positions on regional

and international forums, he added. Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu expressed sorrow over the deaths of Pakistanis in the Morocco boat incident and reaffirmed the commitment to providing more job opportunities for skilled Pakistanis in Turkiye. He also said Turkiye is working on increasing the supply of machinery to Pakistani industries and expanding technical training and educational projects in Pakistan. Several Turkish companies are successfully operating in Pakistan; however, there remains significant potential to increase joint investment and trade volume, he said adding that there are sincere fraternal relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, and both countries can achieve many milestones in

the economic field. Minister Salik mentioned that the Government of Pakistan is taking more effective steps to prevent human trafficking. In the past year, 600,000 Pakistanis went abroad for employment, and by December 2024, overseas Pakistanis sent a record remittance of 3.1 billion dollars to Pakistan, he added. He said the establishment of better banking channels between Turkiye and Pakistan is also essential for promoting mutual trade. The meeting concluded with an agreement to enhance cooperation towards eliminating extremism and terrorism, promoting interfaith harmony, and providing skilled Pakistanis with modern technical education.

# NSU earns prestigious candidacy for ISATCOVE

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark achievement for technical and vocational education in Pakistan, the National Skills University Islamabad (NSU) has received candidacy for the prestigious "Committed to Excellence" certificate and badge from the International Self-Assessment Tool for Centres of Vocational Excellence (ISATCOVE). This recognition, supported by the European Commission and implemented by the European Training Foundation (ETF), places NSU among an elite group of institutions striving for global standards in vocational education. A letter addressed to NSU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar congratulated the university for successfully completing the ISATCOVE self-assessment process and lauded the institution's commitment to enhancing vocational excellence. The letter stated, "The Committed to Excellence certificate and badge will recognize your school's effort in actively engaging in ISATCOVE self-assessment to enhance your level of vocational excellence. This recognition is designed to encourage a culture of continuous improvement, helping institutions identify areas that need development and take meaningful steps toward achieving excellence in vocational education." ISATCOVE, an initiative to elevate vocational education and training (VET) standards globally, was piloted in 2023. By 2024-25, the organization has extended it to a select group of VET providers. The program offers comprehensive training, guidance, and mentoring, from planning and execution to interpreting results and formulating actionable improvement plans. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar expressed his gratitude and congratulated NSU faculty members, specifically Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad and Ms. Spogmai Shahab, along with the entire team, for their unwavering dedication over the past six months. "This achievement underscores NSU's commitment to fostering technical and vocational education excellence. It is not just a recognition but a call to continue our efforts toward setting global benchmarks," Dr. Mukhtar said.—DNA

# HEC nominates Dr Kamran as VC NTC

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has nominated Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran, Vice Chancellor, MNS University of Engineering and Technology, Multan, as the Vice Chairperson of the National Technology Council (NTC). The notification in that regard has been issued by HEC, said a press release on Wednesday. Experts, teachers, and students associated with the field of engineering from across the country have congratulated Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran on his nomination as Vice Chairperson of the National Technology Council, terming it a recognition of his professional competence and leadership at the national and global levels.—APP

# Agricultural tube wells being solarized in Balochistan: Sb told

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Government Assurances was told on Wednesday that the process of solarization of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan has been initiated to facilitate the farmer in boosting their production. "The payments are being made to the farmers for the purpose," the officials from the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) told the committee meeting which was presided over by Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan. The panel was met today to discuss the updated status of various assurances given by the Federal Government. The matter related to solarization was raised by Senator Manzoor Ahmed Kakar during the meeting which was told that the federal government, in collaboration with the Balochistan government, initiated the solarization project. The QESCO officials briefed the body that the scheme would be implemented district wise. The committee expressed satisfaction with the details and disposed of the matter. The assurance regarding the missing file of a house located in Sector I-10/4, Islamabad was also taken up by the committee.—APP

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## Briefs

## PM instructs transparent, merit-based selection of students

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure a transparent and merit-based selection of the students to be sent to China for modern training in the agriculture sector. The prime minister, chairing a meeting on the subject, also directed the formation of a committee to address the grievances of the students not meeting the standard during the scrutiny. Calling China a time-tested friend of Pakistan and lauding its development in the agriculture sector, he told the participants that during his China visit, he had requested the Chinese leadership for the modern training of Pakistani students in the agriculture sector. He said that the Government of Pakistan would bear the expenses of the students' training and the first batch would soon leave for China. A 10% quota has been allocated for Balochistan among the students to be selected for the training, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz also thanked the Chinese leadership and the universities for allowing the Pakistani students. In the meeting, the prime minister was told that 1287 male and female students had applied through a portal of which 711 - including those from Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan - met the criteria. The students would be sent to China in two batches. Scheduled to leave for China in March this year, the first batch of 300 students will receive training in improving irrigation, diagnosing and monitoring veterinary diseases, veterinary breeding and genetics, and modern seed preparation and processing. The second batch of 400 students will leave for China by mid-year to be trained in the use of modern agricultural machinery, rapid crop growth, and modern agricultural technology, including artificial intelligence and the processing of fruits and vegetables.—APP

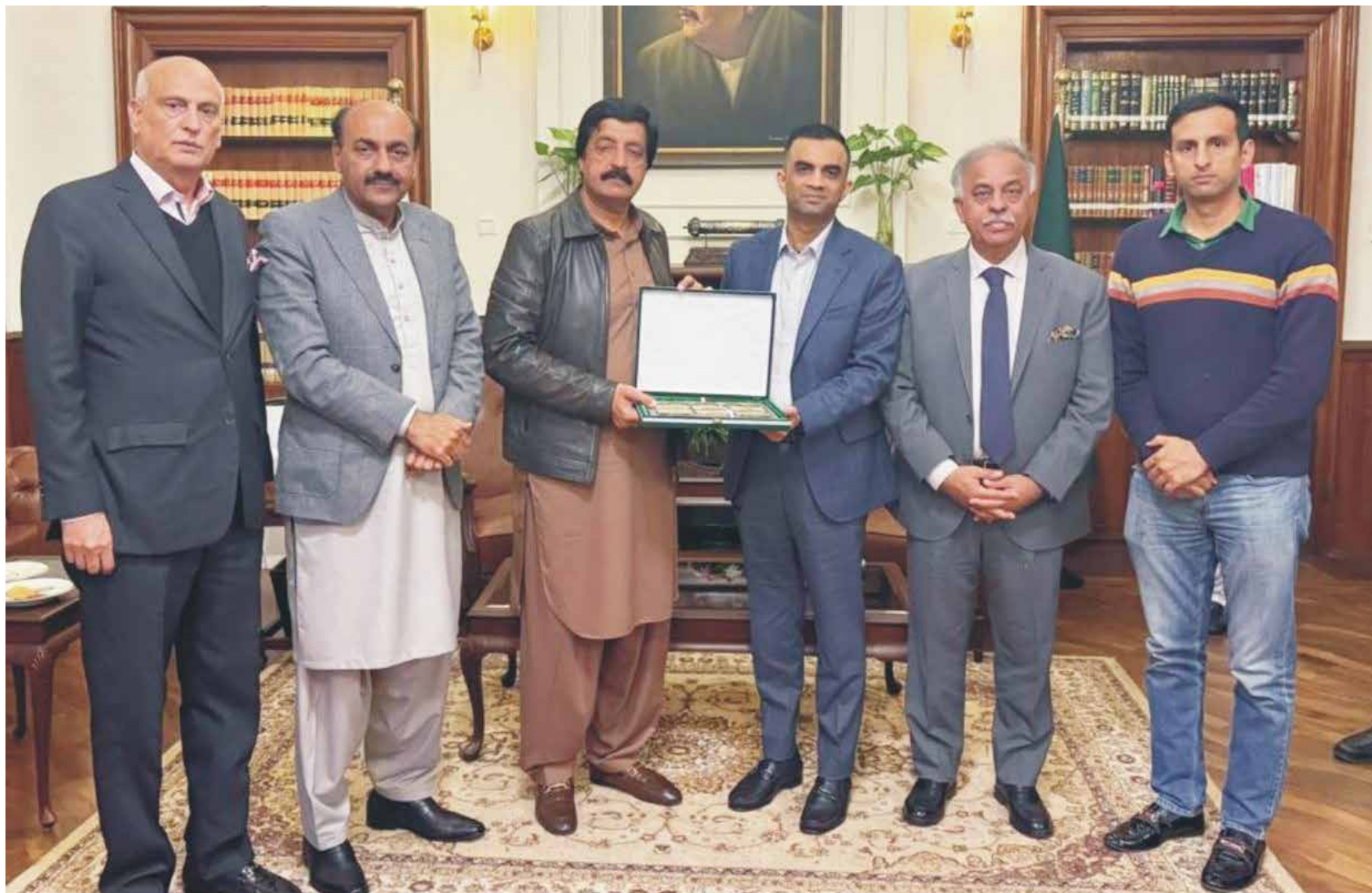
## 115th death anniversary of Maulana Muhammad Hussain

ISLAMABAD: The 115th death anniversary of Maulana Muhammad Hussain Azad, a renowned scholar and poet, is being observed on Wednesday. He was born on May 5, 1830, in Delhi, British India, Maulana Azad became a prominent figure in the intellectual and literary circles of his time. Azad made significant contributions to Urdu literature, particularly through his work as a poet, scholar, and critic. His most notable work, "Tarikh-e-Adab-e-Urdu" (History of Urdu Literature), continues to be an essential reference in the field. He was also an advocate for education and the promotion of the Urdu language. Apart from his literary achievements, Maulana Azad played an influential role in the Indian independence movement and was a strong supporter of Muslim unity.—APP

## Devcom webinar highlights way forward to GLOF Management

DNA

ISLAMABAD : At a sideline event of the International Year of Glaciers Preservation (IYGP), organised by the Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) on Tuesday the panel of experts underscored the urgent need for decisive and collaborative actions to address the challenges posed by glacial melt and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in Pakistan. Highlighting the critical state of the country's glaciers and the cascading risks to downstream communities, they proposed a series of strategies to chart the way forward for glacier preservation and improved GLOF management, and by reducing the human interventions such as tourism, deforestation and housing



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Governor Punjab presenting crest to Najeed Chaudhary FPCCI Ambassador-at-Large for Trade and Investment Washington DC. Amir Atta Bajwa, former Senior Vice President FPCCI, Manzoor ul Haq former Vice President and Regional Chairman Punjab, Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman Coordination FPCCI and Mozyan Malik former President of Sheikhpura CCI were also present on the occasion.—DNA

## PM's Climate aide briefs South Sudan parliamentary delegation on SDGs

The SDGs, a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015, are designed to tackle pressing global challenges and promote a more sustainable, equitable, and peaceful world by 2030. The goals cover various critical areas, including poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable economic growth

MANOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change and former convenor of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Task Force, Romina Khurshid Alam briefed a high-level parliamentary delegation from South Sudan on the SDGs. The delegation, led by Deputy Speaker Nathaniel Oyet Pierino, visited the SDGs Secretariat on Tuesday. The meeting was part of an ongoing exchange aimed at fostering greater international cooperation on sustainable development. The SDGs, a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015, are designed to tackle pressing global challenges and promote a more sustainable,

equitable, and peaceful world by 2030. The goals cover various critical areas, including poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable economic growth. Romina emphasized the importance of these goals in addressing the interconnected challenges facing countries worldwide. She highlighted that the SDGs are not only about achieving sustainable development but also about ensuring that all nations—regardless of their size or economic status—have the opportunity to thrive while protecting the environment for future generations. Romina said both Pakistan and South Sudan are highly vulnerable to climate change, facing similar challenges such as water scar-

city, extreme weather events, agricultural vulnerability, and the loss of biodiversity. She called for collaborative efforts to enhance climate adaptation strategies, focusing on building resilience within vulnerable communities. Commenting on climate action, one of the key SDGs goals, the Prime Minister's aide underscored that while many countries have taken initial steps to address climate change, there is a need for significantly scaled-up global efforts. Romina Alam pointed to the critical importance of the Paris Agreement, an international treaty aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C, ideally to 1.5°C. She emphasized that achieving this ambitious target requires urgent action

to reduce carbon emissions, transition to renewable energy sources, and promote sustainable practices across industries globally. She explained that despite the growing global commitment to climate action, many developing nations still face significant challenges including the lack of financial resources and technological support necessary to effectively combat climate change and adapt to its inevitable impacts. "International community must work together to bridge these gaps, ensuring that vulnerable countries have the tools and resources needed to mitigate climate risks and build climate resilience", she stated. Deputy Speaker Nathaniel Oyet Pierino expressed great interest in the SDGs and conveyed South Su-

dan's commitment to achieving sustainable development. He noted that South Sudan, as one of the world's youngest nations, is keen to learn from the experiences of other nations in implementing the SDGs, particularly in areas like climate action and environmentally sustainable infrastructure. The meeting also highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation and the sharing of best practices, especially in the context of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Romina Khurshid Alam assured the delegation that Pakistan remains committed to supporting its partners in Africa and beyond, especially in helping them navigate the complex challenges of climate change and sustainable development.—APP

## Pakistan eyes China's pineapple farming expertise

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan seeks to diversify its agricultural sector and boost exports, it stands to gain valuable insights from Xuwen County in southern China, which is renowned as the "Pineapple Capital of China." With decades of expertise, Xuwen has transformed pineapple farming into a thriving industry, offering Pakistan an opportunity to adopt similar techniques for sustainable agricultural growth. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the region produces over 1.4 million tons

of pineapples annually. This success is attributed to advanced farming techniques, efficient supply chains, and government-backed initiatives that have empowered local farmers and positioned Xuwen as a leader in agricultural innovation. "Pakistan, with its fertile lands and favorable climate, holds immense potential for pineapple cultivation. By studying Xuwen's model, Pakistan can benefit in several ways. For example, Xuwen employs precision farming techniques, such as soil analysis, irrigation management, and pest control, which ensure high-quality crops. Introducing these practices

in Pakistan could enhance yields and reduce post-harvest losses," according to Ghulam Qadir, Trade and Investment Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing. During his visit to this agricultural hub in Guangdong Province, he noted that Xuwen's cooperative model encourages small farmers to pool resources and negotiate better prices. This model could be replicated in Pakistan to empower rural communities. "By leveraging these techniques, Pakistan could reduce its reliance on traditional crops and boost its export potential, particularly in Middle Eastern and Central Asian markets.

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## 'PTI's anti-corruption claims exposed in £190 million scandal'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal, on Wednesday said that a £190 million corruption case has exposed the reality of a leader who once called others "thieves" and accused PTI of misleading the public with false claims of fighting corruption. Talking to a private news channel, he criticized former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, accusing him of misleading the nation by presenting himself as a champion of anti-corruption and transparency. The truth has come to light," he said, adding that the party's tenure failed to deliver economic stability and instead deepened political polarization across the country, he added. He added that during PTI's time in power, the focus was not on governance or reform but on spreading divisive rhetoric and misleading the public. He emphasized that the allegations of corruption against PTI now contradict the image it tried to build as a party committed to transparency and accountability.—APP

## PGF to host Asian Tour Development tour events

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) has announced the return of the Asian Development Tour (ADT) to Pakistan. The upcoming championship will be hosted at the Rumanza Golf & Country Club, Multan, a premier golfing destination renowned for its world-class facilities and scenic layout, said a press release. The last ADT championship held in Pakistan took place in Lahore in October 2019, marking a successful milestone in the country's golfing journey. The PGF continues its commitment to fostering professional golf by hosting another ADT event in Multan, further showcasing Pakistan's potential as a prime venue for international golf tournaments. Pakistan will add two additional ADT events to the 2025 calendar, including CNS ADT Open Golf Championship and Pakistan ADT Open Golf Championship, scheduled for September. These events signify Pakistan's growing footprint on the global golfing map.—APP

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## Global solution to climate change

THE US will once again pull out of the Paris Agreement, the world's most important effort to tackle climate change. On the first day of his second term, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the US to withdraw from this pact. For many countries, particularly vulnerable ones, this decision is a sign that the US is retreating from its leadership role in global environmental initiatives. The move reinforces the perception that the US isn't committed to global cooperation on climate change. When the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement during Trump's first term, the global reaction was one of disappointment, concern and criticism. The announcement of a second withdrawal has also drawn criticism from other Paris signatories and environmental groups as well as statements of continued support by states, cities and other countries for the goals of the agreement. The US' move will weaken multilateral cooperation, hinder efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and jeopardize the credibility of the Paris Agreement. Regarding the impact on the US, Xu Liang, an associate professor at the School of International Relations of Beijing International Studies University, told the Global Times that the withdrawal may boost employment and development in traditional industries in the short term, but it will erode the US' long-term interests. "First, the internal fight between different groups advocating for clean energy and those supporting traditional energy may intensify. Second, it could push the US into a backward position in industries such as new energy vehicles, especially at a time when clean energy is the trend in global development," Xu said. The California wildfires provide a compelling argument for the US to remain in the Paris Agreement. The Los Angeles Times reported a few days ago that "An extremely warm summer and fall. An unusually dry winter. Hillsides covered with bone-dry vegetation. And strong Santa Ana winds. In the mix of conditions that have contributed to the most destructive fires in L.A. history, scientists say one significant ingredient is human-caused climate change." These fires are a stark reminder of the immediate risks that climate change poses to vulnerable regions. The US should contribute to global efforts to curb emissions, support adaptation strategies, and help fund initiatives to mitigate such environmental disasters in the future. With extreme weather events becoming more common - the UN weather agency just confirmed 2024 was the hottest year on record, the US has a clear responsibility to be part of the global solution. Climate change is one of the key areas where the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind should be emphasized. Countries around the world are facing common challenges brought about by climate change, a problem too complex for any single country, no matter how powerful, to tackle alone. All countries, regardless of size, should collectively contribute to the realization of a shared future. Zhang Tengjun, deputy director of the Department for American Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, told the Global Times that climate change remains one of the most active areas of China-US engagement and cooperation in this field affects the stability of China-US relations to a certain extent.



## US, Ukraine ties under Trump

ON January 19th, TIME magazine published an astonishing article, amply confirming what dissident, anti-war academics, activists, journalists, and researchers have long argued. The US always intended to abandon Ukraine after setting up the country for a proxy war with Russia, and never had any desire or intention to assist Kiev in defeating Moscow in the conflict, let alone achieving its maximalist aims of regaining Crimea and restoring the country's 1991 borders. To have a major mainstream outlet finally corroborate this indubitable reality is a seismic development. The TIME article's brief first paragraph alone is rife with explosive revelations. It notes when the proxy war erupted in February 2022, then-President Joe Biden "set three objectives for the US response" - and "Ukraine's victory was never among them." Moreover, the phrase oft-repeated by White House apparatchiks, that Washington would support Kiev "for as long as it takes", was never meant to be taken literally. Instead, it was just "intentionally vague" newspeak, with no implied timeframe or even outcome in mind. Eric Green, a member of Biden's National Security Council who oversaw Russia policy, states the US "deliberately...made no promise" to President Volodymyr Zelensky to "recover all of the land Russia had occupied" since the conflict's inception, "and certainly not" Crimea or the breakaway Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. He said the White House believed "doing so was beyond Ukraine's ability, even with robust help from the West." It was well-understood such efforts were "not going to be a success story ultimately" for Kiev, if tried. The Biden administration reportedly had three key objectives in Ukraine, which per TIME were all "achieved". Nonetheless, "success" on these fronts "provides little satisfaction even to some of" the former President's "closest allies and advisers." Green was quoted as saying Washington's purported victory in Ukraine was "unfortunately the kind of success where you don't feel great about it," due to Kiev's "suffering", and "so much uncertainty about where it's ultimately going to land." The Western media has acknowledged Ukraine's calamitous August 2024 invasion of Russia's Kursk region was, to all intents and purposes a British operation. London provided a vast welter of equipment to Kiev "central" to the effort, and "closely" advised their Ukrainian counterparts on strategy. The aim was to draw Russian forces away from Donbass and boost Kiev's bargaining position, which has proven a staggering embarrassment on both fronts. But there was a wider, more insidious goal behind the incursion. Britain openly and eagerly advertised its fundamental role in the Kursk misadventure to bolster public support at home for continuing the proxy war, and "persuade key allies to do more to help." In other words, to normalise open Western involvement, and create the "direct conflict" the Biden administration was so keen to avoid. London was also at the forefront of pressuring NATO member states to permit Ukraine to use foreign-supplied weaponry and materiel inside Russia, which could likewise produce their long-sought hot war against Moscow.

# The myth of two state solution and unveiling a subtle deception

Khayam Abbasi



Elise Stefanik, newly appointed US ambassador to the UN under President Trump. When questioned during the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing about Palestinians' right to self-determination. Instead of addressing the question directly, the ambassador Stefanik deflected by stating, "Of course, they deserve human rights."

FOR decades, the Palestinian issue has been subjected to calculated distortion through global media and propaganda, blurring the critical distinction between human rights and national or political rights. This deliberate obfuscation undermines the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty and self-determination, reducing it to a superficial debate about individual liberties. This subtle but dangerous narrative is not a recent phenomenon; it has its roots in historical policies such as the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and continues to shape international discourse on Palestine. Understanding this tactic is crucial to comprehending the denial of Palestinian national and political rights, as exemplified by statements like those made by, Elise Stefanik, newly appointed US ambassador to the UN under President Trump. When questioned dur-

ing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing about Palestinians' right to self-determination. Instead of addressing the question directly, the ambassador Stefanik deflected by stating, "Of course, they deserve human rights." This response effectively reduced the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty and self-determination to a mere issue of individual liberties, sidestepping their collective national and political rights. While the acknowledgment of human rights appears progressive, it strategically sidesteps the deeper issue of Palestinian national rights and sovereignty, reducing their collective struggle to an individual-level concern. The distinction between human rights and national or political rights is fundamental yet frequently blurred in discussions surrounding Palestine. Human rights are universally applicable and pertain to individuals, guaranteeing freedoms such as religion, speech, assembly, and access to education. National and political rights, on the other hand, apply to groups, nations, or societies, encompassing the right to self-determination, autonomy, sovereignty and control over land and resources. In the context of Palestine, this distinction is critical. While global powers and organizations may acknowledge Palestinians' human rights in principle, they often fail—or outright refuse—to recognize their national and political rights. This discrepancy lies at the heart of US and Israeli policies, where the superficial acknowledgment of human rights is used as a smokescreen to obscure the continued denial of Palestinian sovereignty and territorial claims. This approach reflects a broader pattern of denying colonized or oppressed groups their collective rights. By focusing solely on individual rights, powerful states deflect attention from the systemic denial of collective justice and sovereignty, which is the cornerstone of the Palestinian struggle. The roots of this deception can be traced back to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, where the British government declared its support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. While this declaration paved the way for the creation of the state of Israel, it included a clause that purported to protect the rights of the indigenous Palestinian population: "It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." The wording is revealing. While the document acknowledges the civil and religious rights of Palestinians, it makes no mention of their national or political rights. This omission was not accidental—it was a calculated move to facilitate the Zionist project while reducing the Palestinian presence to a passive, apolitical entity. The subsequent colonization, displacement, and marginalization of Palestinians were thus framed within a narrative that ignored their collective identity and sovereignty. The establishment of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Nakba (catastrophe), during which over 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced, marked a turning point in the Palestinian struggle. The international community, particu-

larly the United Nations, responded with resolutions that ostensibly sought to address the situation. However, these resolutions often emphasized humanitarian concerns while sidelining the issue of Palestinian statehood. For example, UN General Assembly Resolution 194, passed in 1948, called for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and compensation for their losses. While this resolution acknowledged the plight of Palestinian refugees, it failed to address the root cause: the denial of Palestinian national rights and the ongoing occupation of their land. The same pattern is evident in subsequent agreements, such as the Oslo Accords of the 1990s. While these accords were hailed as a step toward peace, they focused primarily on administrative and civil issues, leaving the core issues of sovereignty, borders, and refugees unresolved. Meanwhile, Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, further eroding the possibility of a viable Palestinian state. One of the most striking aspects of the Israeli narrative is its reliance on biblical or divine claims to justify its occupation of Palestinian territories. This argument is frequently invoked to legitimize the annexation of land, including areas like the West Bank, which international agreements designate as part of a future Palestinian state. This claim was starkly highlighted when US ambassador to the United Nations, was asked whether she recognized Israel's biblical right to the West Bank. The ambassador unequivocally affirmed this position, signaling a troubling endorsement of Israel's religiously framed territorial claims. The irony of such assertions lies in the fact that Israel is one of the least religious countries globally, with a significant proportion of its population identifying as secular or atheist. Moreover, many of the Zionist leaders who shaped the state's foundation were themselves secular, relying on political and colonial arguments rather than religious ones to justify their actions. Despite this, the narrative of a "biblical right" is used as a tool to disenfranchise Palestinians and justify the expansion of illegal settlements in occupied territories. The two-state solution is frequently presented as the ostensible resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, this proposal has become increasingly untenable due to Israel's actions on the ground. The continuous expansion of settlements, the annexation of Palestinian land, and the construction of the separation wall have created a fragmented and disjointed Palestinian territory, rendering the idea of a contiguous Palestinian state nearly impossible. Moreover, the two-state solution fails to address the core issues of Palestinian sovereignty and the right of return for refugees. By framing the conflict as a territorial dispute rather than a question of national rights, the international community perpetuates a narrative that favors Israel's interests while sidelining Palestinian demands for justice and equality. Media and propaganda have played a crucial role in shaping global perceptions of the Palestinian issue. By focusing on

isolated incidents of violence or portraying the conflict as a religious or ethnic dispute, mainstream media outlets often obscure the structural and systemic nature of the occupation. This selective framing shifts attention away from the broader issues of colonialism, apartheid, and the denial of Palestinian sovereignty. Additionally, terms like "clashes" and "conflict" are frequently used to describe situations where there is a clear imbalance of power. Such language creates a false equivalence between the occupier and the occupied, further distorting the reality of the situation. The deliberate conflation of human rights with national and political rights has far-reaching implications beyond Palestine. By reducing collective struggles to individual rights, the global order undermines the principles of self-determination and sovereignty that are enshrined in international law. This approach weakens the foundations of justice and accountability, enabling powerful states to impose their agendas on weaker nations. In the case of Palestine, this has meant decades of displacement, marginalization, and violence with little to no accountability for the occupying power. The international community's failure to enforce its own resolutions and hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law has emboldened Israel to continue its expansionist policies with impunity. For a genuine and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is imperative to address the root causes rather than merely treating the symptoms. This requires a fundamental shift in the international community's approach—one that prioritizes the recognition of Palestinian national and political rights alongside their human rights. Furthermore, civil society, activists, and academics must work to expose and counter the narratives that seek to distort the Palestinian struggle. By highlighting the structural and systemic nature of the occupation, they can challenge the superficial framing of the conflict and advocate for a more just and equitable resolution. The Palestinian issue is a stark example of how powerful states and their allies manipulate international discourse to serve their interests. By blurring the line between human rights and national or political rights, they reduce the Palestinian struggle to a question of individual liberties, ignoring the larger issue of sovereignty and self-determination. This tactic, rooted in the Balfour Declaration and perpetuated through international agreements, media narratives, and diplomatic rhetoric, has allowed Israel to continue its expansionist policies while denying Palestinians their rightful place as a sovereign nation. It is imperative for the global community to recognize and address this deception, shifting the focus from superficial acknowledgments of human rights to the recognition of Palestinian national and political rights. Only then can there be a genuine and just resolution to the conflict—one that respects the dignity, sovereignty, and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

— The writer is the subeditor of Daily Islamabad Post  
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# Trump's strategy to contain China (Part-II)

Qamar Bashir



Bessent concluded that a Trump administration would take a more aggressive stance on countering China's economic expansion, ensuring that the U.S. leverages trade agreements, private-sector investments, and strategic partnerships to prevent more nations from falling into Beijing's economic orbit

DURING the two confirmation hearings—Marco Rubio's confirmation hearing for Secretary of State and the Senate Finance Committee—China was identified as America's most significant geopolitical challenge. Various strategies were discussed to counter China's rapid and unprecedented rise on the global stage, including a three-point strategy: strengthening U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific, restricting China's access to advanced U.S. technology, and countering Beijing's military aggression in Taiwan and the South China Sea. The discussion urged the Trump administration to work tirelessly to end economic dependence on China, particularly in critical industries such as semiconductors and rare minerals, to safeguard national security and economic resilience. While outlining perceived threats from China, the hearings cited alleged cyberattacks on U.S. infrastructure, such as the Treasury Department hack, sabotage of communication cables in Asia and Europe, and military intimidation of Taiwan and the Philippines in the South China Sea. Additionally, China was accused of waging economic warfare through its control of critical minerals and manufacturing dominance, posing a significant risk to U.S. economic stability. Senator Rubio warned that without decisive action, China would dominate global supply chains, making the U.S. dangerously dependent on Beijing for essential goods, including medicine and technology. Both committees expressed deep concerns over China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), arguing that Beijing has strategically used the massive infrastructure project to ensnare developing countries in debt traps and gain economic and geopolitical leverage. Senators John Cornyn and Todd Young warned that the BRI has expanded China's influence across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with over 150 countries now part of the initiative, many of which are struggling with unsustainable debt burdens. They noted that China provides large-scale infrastructure loans with opaque terms, and when countries fail to meet repayment obligations, Beijing seizes control of critical assets such as ports, railways, and energy infrastructure, effectively making these nations financially and politically subservient to Chinese interests. The senators called for a robust counter-strategy to curb China's economic coercion and reassert

U.S. influence in global infrastructure and development financing. Senators Maria Cantwell and Bill Cassidy further warned that China's BRI projects often involve exploitative labor practices, where Chinese firms and workers dominate construction contracts, leaving little long-term benefit for local economies. To counter this, they advocated for stronger U.S. trade and investment partnerships that prioritize local job creation and economic sustainability. They proposed expanding U.S.-backed alternatives, such as the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), to offer more transparent and sustainable financing options to emerging economies. Instead of relying solely on public funds, they suggested that the U.S. encourage private-sector-led investments in infrastructure projects in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, providing a viable alternative to China's state-backed lending. Additionally, Bessent and Senator James Lankford proposed leveraging U.S. energy exports as a tool to counter China's growing economic foothold in developing nations. By increasing American liquefied natural gas (LNG) and oil exports, the U.S. could offer an energy alternative to Chinese-financed coal and fossil fuel projects under the BRI, reducing these countries' dependence on Beijing. Another proposed measure involved strengthening diplomatic and security alliances, particularly with Indo-Pacific nations, to reduce China's dominance over global infrastructure and supply chains. Senator Cornyn emphasized that the U.S. must work closely with India, Japan, and Australia through the Quad alliance to provide a coordinated, transparent, and non-exploitative alternative to the BRI. Bessent concluded that a Trump administration would take a more aggressive stance on countering China's economic expansion, ensuring that the U.S. leverages trade agreements, private-sector investments, and strategic partnerships to prevent more nations from falling into Beijing's economic orbit. The hearings made it clear that reasserting U.S. leadership in global infrastructure financing and reducing dependency on China's BRI loans would be a key priority for the incoming administration. It was acknowledged that, under the watch of U.S. leadership, the BRI has expanded to 151 countries, encompassing a combined GDP of \$41 trillion and a population of approximately 5.1 billion people. With over \$679 billion

invested in infrastructure projects—including power plants, railways, highways, ports, and telecommunications—the BRI has reshaped global trade and economic connectivity. Despite the initiative's rapid expansion over the past 12 years, the U.S. is only now in the brainstorming phase of formulating a countermeasure. The current discussions revolve around developing an alternative to the BRI—one that operates under U.S. leadership and is marketed as a more viable and transparent system of lending and investment. However, this realization comes too little and too late. Even if the U.S. were to start constructing a parallel system today, it would take at least 12 years to reach the level of maturity that the BRI has achieved as of 2025. By that time, the BRI itself would have advanced another decade, further consolidating China's economic influence. Given this reality, a more pragmatic approach for the U.S. would be to rethink its strategy—not by opposing the BRI, but by engaging with it. Instead of treating China as a rival in global infrastructure development, the U.S. should consider a cooperative approach, joining BRI projects as an equal partner. China has consistently extended invitations to all nations, including its geopolitical adversaries such as the U.S. and India, to collaborate within the BRI framework. By leveraging the unmatched expertise of U.S. entrepreneurs, managers, and innovators, the BRI could be significantly enhanced in terms of efficiency, transparency, and governance. A strategic partnership between the world's two largest economies would not only benefit the partner nations involved but also set a new precedent for global cooperation. Rather than engaging in a zero-sum competition, a U.S.-China collaboration on infrastructure and development initiatives could usher in an era of shared prosperity, sustainable growth, and geopolitical stability. Ultimately, global economic development should not be viewed as a contest of dominance but as an opportunity for mutual benefit. By fostering a cooperative rather than adversarial relationship, the U.S. and China could lead the world toward an unprecedented level of economic integration and progress (Continues).

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

## Briefs

Pak steadfast  
in support of  
Kashmiris

FROM PAGE 01  
"Thousands of students are now serving different key departments after completing their studies from Daanish Schools," he added. The prime minister further said the talented orphans and poor children were enrolled in Daanish Schools which would bring an educational revolution in the country. Shehbaz also said the students get free books, meals and boarding facilities. Similarly, he said the school buildings would be separate for girls and boys. Announcing that more Daanish Schools will be established soon in Neelum and other areas of AJK, the prime minister said more such educational facilities would also be opened in Gilgit Baltistan, Balochistan and the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The premier said all funds for the schools would be paid by the federal government and directed the relevant authorities to construct and operationalise the schools within one year.

Hafiz Naeem  
meets  
Hamas...

FROM PAGE 01  
committed to doing their part in Gaza's reconstruction. Hafiz Naeem also conveyed Pakistan's solidarity with the people of Palestine, stating that the Jamaat-e-Islami delegation was present to show support on behalf of the Pakistani people. Hasan Darwish, the Hamas leader, thanked the Pakistani people and Jamaat-e-Islami for their continued support. The Hamas leader expressed gratitude for Pakistan's leadership in addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah. Hasan Darwish also expressed hope for continued cooperation from the Pakistani government and its people in the efforts to rebuild Gaza.

Opp.  
considering  
APC in...

FROM PAGE 01  
the APC is expected to invite stakeholders from various sectors, including legal experts, academics, farmers, and civil society representatives, ensuring a comprehensive dialogue on national issues. The alliance has also reached out to political leaders, including former Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, to discuss the APC proposal. Over the past few days, the opposition has intensified consultations with different parties and leaders to find viable solutions to the country's current crisis.

FIA starts  
airport...

FROM PAGE 01  
Among the countries under focus are Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Senegal, Kenya, Russia, and Egypt. The advisory also calls for a detailed investigation into passengers traveling to Libya, Iran, Mauritania, Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, Kuwait, and Kyrgyzstan. These regions have been flagged due to their association with increased human trafficking activity in recent years. In a significant development, two foreign airlines — one from the Gulf region and the other from Africa — have been included in the advisory. The FIA has ordered that these airlines cooperate fully in verifying the documents of passengers, particularly those flying to or from Pakistan.

Retired  
Justice...

FROM PAGE 01  
Persons Tribunal through legislation. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that legislation would indeed be required to form such a tribunal, to which the Additional Attorney General responded that a cabinet committee is currently working on the bill. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail noted that the existing laws already proscribed enforced disappearances. "If someone has committed a crime, try them. If not, let them go," he remarked.

## Malaysian, Brunei envoys chief guests

Rising Stars Hockey Club lifts  
Chief of Army Staff trophy

Team coach Asif Bhatti and Manager Ansar Bhatti congratulated players for outstanding performance



## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The final match of 2nd Chief of Army Staff Inter Club Hockey Championship 2025 was played at Naseer Banda Hockey Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex. After an interesting and thrilling match, the match was tied at 2.2 goals and both teams managed to score 3.3 goals in the

penalty shoot-outs. Rising Star Hockey Club won the Chief of Army Staff Inter-Club Hockey Tournament by defeating Nishtar Hockey Club by 6 goals to 5 in the sudden death competition. Among the special guests High Commissioner of Malaysia Mr. Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Darul Islam Brunei Mr. Kamal Ahmed, Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board Mr. Syed Naveedur Rehman, Olympian Shahbaz Ahmed Sr

Chaudhry Atif Hanif is the main sponsor of this tournament, Urban Group and CEO of Rang Duka Mr. Waqas Hameed, Co-Chairman of Ring Two Mrs. Uzma, CEO of Green City Housing Society were present at the ground and thoroughly enjoyed this thrilling and exciting match. Azim Jatt and Wajahat Munir performed the umpiring duties in today's match while Muhammad Imran was the reserve umpire. The

technical official in the field jury was Rizwan Rana along with Ehsanullah Niazi and Raja Muhammad Latif were part of the jury. International hockey empire Sohail Janjua was also present. Tournament Director Chaudhry Mehboob Javed and Assistant Tournament Director Waseem Baig were also present. Team coach Asif Bhatti and Manager Ansar Bhatti congratulated players for outstanding performance.

## PTI refuses to continue talks...

FROM PAGE 01  
the events, the party will not continue the negotiations. In a statement today, Ayub said: "Constitution of judicial commission is necessary before fourth round of talks." He said that they would not sit at the negotiating table with the government anymore until the formation of the judicial commission. "The PTI founder has issued clear instructions [in this regard]," he added. Senator Siddiqui, the government negotiation team spokesperson, said that the ruling coalition have not yet decided about forming the judicial commission so far. He made the remarks following a meeting of a sub-committee, formed by the government to review and respond to the PTT's demand to launch judicial probe into the May 9 and No-

ember 26 events. Senator Siddiqui said that the fourth round of talks with the PTI would take place on January 28, adding that they would hand over the government's written response to the former ruling party during the sitting. The sub-committee would also meet on Thursday and Friday as well, he said, adding: "The consultation process will continue." During today's meeting, the body discussed the PTT's demands in detail as the incarcerated PTI founder — who has been behind bars since August last year in multiple case ranging from corruption to terrorism — warned the government on January 20 of quitting talks if the judicial commission was not formed days within seven days. Ijaz-ul-Haq, a member of the government's team, said that the meeting discussed the PTT's

charter of demands and legal matters. "[Our] response is under process," he added. Sources privacy to the development revealed that the body was preparing its point-wise written response, which is expected to be shared with the PTI during the next round of talks. The sub-committee would submit its response to NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, following which he would convene a meeting of the negotiation committees from both sides, the sources added. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah, senior PPP leader Naveed Qamar, Istekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Abdul Aleem Khan, Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Dr Farooq Sattar and others were among the attendees of the meeting.

## Latest Peca changes draft lowers...

FROM PAGE 01  
spreading disinformation, Express News reported. The amendments also outline the establishment of a Digital Rights Protection Authority (DRPA), which will have sweeping powers to regulate social media and online platforms. The authority will be empowered to block or remove unlawful content and ensure compliance with regulatory guidelines.  
**Key features**  
1. Expanded definitions: The amendments redefine "social media platforms" to include websites, applications, and tools facilitating digital communication. This expanded scope also includes any individual or entity operating such platforms within Pakistan.  
2. Authority formation: The DRPA will consist of a chairperson

and six members, including secretaries from IT, information, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The body will have jurisdiction to investigate complaints, issue directives for content removal, and recommend measures to ensure digital ethics.  
3. Content regulation: The authority will regulate a wide range of content deemed unlawful, including blasphemy, hate speech, incitement to violence, obscenity, defamation, and material against the defence or security of Pakistan. A comprehensive list of 16 prohibited content categories has been included in the amendments.  
4. Compliance mandates: Social media platforms may be required to register with the government, establish local offices, and appoint representatives in Pakistan. Companies will also be given

deadlines to remove content flagged by the authority or face penalties. Mixed views on amendments  
The government asserts that these changes are necessary to address the rise of fake news and hate speech, which have contributed to public unrest and societal divisions.  
While proponents of the legislation highlight its potential to curb online disinformation and ensure accountability, critics fear the law could lead to censorship or misuse by authorities.  
The government has assured that the amendments will be implemented transparently, with due safeguards to protect citizens' rights.  
The draft legislation is expected to be tabled in Parliament soon, marking a significant step in the country's efforts to regulate the digital landscape.

190m pounds  
scam was an  
open and shut  
case: Ata Tarar

FROM PAGE 01  
as there was solid evidence of graft, misuse of power and authority. He said the then-ruling couple took two hundred kanals of land as a bribe. Al-Qadir Trust was formed, and 5-carat rings were taken from the tycoon whose fine was paid through 190 million pounds. In sheer violation of rules, a sealed envelope was brought to the cabinet meeting and its approval was taken without even sharing details of the content, despite some member's objections. The Supreme Court had termed the case as a classic example of robbing Peter to pay as the money was taken from one hand and given to another in case of daylight robbery. The government of Pakistan's money was misused and billions of rupees of public money was practically handed over to the person who was found guilty of money laundering in the UK. He said the National Accountability Bureau had been investigating many cases of corruption and land grabbing against Malik Riaz and his son Ali Riaz. He said the NAB has made it clear that whatever money will be spent on the Dubai project will fall under the category of money laundering. He remarked that the 190 million pounds case was an open and shut case as undeniable evidence against Malik Riaz and his son was on record. Malik Riaz has been declared an absconder as he was not ready to face cases registered against him, he maintained. The British government cancelled the visas of Malik Riaz and his son as a punishment when it was proven that money that was seized from him was the property of the government of Pakistan. He wondered how the PTI social media platforms were linking this matter with Seerat. He requested them to keep religion out of politics and such corruption cases. They should face cases of corruption and bribery in the courts and should not try to hide their heinous crimes behind religion, he added.

PM grieved  
over  
Indonesia  
flash floods

FROM PAGE 01  
the prime minister wrote on his X timeline. He said that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Indonesian government and its people as they respond to this calamity with resilience and courage.

Another  
aid convoy  
dispatched...

FROM PAGE 01  
consignment comprising 16 trucks were sent to the crisis-hit region later in the day. A total of 61 vehicles carrying food supplies had entered Kurram district today, confirmed DPO Khalid. He said that the goods supply operation was being closely monitored by Kohat Regional Police Officer Abbas Majeed and Kohat commissioner to ensure the smooth and secure transportation of goods. Kurram has been wracked by violence for decades, but around 150 people have been killed in a fresh round of fighting which started in November last year when two separate convoys travelling under police escort were ambushed, leaving 40 people dead.

## Briefs

PSX loses  
1,598 more  
points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 1,598.82 more points, a negative change of 1.39 percent, closing at 113,443.43 points as compared to 115,042.25 points on the last trading day. A total of 743,632,966 shares were traded during the day as compared to 767,270,814 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs35.245 billion against Rs.31.825 billion on the last trading day. As many as 454 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 93 of them recorded gains and 307 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 54 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 100,218,430 shares at Rs 1.7 per share, Cnergyco PK with 96,976,679 shares at Rs.7.36 per share and Fauji Cement with 83,552,040 shares at Rs.38.58 per share. —APP

Rupee sheds  
04 paise  
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 04 paise against the US dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs278.85 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.81. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.80 and Rs 281.30, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.29 to close at Rs290.29 against the last day's closing of Rs289.00, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.78, whereas an increase of Rs 1.94 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs343.47 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs341.53. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham remained unchanged and closed at Rs 75.91 while the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise to close at Rs74.32. —APP

Gold prices  
increase by Rs  
4,250 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 4,250 and was sold at Rs 287,450 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 283,200 on a previous trading day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 3,642 to Rs 246,440 from Rs 242,798 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs 225,911 from Rs 222,565. The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.59.40 to Rs.3,431 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.51.50 to Rs 51.50 and Rs 2,941 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$40 to \$2,751 from \$2,711, the Association reported. —APP

Pivot to Service  
Co aligned with  
Govt's mission of  
export-led growth

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash has emerged as a transformative force in Pakistan's digital financial ecosystem by enabling access to financial products like affordable payments, credit, savings and insurance to millions of previously underserved citizens, Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, said at the World Economic Forum. Speaking at an exclusive roundtable discussion, Jazz's CEO shared insights into the company's digital transformation journey and its evolution into a comprehensive digital services provider from a pure-play network operator, said a news release received here on Wednesday. Jazz serves over 100 million customers across various platforms—telecom, banking, entertainment, etc.—with investments exceeding USD 10.8 billion. —APP

200,000 int'l troops needed  
to secure any Ukraine peace

Trump on Tuesday indicated he would consider imposing fresh sanctions on Russia if President Vladimir Putin refuses to negotiate a deal to end the war in Ukraine

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said any peace deal agreed with Russia would require at least 200,000 European peacekeepers to oversee it, according to comments published Wednesday. US President Donald Trump's return to the White House has raised the spectre of some kind of halt in the fighting after he vowed to end the war — though he has never explained how. Speaking at the World Economic Forum

in Davos a day earlier, Zelensky said any deal to end the conflict would need to be overseen by a large foreign contingent of peacekeepers. Zelensky said that given the small size of the Ukrainian army compared to that of Russia, "we need contingents with a very strong number of soldiers" to secure any peace deal. "From all the Europeans? Two hundred thousand. It's a minimum. Otherwise, it's nothing," he said. He said any other

arrangement would be akin to the monitoring mission led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in eastern Ukraine that disintegrated when Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. "They had offices and that's all," Zelensky said, underscoring the need from the Ukrainian perspective for an armed force to prevent further Russian attacks. The Ukrainian leader has repeatedly

said that Ukraine must be represented at any talks with international parties to end the conflict and that only robust security guarantees can dissuade Russia from attacking again. Ukraine's fear that Moscow would use a truce to rebuild its military stems partially from the decade that followed peace agreements between Kremlin-backed separatists and Kyiv in 2014 which failed to halt Moscow's full-scale invasion in 2022. In an earlier

address at Davos, Zelensky called on Europe to establish a joint defense policy and said European capitals should be prepared to increase spending, while calling into question Trump's commitment to NATO, the US-led security bloc. Trump on Tuesday indicated he would consider imposing fresh sanctions on Russia if President Vladimir Putin refuses to negotiate a deal to end the war in Ukraine. —Agencies

Navy wins 32nd National  
Shooting Championship

DNA

KARACHI: The closing ceremony of the 32nd National Shooting Championship was held at Pakistan Navy Shooting Range in Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Pakistan Navy emerged as the champions of 32nd National Shooting Championship 2025, securing a tally of 20 Gold, 17 Silver, and 5 Bronze medals, while Paki-

stan Army claimed second place. Maqbool Hussain and Rasam Gul from Pakistan Navy were declared overall best shooters in the male and female categories, respectively. Notably, 7 new national records were set during the competition in the Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun categories. Chief of the Naval Staff commended the efforts and dedication of the participants, awarding medals and trophies to the best performers. He also acknowledged the hard work of organizers, sponsors, and participants

who contributed to the success of the event. Admiral Naveed Ashraf highlighted that state-of-the-art facilities at Pakistan Navy Shooting Range remain available to sports shooting enthusiasts and expressed hope that these talented players will soon bring international recognition to Pakistan. The week-long championship featured 16 events conducted in accordance with the latest rules of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF), under the auspices of the National Rifle Association of Pakistan (NRAP).

Approximately 350 shooters representing Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Police, WAPDA, provincial teams from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as the Higher Education Commission, Federal Rifle Association of Pakistan, and various shooting clubs, participated in the championship. The ceremony was attended by civil and military officials, prominent members of Pakistan's shooting fraternity, and media representatives.

Italy govt under fire  
for releasing Libyan  
warlord accused of  
war crimes

ROME: Italian opposition lawmakers and human rights groups voiced outrage Wednesday after Italy released a Libyan warlord on a technicality, after he was arrested on a warrant from the International Criminal Court accusing him of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Justice Minister Carlo Nordio was grilled about the release Tuesday of Ossama Anjem, also known as Ossama Al-Masri, during a previously scheduled appearance before the Senate. Nordio didn't respond to several requests for details about the release or demands that he reaffirm Italy's commitment to upholding international justice. Al-Masri heads the Tripoli branch of the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution, a notorious network of detention centers run by the government-backed Special Defense Force. The ICC warrant, dated Jan. 18 and referenced in Italian court papers, accuses him of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Mitiga prison in Libya starting in 2011, punishable with life in prison. Al-Masri was arrested Sunday in Turin, where he reportedly had attended the Juventus-Milan soccer match the night before. Rome's court of appeals ordered him freed Tuesday, and he was sent back to Libya aboard an aircraft of the Italian secret services, because of what the appeals court said was a procedural error in his arrest. The ruling said Nordio should have been informed ahead of time of the arrest, since the justice ministry handles all relations with The Hague-based court. Al-Masri returned to Tripoli late Tuesday. He was received at the Mitiga airport by supporters who celebrated his release, according to local media. Footage circulated online showed dozens of young men chanting and carrying what appeared to be Al-Masri on their shoulders at the airport. Opposition lawmakers from several parties voiced outrage and demanded clarity, with former Premier Matteo Renzi accusing the right-wing government of hypocrisy given its stated crackdown on human traffickers. "But when a trafficker whom the International Criminal Court tells us is a dangerous criminal lands on your table, it's not like you chase him down, you brought him home to Libya with a plane of the Italian secret services," said Renzi of the Italia Viva party. "Either you're sick or this is the image of a hypocritical, indecent government. —APP

France arrests  
new Algerian  
influencer as  
tensions soar

PARIS: French authorities Wednesday arrested another Algerian social media influencer as tensions soar between Paris and its North African former colony, the interior minister announced. Rafik M. had "called on TikTok for the carrying out of violent acts on French territory," said Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau on social media, without saying where he had been arrested. The influencer is one of half a dozen Algerians arrested in France over the last month on accusations of calling for violence on French territory. One of them, known as "Doualemn," was deported to Algeria where the authorities promptly sent him back to France in a move that incensed Retailleau. Tensions have surged between France and Algeria after President Emmanuel Macron renewed French support for Moroccan sovereignty over the disputed territory of Western Sahara during a visit to the kingdom last year. Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, is mostly under the de facto control of Morocco. But it is claimed by the Algiers-backed Sahrawi separatists of the Polisario Front, who want a self-determination referendum. Algeria meanwhile has been holding French-Algerian novelist Boualem Sansal on national security charges. Sansal, who was arrested at Algiers airport in November, is a major figure in modern francophone literature. Retailleau, a hard-line right-winger, has repeatedly accused Algeria of "seeking to humiliate France." The far-right in France is urging the government to take tough measures against Algiers, including canceling aid, cooperation agreements and delivering visas. Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said earlier this month France would have "no option but to retaliate" if "the Algerians continue to escalate" the row. —APP

Edible oil industry urged  
to adopt environmental  
sustainability practices

Romina Khurshid assured the delegation of the government's commitment to facilitating the industry and urged industry leaders to explore sustainable production alternatives

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator of the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday called for strengthened collaboration between government bodies and industry stakeholders to achieve climate resilience and sustainability objectives. She underscored the critical need to reduce emissions in order to support Pakistan's agricultural and economic stability. During a meeting with a six-member delegation from the edible oil industry led by Seatrade Group CEO, Omar Najib Balagamwala, the Prime Minister's aide emphasized the importance of sustainable sourcing, energy efficiency, waste management, and circular economy practices as essential steps toward fostering a cleaner environment. "These industries are crucial to our national economy, but they must also shoulder the responsibility of minimizing their environmental footprint to align with the government's climate goals," Alam said, stressing that adopting eco-friendly practices is key to ensuring growth does not come at the expense of the environment. The meeting was attended by Parliamentary Secretary Rana Ahmad Atiq Anwar, Federal Secretary Aisha Humera Moriani, senior officials from the Ministry of Climate Change, and Member of National Assembly Riaz U Haq. mar Najib Balagamwala, CEO of Seatrade Group, shared that the edible oil industry faces several challenges, including shipment issues, and technical barriers to importing oilseeds. Romina Khurshid assured the delegation of the government's commitment to facilitating the industry and urged industry leaders to explore sustainable production alternatives adding: "Pakistan's climate strategy must address the environmental repercussions of food production," Alam emphasized, advocating for responsible sourcing of raw materials, cleaner production techniques, and waste reduction efforts. Although comprehensive data on waste generated by the oil and ghee industry is lacking, Alam pointed out that the sector generates significant amounts of solid, liquid, and packaging waste. She stressed that implementing proper waste management and waste-to-value strategies could alleviate these issues. Furthermore, Alam called for targeted research into greenhouse gas emissions specific to the edible oil industry, urging environmental organizations to conduct studies that would provide more accurate data to support the country's climate goals. Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Rana Ahmad Atiq Anwar stressed the importance of nurturing the edible oil industry to enhance both economic growth and sustainability. "We are working to facilitate the industry," he stated, emphasizing the government's efforts to boost local production and reduce the country's reliance on imports, which currently account for 90% of Pakistan's edible oil consumption. Federal Secretary for Climate Change Ministry, Aisha Humera Moriani reinforced the government's commitment to supporting the development of the edible oil sector. She highlighted the industry's potential to contribute significantly to the economy while addressing environmental challenges. —DNA

## Buttler opposes boycott of Afghanistan cricket

KOLKATA: England's captain Jos Buttler expressed that he does not think a boycott of Afghanistan's cricket team is the appropriate response ahead of their scheduled match in next month's Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. The match, set to take place in Lahore on February 26, has faced significant political scrutiny in recent weeks. This followed a letter from Labour MP Tonia Antoniazzi to Richard Gould, the ECB Chief Executive, condemning the "insidious dystopia" and "sex apartheid" affecting 14 million women in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. The letter, signed by over 160 British politicians, urged England's men's team to speak out against the mistreatment of women and girls, including the ban on female participation in sports since 2021. Antoniazzi suggested that a boycott would send a "clear signal" that such abuses would not be tolerated. In response, Gould rejected the call for a boycott, em-

phasising the need for a "coordinated, ICC-led response" rather

than unilateral actions by individual countries. His stance was sup-

ported by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who encouraged the ICC



to enforce its own rules, and Lisa Nandy, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who deemed such measures "counterproductive." Ahead of the first T20I against India in Kolkata, Buttler spoke about the situation, saying that while players are trying to stay informed, the decision would be led by the "experts." He expressed hope that the match would proceed as scheduled. "Political situations like this, as a player, you're trying to be as informed as you can be," Buttler said. "The experts know a lot more about it, so I've been in dialogue with Rob Key [ECB men's managing director] and others to see how they view it. I don't think a boycott is the way to go about it," he added. His comments drew comparisons to the 2003 World Cup, when England's players were urged to boycott a match against Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe's regime. —Agencies

At least 11  
killed in rail  
accident in  
west India

NEW DELHI: At least 11 people died in a rail accident in India's western Maharashtra state on Wednesday when they disembarked from their train, fearing a fire, only to be hit by another train passing on the adjacent track, local media reported. Railway officials told local media that someone had pulled the train's alarm chain, causing it to come to a halt, after which several passengers disembarked onto the adjacent tracks and were mowed down by another passing train. "As per the information, 11 people have died in the accident and 5 others are injured," Praveen Gedam, a senior railways official in Nashik region, told ANI news agency, in which Reuters has a minority stake. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said ambulances had been dispatched to the spot - located about 400 kilometres (250 miles) away from India's financial capital Mumbai - and arrangements were being made to treat the injured. "Emergency equipment like glass cutters, floodlights etc. have also been kept ready," he said on messaging platform X. Indian railways is the fourth largest train network in the world and is undergoing a \$30 billion upgrade, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push to boost connectivity. Rail accidents in the last two years, including a collision in 2023 that killed at least 288 people, have tarnished its image, however. —APP

Low-cost  
housing  
schemes on  
card: Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, stated on Wednesday that his Ministry is developing a new vision for low-cost housing schemes by incorporating advanced construction techniques. The minister stated during a meeting that investing in smart and green housing techniques and research has become a key aspiration and goal. He commended the idea of exhibitions, emphasizing that such events are essential to move away from conventional construction methods that waste valuable non-renewable resources. He further said that such platforms are the need of the hour as this industry have a great potential that needs a right vision and impetus to grow and flourish. Minister asserted that conventional mode of construction and Theka (contract) system must be discouraged and become obsolete as they promote corrupt practices and illegal activities. He reiterated that as per the vision and directions of prime minister we are eager to learn new ideas and capture opportunities through these expos to introduce advanced technologies like fiber construction for low cost housing schemes. The minister's meeting with Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO of Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt), a Karachi-based exhibition company, was also attended by the Secretary of Housing and Works, Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, and other senior officials from the ministry. —APP

CCP approves  
asset  
acquisition of  
CCML by SSIL

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval for the acquisition of certain assets, including land, equipment and machinery of Crescent Cotton Mills Limited (CCML) by Sultan Spinning Industries (Private) Limited (SSIL). The CCP defined the relevant product market as 'yarn,' segmented into cotton, synthetic, and blended yarn, based on differences in production, consumer preferences and pricing, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. The assessment determined that CCML holds a minimal market share, which will diminish further post-transaction as the assets will no longer contribute to its operations. In contrast, SSIL's market entry is anticipated to invigorate competition by introducing a new participant in the yarn industry. —APP

## Briefs

### Pak, US agree to enhance bilateral ties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with US Congressman Thomas Richard Suozzi and Congressman Jack Bergman to discuss Pakistan-US relations and the regional situation, including Afghanistan. The meeting, held in Washington, saw agreement on fostering stronger bilateral ties between the two nations. During the discussions, Minister Naqvi emphasized the importance of the United States as a key economic and defense partner for Pakistan. He highlighted the value of US assistance in improving Pakistan's social sectors and expressed a desire for expanded collaboration across various fields. Naqvi extended an invitation to both Congressman Suozzi, a Democrat, and Congressman Bergman, a Republican, to visit Pakistan. "Your visit will play a crucial role in further strengthening our bilateral relationship," he said. Congressman Suozzi, a member of the Pakistan Caucus, reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening ties with Pakistan and announced his intention to visit soon. The meeting also concluded with a decision to hold the Pakistan Caucus Conference in Washington, D.C., on April 30. Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, was present at the meeting, further underscoring the significance of the discussions. The visit marks a step forward in deepening the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and the United States.

### NBA warrants issued for PTI leaders

DNA

FAISALABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub, Senate Opposition Leader Shibli Faraz, and others in a case related to their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots. The arrest warrants, issued over failure to appear before court in a case registered at Civil Lines Police Station, have also been issued against PTI's former Shahzad as well as former party leader Fawad Chaudhry. Meanwhile, expressing his views during his appearance before the court, PTI member provincial assembly (MPA) Junaid Afzal Sahi — who along with Khayal Ahmad Kastro had been declared absconder over failure to appear — said that a review petition has been filed which has been adjourned by the court. The said case, concerned with setting ablaze a police van, accuses PTI leaders of aiding and abetting arson. Warrants were issued against the three PTI leaders and former minister Fawad over failure to appear in the previous hearing which have now been followed by the issuance of non-bailable arrest warrants.

### Don't single out China in sea tensions

DAVOS: There will always be border disputes in Asia, and China should not be singled out because of tensions in the South China Sea, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Wednesday. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Anwar said that Malaysia had border issues with Singapore and its other neighbors in Southeast Asia but they still managed to cultivate good relations. While Malaysia also has maritime issues with China, it will push ahead with improving ties because it is an important country, he said. "We have excellent relationship with Singapore. We still have border issues with them," Anwar said. "I treat the Thais as my family members, the leaders, but still we have some border issues with them. So it is with Indonesia, with the Philippines. — Agencies

# Bench powers case not linked to 26th Constitutional Amendment

The jurisdiction of the bench was contested and subsequently, the cases were adjourned to January 16



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has said that the case related to the bench's jurisdiction has no connection with the 26th Constitutional Amendment, adding that if someone feels scared on their own, that's a different matter. His remarks came during a contempt of court hearing on Wednesday regarding the non-scheduling of a case on the powers of benches, with the two-member bench being headed by Justice Shah which also includes Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi. The issue at hand relates to the erred fixing of cases — which included a chal-

lenge to the vices of Custom Act 1969 — by Additional Registrar (Judicial) Nazar Abbas — who has been removed from his post — who wrongly fixed cases meant for the Supreme Court's constitutional bench instead of a regular one. The cases were fixed before a regular bench of three judges which were heard on January 13, 2025, where in addition to the merit of the case, the constitutionality of sub-section 2 of section 11A of the Customs Act was challenged. The jurisdiction of the bench was contested and subsequently, the cases were adjourned to January 16. Realising the serious lapse on their part, the Judicial Branch through a note approached the regular committee under section 2(1) of the Su-

preme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023. Keeping in view the serious nature of lapse the committee convened on January 17 under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). The committee noted that Clause 3 of Article 191A of the Constitution read with Clause 5 of Article 191A of the Constitution expressly vests such jurisdiction in the constitutional bench and none other. The committee, therefore, withdrew these cases from the regular bench and directed that the same should be placed before the constitutional bench committee constituted under Article 191A of the Constitution for re-fixation. The issue has also led to Justice Shah, Justice Ayesha A Malik and Justice Aqeel writing a letter to CJP Yahya Afridi the head of the constitutional bench Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan about the issue regarding the formation of benches. During the hearing today, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan argued that the court's jurisdiction in contempt cases was limited, emphasising that written statements from those issued show-cause notices were necessary. Argued that, following the 26th Amendment, the authority to form benches now lies with a constitutional committee. Justice Shah countered, saying that the question pertains to Section 2 of the Practice and Procedure Act, asking whether a case can be withdrawn if a bench seeks to determine its jurisdiction. In response to AGP Awan's objection that amicus curiae appointed by the court were lawyers who had challenged the 26th Amendment, Justice Shah suggested appointing other amicus curiae from the same group, while Justice Aqeel concurred with the attorney general's concerns. Furthermore, the attorney general asserted that under the court's original criminal jurisdiction, the issue was strictly between the court and the alleged contemnor. The AGP also Awan remarked that the questions raised by the court could not be heard within the context of the contempt case, adding that until Nazar provides a written response, the registrar's stance cannot be considered as his defence.

### UN warns Israel's genocide could spread to WB

NEW YORK: The United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Palestinian territories has warned that Israel's genocidal acts may spread from Gaza to the West Bank, amid an ongoing large-scale military operation in the occupied city of Jenin. Francesca Albanese made the remarks in a post on X on Wednesday, as the Israeli regime has escalated brutal violence in the West Bank since the ceasefire in Gaza went into effect over the weekend. "As the long awaited ceasefire in Gaza took place, Israel's death machinery escalated its firing in the West Bank, killing 10 people in Jenin [on Tuesday]," Albanese said. "If it is not forced to stop, Israel's genocide of Palestinians will not be confined to Gaza. Mark my words," she added. As the Israeli deadly violence continues in the West Bank, regional countries have voiced serious concerns over the Israeli atrocities and their fallout. Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi described Israeli military offensive in West Bank as "dangerous," saying the violent raids could "destabilize" the security of the entire region. Also on Wednesday, Palestinian channels on Telegram shared videos showing Israeli forces heading towards the Jenin refugee camp with military bulldozers, after leaving the al-Jalama checkpoint in West Bank. — Agencies

## Pakistan-China collaboration to benefit future generations

The second phase of CPEC is focused on business to business cooperation

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday acknowledged the services of Chinese workers, technicians and engineers for successfully completing CPEC Phase-I projects in collaboration with the Pakistani workforce. "The successful completion of the CPEC Phase-I projects, located in parts of the country, is a symbol of the everlasting friendship between Pakistan and China, which is reaching new heights with each passing day," he said while addressing an event held in connection with the festivities of the Chinese Spring Festival at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). He expressed confidence that as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) entered its second phase, there would be even more increased cooperation and coordination between the two countries, benefiting not only the people of Pakistan but the entire region. Under the second phase of CPEC, the minister highlighted that special focus would be given to multidimensional fields including the agriculture sector by adopting technological advancements, the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and cooperation in the information technology area, which would help Pakistan increase its exports. Ahsan Iqbal mentioned that it was the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to benefit from the expertise of information technology experts from across the world, especially China, and to equip the Pakistani youth with all IT-related skills, enabling them to meet the needs of the contemporary world. Commenting on collaboration in the mining sector, the minister said that there would be increased cooperation and investment on a business-to-business basis by the private sector. He noted that work on two mega projects Karakoram Highway Phase-II and Pakistan Railways' Main Line-I (ML-I) would begin in the current year, 2025, expanding and deepening the existing cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

## NAB distributes Rs 97 mln to Jeddah Town victims

The recovery of Jeddah Town investments was a remarkable achievement, considering that the culprits had already served their sentences and some had passed away

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Sohail Nasir, distributed the first installment of cheques totaling Rs 97 million to 132 victims of Jeddah Town during a modest ceremony at NAB headquarters, on Wednesday. Speaking at the event, the deputy chairman emphasized that NAB is committed to recovering the stolen funds of scandal victims. NAB serves as the custodian of people's investments and also acknowledged the challenges involved in recovering looted funds. The recovery of Jeddah Town investments was a remarkable achievement, considering that the culprits had already served their sentences and some had passed away. He praised the policies of the current NAB chairman, noting that recoveries have accelerated since he took office. He emphasized that the true success of NAB lies not in securing convictions, but in returning the looted funds to the victims. He stressed the importance of investing only in legal, registered societies and promised to return every penny to victims of fraudulent housing societies, urging the public's support in fulfilling this commitment. Mirza Irfan Baig, Director General of NAB Rawalpindi, stated that NAB is dedicated to eliminating corruption from the country to ensure a comfortable future for the next generation. NAB Rawalpindi is prioritizing the resolution of corruption cases mostly involving fake housing societies. Over the past year and a half, it has recovered Rs 38 billion, including looted money from old cases like Araiyan City, Jeddah Town, and others. NAB has also resolved fraud cases worth Rs 100 billion, provided billions of rupees in relief to victims of Ghouri Town. Additionally, 100 Kanal of land was recovered from Ghouri Town's management, with more cases nearing resolution.

## Trump stirs tariff pot with fresh threats on EU

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum says she will respond to US actions "step by step"

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday vowed to hit the European Union with tariffs and said his administration was discussing a 10% punitive duty on Chinese imports because fentanyl was being sent from China to the US via Mexico and Canada. Trump voiced his latest tariff threats in remarks to reporters at the White House a day after taking office without immediately imposing tariffs as he had promised during his campaign. Financial markets and trade groups exhaled briefly on Tuesday, but his latest comments underscored Trump's longstanding desire for broader duties and a new February 1 deadline for 25% tariffs against Canada and Mexico, as well as duties on China and the European Union. Trump said the EU and other countries also had troubling trade surpluses with the US. "The European Union is very, very

bad to us," he said, adding: "So they're going to be in for tariffs. It's the only way [...] you're going to get fairness." Trump said on Monday that he was considering imposing duties on Canada and Mexico unless they clamped down on the trafficking of illegal migrants and fentanyl, including precursor chemicals from China, across their US borders. Trump had previously threatened a 10% duty on Chinese imports because of the trade but realigned that with the February 1 deadline. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told CNBC early on Tuesday that Trump's Canada and Mexico tariff threat was to pressure the two countries to stop illegal migrants and illicit drugs from entering the US. "The reason why he's considering 25%, 25% and 10%, or whatever it's going to be, on Canada, Mexico and China, is because 300 Americans die every day" from fentanyl overdoses, said Navarro. Trump on Monday announced a sweeping immigration crackdown, including a broad ban on asylum.

## Engagement with Afghanistan must to help millions: UNAMA

The UNAMA representative further said that peace and stability of Afghanistan is the concern of the entire international community and not just of the UN



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Disengagement is neither an option nor helpful to Afghans. We must collectively engage with Afghanistan to create an entry point for helping millions of Afghans that are in distress, and also help the country deal with its longstanding challenges. These remarks were made by the head of the Pakistan-based liaison office for the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Malick Ceesay, during the launching ceremony of "Complex Terrorism Landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan Region: Afghan Emirate as Counter-Terror Partner", the latest publication of the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). The research publication offers critical insights into the evolving dynamics of militancy in the region and explores the heightened threats posed by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.

The UNAMA representative further said that peace and stability of Afghanistan is the concern of the entire international community and not just of the United Nations, all wanting to see the country prosper, stable and enjoy lasting peace as a matter of Afghanistan's and international interest. UNAMA and UN are committed and working to make that possible through engagement, regional collaboration and coordination. The CRSS research in its key highlights notes that contrary to the initial optimism about Taliban rule that it might bring decline in transnational terrorism and lead to regional stability, the threats have instead only intensified and it has introduced new complexities, manifest in - as far as Afghanistan's neighbors are concerned - 6% surge in violence recorded in Pakistan in 2024, the highest in nearly a decade. The country also witnessed a sustained rise in i) overall violence (resulting from terrorism and counter-terrorism operations), and ii) terror attacks on Pakistan's security forces and their resulting fatalities, for the fourth consecutive year since 2021, which coincides with the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan.

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