

Saturday, January 25, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Scholz slams Musk for using social media to support far-right

Detailed News On Page-08

Only arms embargo will stop Israel

Detailed News On Page-08

renounces

violence

Exposes foreign support

for Baloch insurgency

News Desk

QUETTA: Former Baloch

Liberation Army (BLA)

along with other militants,

denounced violence and

alleged foreign agencies' in-

volvement in supporting Ba-

loch separatists. Speaking

alongside Balochistan min-

isters and Counter Terror-

ism Department (CTD) of-

ficials, Najibullah admitted

spending 19 years in mili-

tancy, motivated by hatred

instilled by a neighbor. He

described the insurgency as "gang warfare," highlight-

ing the suffering of fight-

ers while leaders' families

live abroad. He urged mili-

tants to abandon violence

Continued on Page 06

Hamas names

4 hostages set

to be released

They will be freed in

exchange for 180 Palestinian

prisoners held in Israel

AGENCIES

GAZA: Hamas has named

four hostages to be re-

leased on Saturday under

the Gaza ceasefire deal. It

says they are soldiers Ka-

rina Ariev, Daniella Gilboa,

Naama Levy and Liri Albag.

They will be freed in ex-

change for 180 Palestinian

commander

Najibullah,



Sinner beats Shelton to set up Zverev final

Detailed News On Page-06

Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh



3 human traffickers arrested

PM-led task force resolves to curb human trafficking

"We will bring the perpetrators involved in human trafficking to justice," vows PM Shehbaz

Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: In order to eliminate the menace of human trafficking from the country, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday formed a special task force, led by himself. "We will bring the perpetrators involved in human trafficking to justice," the prime minister resolved while chairing a review meeting regarding steps to curb human trafficking in Pakistan. The development came days after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) kicked off a probe against its 20 officials over their alleged involvement in human smuggling.

Moreover, the federal government had launched a high-level probe into the tragic boat incidents in Morocco wherein at least 44 Pakistanis drowned while attempting to reach Spain from West Africa earlier this month. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested three suspects, including an alleged human trafficker implicated in the recent Morocco boat tragedy, in a crackdown on human smuggling operations. The accused, identified as Waqas Ashraf, Rana Muhammad Farhan, and Muhammad Adil, were taken into custody by the FIA's Gujranwala chapter. Waqas Ashraf, in particular, has been linked to the Morocco boat accident and was arrested in Sambrial.

During the meeting today, the premier was briefed on the groups involved in the deaths of Pakistanis in the illegal immigrant boat incidents, arrests made by various institutions in Pakistan, FIRs filed, and the future course of action. The prime minister stressed to speed up the pace of arrests of those involved in human trafficking and directed all the relevant departments including the foreign ministry to play their active role in identifying the human smugglers. He said that the entire nation was deeply saddened by the heartbreaking incident of the deaths of Pakistanis in the boat of illegal immigrants. The meeting was informed that six organised human trafficking groups had been identified,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Junaid Akbar

elected PAC

chairman

Opposition Leader

in National Assembly

Omar Ayub recommends

Akbar's name

DNA

ISLAMABAD:PTI Member

of National Assembly (MNA)

Junaid Akbar was elected

chairman of the Public Ac-

counts Committee (PAC) on

Friday, the post was lying

vacant since the government

came into power following

the February 2024 elections.

The PAC is considered one of

the most powerful parliamen-

tary bodies, with the authori-

ty to summon any individual or record from government

departments in financial

matters. As per parliamentary norms established following the 2008 general

elections, the chair of the

PAC is traditionally allotted

to the opposition, a practice which continues till today.

Asad Qaiser

contactsFazl PTI leaders are expected

to meet Fazlur Rehman on Monday or Tuesday MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD:PTI leader

Asad Qaiser held a telephonic call with JUI-F chief

Maulana Fazlur Rehman

Chinese investors move SHC against 'police harassment'

"We have been deprived of right to free movement and holding business meetings," says Chinese investors

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Amid worsening law and order situation in Karachi, six Chinese investors on Friday filed a petition in the Sindh High Court seeking protection against extortion and alleged harassment by police officials in the metropolis. In their petition, the Chinese investors, while expressing their disappointment over the "culture of bribe" in the local police, have said that they would be left with no other option but to leave for Lahore or return to their homeland. "Police [officers] demand bribes from the airport to our residences. We are made to wait for hours at the airport in the name of [arranging] bulletproof vehicles," read the petition. The Chinese businessmen alleged that police officials, after receiving bribes, took them to their residences in their vehicles. In addition to this, the Chinese investors said that they had been deprived of the right to free movement and holding business meetings.

Continued on Page 06

will not be accepted, says PPP chairman

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardariempha-

FIA begins Toshakhana inquiry against

the JIT will record statements from all the accused individuals

STAFF REPORT

Continued on Page 06

Former BLA Slams Peca amendment commander

ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Lt. General Inayat Hussain Shah, Chief of Logistic Staff Pakistan Army,

Defence Adviser of Bangladesh Brig. General Abu Bubel Md Shahabuddin and others

cutting cake to mark the 53rd Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh. - DNA

PTI to boycott 4th round of talks with govt: Gohar

NA speaker, who has been facilitating government-PTI negotiation, summons session on January 28 at 11:45pm

KHAYAM ABBASI

the fourth round of talks with the government, a day after it announced that party founder Imran Khan issued directions to call off negotiations due to a delay over the formation of judicial commissions. The PTI and the government had been engaged in talks to bring down political temperatures. After two rounds of meetings, the third round was held seven days ago (Jan 16) in which the PTI formally presented its demands in writing. Despite weeks of negotiations, the dialogue process has hardly moved forward on major issues – the formation of judicial commissions and the release of PTI prisoners. On Monday, the government assured the PTI of a response to the opposition's

Continued on Page 06

No one will evade ISLAMABAD: PTI has decided to boycott mega graft of 190m pounds: Kh. Asif

PTI should explain how public money ended up in their accounts, asks minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Friday the 190 million pounds case was a major financial scam and no one would be able to evade accountability. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the minister said "people often change for wealth and riches", describing the 190 million pounds case as stealing.

Continued on Page 06

Rules out joining govt

Only parliament has authority to roll back 26th amendment: Bilawal

Attempts to undo constitutional amendment

sised on Friday that the 26th Constitutional Amendment can only be repealed by parliament, saying that if any institution attempts to annul it, such a move will not be accepted by anyone. Speaking to journalists in Islamabad, he urged the Supreme Court judges to facilitate each other's work rather than create obstacles. He reiterated that the authority to roll back the 26th Amendment lies solely with parliament. The 26th Constitutional Amendment— which changed the procedure ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation for the appointment of the chief justice, Agency (FIA) has initiated an inquiry fixed the post's tenure and formed consti- into the Toshakhana case against Prestutional benches - was widely criticised by ident Asif Ali Zardari, PML-N supremo the opposition and the legal fraternity, with Nawaz Sharif, and former prime minismany of them challenging the controversial ter Yousuf Raza Gilani. As per details, amendment in the apex court. Earlier, Sindh the joint investigation team (JIT) has Bar Council's vice chairman challenged requested the National Accountability

Continued on Page 06

Zardari, Nawaz

After obtaining the NAB records,

prisoners held in Israel. It will be the second such exchange since the ceasefire came into effect last Sunday. Three hostages and 90 Continued on Page 06 Joint Ministerial Commission between

Pakistan, Azerbaijan vow to cement bilateral ties

Agreed to implement the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) signed in July 2024, as well as explore joint ventures

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

to discuss the country's political situation. Former ISLAMABAD: Vugar Mustafayev, Min-National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser reached out to Maulana Fazlur Rehman. During the conversation, they exchanged views on the current political scenario and deliberated on their upcoming meeting.

ister of Defence Industry of Republic of Azerbaijan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on 24 January, 2025. During the meeting, both sides expressed their shared commitment to strengthen and diversify relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the current trajectory of their bilateral cooperation, in all areas of mutual interest, particularly in trade, energy, investment and defense sectors.Minister for Defence Industry of Azerbaijan thanked the Prime Minister for the warm hospitality extended by Pakistan to him and his delegation. Minister Vugar Mustafayev is visiting Pakistan to Co-Chair the 8th Session of

Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, The 8th session of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Joint Commission concluded successfully in Islamabad on Friday, reaffirming bilateral commitments across key sectors and paving the way for enhanced cooperation in areas including energy, trade, defense, agriculture and education. The session was co-chaired by Federal Minister for Defence Production of Pakistan, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Azerbaijan's Minister for Defence Industry, VugarValehoglu Mustafayev.On the occasion, both sides agreed to implement the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) signed in July 2024, as well as explore joint ventures and investments between businesses from both countries.

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Holiday Notice The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall closed Saturday on account of weekly off therefore will be there newspaper on Sunday. Editor



KP includes Life **Insurance Scheme in** Health Card Program

CM Ali Amin Gandapur stated that KP has become the first province in the country to introduce an insurance scheme of this kind. He emphasized that this initiative is a source of pride and happiness for the provincial government and its people

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government on Friday decided to incorporate the life insurance scheme into the Health Card Program. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed for the implementation of the life insurance scheme at a ceremony held at the Chief Minister's House. The event was attended by officials from the Health Card program and State Life Insurance Corporation, with Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur as the chief guest.

Addressing the ceremony, CM Ali Amin Gandapur stated that KP has become the first province in the coun-

try to introduce an insurance scheme of this kind. He emphasized that this initiative is a source of pride and happiness for the provincial government and its people. He said under the scheme, financial support will be provided to the families of deceased breadwinners who were beneficiaries of the Sehat Card Plus program. Families will receive compensation of Rs one million if the head of the household, aged up to 60 years, passes away. For those above 60 years, families will receive Rs 500,000. The Chief Minister highlighted that over 10.4 million families will benefit from this life insurance scheme, which will

Randhawa inspects ongoing

construction activities

and Jinnah Avenue Interchange projects, accompanied by Member Engineering. The visit commenced at the Serena

Interchange project, where the Chairman CDA inspected ongoing construction activities. The relevant officers briefed

Chairman CDA on the progress, highlighting that finishing work on both underpasses of the Srinagar Highway is in full

swing and will be completed within this month. Chairman CDA directed that the underpasses should be opened to traffic

by the end of the month. It was further briefed that beautification work around the Serena Interchange underpasses

is progressing rapidly. He instructed that aesthetically pleasing lights be installed permanently to enhance the project's

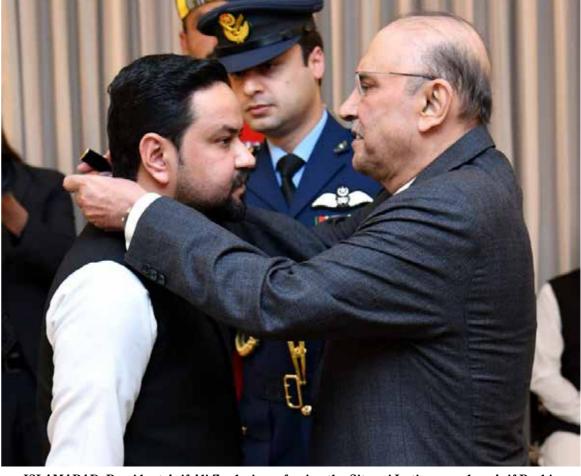
visual appeal. Additionally, Chairman CDA emphasized the importance of expediting plantation and horticulture activities

around the project area. Later, Chairman CDA, along with Member Engineering, also visited the F-8 Jinnah Avenue

Interchange project. During the briefing, officers briefed that the girder launching for the flyover has been completed.

cost Rs 4.5 billion annually, entirely funded by the provincial government. e added that this initiative, following the Sehat Card Plus, is the KP government's second major program for social security. With nearly 49% of the province's population living below the poverty line, the government is determined to ensure their social protection. he CM concluded that the life insurance scheme will provide much-needed relief to families who lose their primary earners.

Furthermore, under the Health Card program, 100% of the province's population is already receiving free and quality healthcare services.-DNA



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the Sitara-i-Imtiaz award on Asif Bashir.

Punjab to provide Ramazan package to millions of families

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided in-principle to provide Nighaban Ramazan package to millions of families in the province. While chairing a special meeting on the subject on Friday, she asked citizens to complete registration for Nighaban Ramazan package by February 15, and directed the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to ensure transparency. Chief Minister said, "Nighaban Ramazan package is a right of the poor, and a duty of the government." She added, "People should get their right with re-

spect and dignity.' Maryam reviewed various suggestions and recommendations regarding the package in the meeting. She was briefed by the relevant authorities about Registration in PSER Punjab Socio-Economic Registry that is a pre-requisite to register for the package and people can apply from home through the online portal pser.punjab. gov.pk." The CM was also apprised that registration can be done in the Union Councils and Municipality offices. A dedicated helpline 080002345 has also been established for the purpose.

President confers Sitara-i-Imtiaz award on Asif Bashir

During the Hajj operation,

President ISLAMABAD: Asif Ali Zardari on Friday conferred the Sitara-i-Imtiaz award on Asif Bashir in recognition of his outstanding services in the field of public services. The award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and attended by parliamentarians. As per the citation read out at the ceremony, Asif Bashir, who is currently posted as Deputy Commissioner in Peshawar, was selected by the federal ministry of religious affairs as a Moavin-i- Hajj (Hajj Assistant) for the previous year's Hajj operation.

the temperature soared to 51.8 degree due to which several pilgrims had to face extreme difficulties. During such situation, the Hajj Moavineen perform extraordinary and appreciable services which often remain unacknowledged.

The Moavineen basically are responsible for providing facilities to the Pakistani Hujjaj (pilgrims), however they also provide possible facilities to the pilgrims belonging to other countries as well. Asif Bashir during Hajj days was serving as a Moavin in Mina where tents of the pil-

grims belonging to different countries including India were present. On 9th Zil Hajj, several Pakistani, Indian and British elderly Hujjaj got fainted due to extreme hot weather. Tragically, 1300 people also lost their lives on that day. In the midst of the crisis, Asif Bashir and his five-member team rushed to the scene, providing first aid to the affected pilgrims, many of whom were Indian citizens. Despite the dire circumstances, Asif Bashir physically carried 26 pilgrims, including 17 Indians, on his shoulders to the hos-

TAS organized alumni convention at Cadet College Sanghar

SANGHAR: The first-ever CCS Alumni Convention was successfully held at Cadet College Sanghar (CCS) from January 18 to 19'2025 collaboratively organized "The Association of Sanghrites" (TAS) and Cadet College Sanghar management the event aimed to reunite Sanghrites from across the globe on a shared platform, fostering unity and strengthening bonds with their alma mater. The convention witnessed an overwhelming response, with over 400 ex-cadets from 26 graduating batches (1994-2019) participating. Many alumni traveled from abroad, including the United States, the Middle East, and China, to be part of this momentous occasion. Commodore Zeeshan Ali, SI(M),

Commandant/Principal of

CCS, warmly welcomed the esteemed alumni and ex-faculty members, setting the tone for the two-day event filled with nostalgia, camaraderie, and memorable activities. The first day of the convention featured a variety of engaging activities, including sports events, a sumptuous dinner, and a lively bonfire and musical night program. Alumni relived their cherished memories while connecting with fellow Sanghrites in a joyous atmosphere. Day two commenced with morning PT followed by breakfast, after which the Alumni conference took place at the prestigious Iqbal Auditorium. The conference was attended by ex-cadets, former faculty members. and the current teaching and administrative staff.

During the session, TAS President Mr.Shahjahan Ahmed Sheikh gave a welcome address and thanked college administration, current faculty, former faculty and ex-cadets for participating with their great batch strengths and CEO TAS Major Qayyum Mahar briefed the attendees on the association's bylaws and structure. Commandant/Principal Commodore Zeeshan Ali SI (M) addressed the alumni, highlighting the significance of the convention and the need for a well-structured alumni association. He also shared insights into the remarkable progress made by Cadet College Sanghar in recent years, underscoring the institution's commitment to excellence.-APP

Similarly, five deck slabs of the bridge have been constructed, with the remaining three slabs nearing completion.-DNA **FJWU-BIC** startups shine at

Centaurus Mali RAWALPINDI:The Fatima Jinnah Women University **Business Incubation Center** (FJWU-BIC) successfully organized a start-ups product display at Centaurus Mall, Islamabad, providing a platform for young women entrepreneurs to showcase their innovative products, connect with industry professionals, and explore business expansion opportunities. The event attracted a large audience, including business leaders, investors, academia, and the general public, creating an engaging and dynamic environment for the participating startups. The exhibition was graced by Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza (Pride of Performance, T.I.), who applauded the creativity, dedication, and entrepreneurial mindset of the participants. She highlighted the significant role of women entrepreneurs in driving economic development and fostering a culture of innovation. In her address, she encouraged young women to embrace entrepreneurship as a path to self-reliance and leadership, emphasizing the importance of mentorship, strategic planning, and perseverance in business success. The start-up product display featured a diverse range of businesses, reflecting the versatility and ingenuity of young female entrepreneurs. Handmade crafts and artistic creations. showcasing traditional and modern designs were displayed with eco-friendly products, promoting sustainability, tech-based solutions, including innovative mobile applications, smart gadgets, digital tools, fashion.-APP

Seminar calls for collective commitment on solid waste management

SWAT:A seminar on Sol-Waste Management (SWM), has called for a collective commitment to implement innovative practices in SWM and explore new future strategies. The seminar was organized under the Oxford Policy Management's Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme, which brought together stakeholders to discuss innovative practices and explore future event attend ed by Muzzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, and other notable speakers, highlighted the success of pilot projects in Babuzai and Bahrain Tehsils. Muzzammil Aslam, in his address as Chief Guest, praised the SWM pilot projects as exemplary models for other districts. He emphasized the importance of integrating

Carbon Credits and Carbon scalability of the pilot pro-Markets into development underscoring initiatives. their role in promoting sustainability. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to scaling these models across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while incorporating climate resilience into governance frameworks and exploring recycling-based industries to enhance Own Source Revenue (OSR). Commissioner Malakand Di rision Muham mad Abid Khan, lauded the technical support provided by the SNG Programme and commended TMA Bahrain for its efforts. He expressed enthusiasm for expanding the initiative to other parts of the Malakand Division, starting with Lower Dir and Malakand districts. Dr Vaqar Ahmad, Senior Governance Advisor for the SNG Programme, highlighted the

iects and stressed the importance of cost recovery mechanisms. He also mentioned the provincial government's plans to allocate funds for similar SWM initiatives in Haripur and Mansehra districts. Jo Moir, Development Director at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), applauded the SNG Programme's iterative approach, which has cost recovery, and citizen satisfaction. She emphasized the importance of institutionalizing these practices to ensure their long-term sustainability. Dr Raheal A. Siddiqui, Provincial Team Lead for the SNG Programme, highlighted the role of evidence-based policymaking and strategic collaboration in driving sustainable reforms.—APP

Rs10m aid distribution ceremony for Kurram victims held

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday chaired a ceremony held at the Governor House on Friday to provide aid to the victims of Kurram district. The event was attended by Syed Kmail Haider Shah, Chairman of the District Council Sukkur and President of the Local Council Association, along with his delegation from Sindh province. On the instructions of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Syed Kumail Haider Shah presented a check worth 10 million rupees to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, for the victims of Kurram district. Pakistani cuisine recipes Kumail Shah also announced that the Local Council Association would provide additional aid worth Rs20 million for the victims and mentioned that another 10 million rupees would soon be handed over to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Red Crescent Society, which would further distribute the assistance in Kurram. Kumail Shah emphasized that the aid was a moral duty, in line with the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and assured that the assistance would be channeled through the Red Crescent Society to directly benefit the affected people of Kurram. The ceremony was also attended by key figures including Malak Habib Orakzai, Chairman of the Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Vice Chairman Farzand Wazir, Chairman of the Red Crescent Society for merged districts Imran Wazir Advocate, and other relevant officials. During the event, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi thanked Syed Nasir Hussain Shah the founder of the Association, Syed Kumail Haider Shah, and the Local Council Association for their generous contribution, describing the humanitarian aid as a prime example of brotherhood and solidarity. He also expressed gratitude to Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his special instructions to provide assistance to the victims. Governor Kundi further acknowledged the support from the provincial governments of Balochistan, Sindh, and Punjab, who stood with the people of Kurram during difficult times. He said that peace was being restored in Kurram and stressed the provincial government's commitment to ensuring complete peace and order in the region. The Governor shared that efforts had been made to organize a Jirga in Kohat and an All Parties Conference at the Governor House to restore peace across the province. He emphasized that all political parties, including the provincial government, should work together for the restoration of peace in Kurram and other parts of the province. Looking ahead, Governor Kundi announced that a convention for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's district councils and local representatives would be held at the Governor House in Peshawar in the second week of February.—DNA

Experts discuss social media and its psychological impacts on youth mental health

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a roundtable discussion titled "Digital Minds: Navigating Social Media and Mental Health" on 23 January 2025. The roundtable brought together prominent social media and psychology experts to deliberate on the complex relationship between social media usage and mental health, with a particular focus on its effects on younger generations. Setting the tone for the session, Ms Nidaa Shahid, Associate Director CASS Lahore, discussed how social media has emerged as a game-changer in the 21st century, offering immense

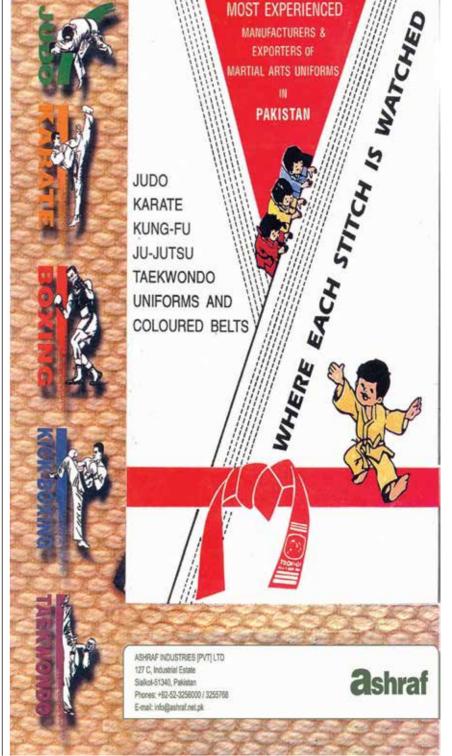
connectivity, while simultaneously posing serious mental health challenges. The first discussant, Mr Fahd Husain, President Aik News Network, probed the complexities of social media stating that it has

blurred the lines between truth and false. He further said that social media rewards emotional content over logical arguments. Additionally, the algorithms ensure that people are only exposed to the content

they agree with, thus reinforcing biases and creating echo chambers. Ms Fatima Aslam, a clinical psychologist, provided insights into the psychological impact of social media on adolescents. She said that since



the advent of social media, the psychological issues being presented in youth have changed, with tech addiction becoming a leading cause of psychological stress. Social media platforms are designed to increase this addictiveness in order to create more revenues. Prof Dr Rafia Rafique, Director Institute of Applied Psychology Punjab University highlighted the four most common stressors of social media which includes comparison with people's online personas, usage of likes and comments as social currency, fear of missing out and online harassment. The vouth of today have become addicted to the quick dopamine rush despite facing these challenges.



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA Revolution Day

lan 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- 28261210334-5421812



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

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Hospitals

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



Donartmonto

Departificits		
CDA	9221334-43	
CDA	9208301-04	
Met Office	9250360-6	
RDA	5555864	
TMA	5770886	
Cantonment E	Soard 9270151-3	

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Hutchison expresses investment \$1b in Pak's port infrastructure

The proposed investment focuses on upgrading Karachi International Container Terminal (KICT) and South Asia Pakistan Terminals Limited (SAPT) with advanced automation technologies, enhancing operational efficiency, and adopting eco-friendly solutions. The plan includes the introduction of electrified and remote-control equipment to reduce carbon emissions, reflecting the government's commitment to sustainable development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from Hutchison Ports, led by Andy Tsoi, Managing Director for the Middle East & Africa Division, met with Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh and secretary Syed Zafar Ali Shah to share a proposed US\$1 billion investment plan.

Accompanying Andy Tsoi were Capt Rashid Jamil, Country Advisor for Hutchison Ports Pakistan, and Leonard Fung, Business Director for the Middle East & Africa Division at Hutchison Ports. Pakistani cuisine recipes

This groundbreaking proposal, which includes an upfront US\$200 million Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), aims to modernize Pakistan's port infrastructure and elevate its role in global trade, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The proposed investment focuses on upgrading Karachi International Container Terminal (KICT) and South Asia Pakistan Terminals Limited (SAPT) with advanced automation technologies, enhancing operational efficiency, and adopting eco-friendly solutions. The plan includes the introduction of electrified and remote-control equipment to reduce carbon emissions, reflecting the government's commitment to sustainable development.

Additionally, Hutchison Ports' pro-



of a state-of-the-art warehousing depot to address the growing demands of Pakistan's trade sector. Significant funding is also proposed for improving road infrastructure around the south wharf to ensure smooth container traffic flow and boost supply chain efficiency. The minister welcomed the proposal, stating: "This partnership represents a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey to becoming a global trade leader. Hutchison Ports' confidence in our economic potential highlights the transformative opportunities in our maritime sector.

Andy Tsoi, Managing Director of Hutchison Ports, expressed his views: "We are proud to partner with the Government of Pakistan to modernize and innovate

its maritime infrastructure. This proposed investment reflects our long-term commitment to enhancing trade and logistics in the region."Pakistani cuisine recipes Other delegates also shared their optimism about the project's potential to significantly boost Pakistan's trade and logistics capabilities, further strengthening

Hutchison Ports'

partnership with the country. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs remains focused on fostering partnerships that drive economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen Pakistan's global trade networks. This landmark proposed investment underscores Pakistan's potential to become a key player in the global maritime in-

PEC chairman. Balochistan chief secretary pledge reforms for engineers and projects

ISLAMABAD: :Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engineer Waseem Nazir met with Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir during his visit to Quetta to deliberate on the pressing challenges faced by the engineering sector in the province.

The meeting emphasized fostering collaboration to address key issues impacting engineering professionals and projects in Balochistan.

Waseem Nazir highlighted the urgent need to fill vacant positions in government and development departments with young, qualified engineers.

He urged the Chief Secretary to ensure that these vacancies are identified and filled to provide career opportunities for fresh engineering graduates. "Recruiting young engineers into government projects will not only offer employment but also enhance the efficiency and sustainability of national development initiatives," he said. A significant concern raised during the meeting, was the absence of technical allowances for engineers, as well as the appointment of non-engineers to critical engineering roles, such as Project Directors. Stressing the importance of merit-based processes, the PEC Chairman stat-"Entrusting projects to qualified professionals ensures the success and quality of our engineering ventures.-APP

Ensuring fundamental right for women collective responsibility: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has allowed female staff members of the National Assembly Secretariat to leave for home before sunset during sessions of the National Assembly. Ayaz Sadiq said that protecting women's rights is collective responsibility. He also stressed on the need to take all necessary steps to provide balance between professional and domestic responsibilities for women. Dr. Shahida Rahman, Secretary General of the Women Parliamentary Caucus, extends appreciation to the Speaker's initiative, stating that the Parliament is committed to protect women's rights. She added that this decision will facilitate women in balancing work and family life. MNA Nikhat Shakeel, Convener of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights, said that this step will have a positive impact on child upbringing and is an important step towards improving women's lives. Shaista Pervez Malik, Country Ambassador/MNA for Women Political Leaders, said that this initiative is also worth emulating for other institutions, and its implementation is necessary in government and private institutions for women. Female members of the National Assembly and employee appreciated the Speaker's initiative and urged all government and private institutions to follow such initiatives. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has underscored the importance of education as the cornerstone of societal development. He has said that no nation can achieve progress and development without promoting education. Speaking on the occasion of International Day of Education, observed globally on January 24 under the United Nations, the Speaker highlighted that quality education is the key to securing a prosperous future for Pakistan "Improving literacy and providing quality education will pave the way for national development and economic growth," the Speaker said. He added that education goes beyond obtaining degrees and plays a pivotal role in imparting values and societal traditions. The Speaker reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to enacting effective legislation aimed at enhancing the education system and improving literacy rates.-DNA

Universities unite at **NUST** to celebrate Int'l Day of Education

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's public and private sector universities here on Friday organized and event at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) to mark the International Day of Education 2025. The event also marked the culmination of NUST's ConnectEd training, titled "Online Education Excellence Program (Batch 3)," which drew participants nationwide. More than a celebration, the gathering was a testament to the unifying power of education in addressing contemporary challenges. Among the notable institutions represented were the recently upgraded Institute of Southern Punjab to the status of university, the National Skills University Islamabad, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Islamabad, and NUST's own College of Aeronautical Engineering and College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. This year's International Day of Education theme, "Artificial Intelligence and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation," resonated deeply with the attendees learning from the NUST ConnecEd training. Participants of the Online Education Excellence Program pledged to uphold the principles

Climate Ministry, ICESCO to host girls' green education conference soon



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Climate Change and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) have announced their collaboration to hold a conference focusing on climate education with an emphasis on green skills for girls in Pakistan. The decision was made during a meeting between the Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, and Dr. Haddy Jatou Sey, the head of ICESCO, who met her on Friday to discuss key actions for the event. During the meeting, Romina Khurshid Alam underscored the significance of empowering girls through education that integrates green skills, highlighting that Islam advocates for the right of women to access education and inher-

itance. She expressed that

the upcoming conference will be held under the theme "National Climate Educational Framework for Girls in the Islamic World," and will bring together federal and provincial government representatives, as well as stakeholders, to participate in the event. "The primary aim of climate education is to prepare citizens for the future and actively involve them in building a climate-resilient nation with a special focus on strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of women, especially young girls,' Romina said. The Prime Minister's aide revealed that she is working on the Africa House initiative in collaboration with Rwanda, which will serve as a gateway for Pakistan to connect with African countries. This partnership will focus on shared efforts to tackle climate change, resilience, and adaptation, she added. Romina also highlight-

ed the successful implementa-

tion of the She Power project, which has been funded by China and benefitted over 20.000 girls in Balochistan during its first phase. The second phase of the project is set to extend its support to 50,000 girls, with the distribution of hygiene kits among them. The meeting emphasized the vital role of education, science, and culture in addressing climate change. Romina reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling its climate change obligations and emphasized the country's ongoing efforts to adapt to the changing climate, including collaboration with global organizations such as ICESCO. Dr. Haddy Jatou Sey reiterated ICESCO's dedication to supporting climate education, noting the importance of cooperation between international organizations, governments, local communities to foster a global response to climate change.



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Popcorn & Farm, 21 Orchard Scheme. Cotton Candy

Petting Zoo

Jumping

Castle



Briefs

ANF recovers 71 kg drugs, arrests 9 accused

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 5 operations across the country managed to recover over 71 kg drugs worth over Rs 11.4 million and arrested 9 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an operation, 71 kg hashish was recovered from a car intercepted near a restaurant in Pishin, Balochistan and 2

suspects were arrested. In 2nd operation, 22.8 kg hashish and 8.4 kg opium hidden in a car near a park in Peshawar were recovered and 4 suspects were rounded up. 38.4 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a truck intercepted near M-1 Motorway, Islamabad and 2 suspects were arrested. In 4th operation, 3.4 kg hashish was recovered from a village in Kamari, Karachi. 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a suspect netted in F-10 Center. Islamabad. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.-APP

Govt resolved to equip youth with skills

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the incumbent government was resolved to equip the country's youth with modern skills to cope with the global market's demand. The prime minister, in a meeting with Vice Chancellor of University of London Wendy Thomson, who called on him here, said that Pakistan's youth were capable of proving their mettle in all fields of life and bringing laurels to the country. He told the visiting dignitary that the Pakistani nationals were serving the international market having graduated from the University of London and other globally renowned The prime institutions. minister said that the government had introduced various programs including merit-based foreign scholarships and employment, and was also formulating new strategies in this regard.-APP

Cutlery exports increase 9.43% to \$30.901

ISLAMABAD: The exports of cutlery witnessed an increase of 9.43 percent during the first half of fiscal year 2024-25, as against the exports of the correspond ing period of last year. The cutlery exports from the country were recorded at US \$30.901 million during July-December (2024-25) against the exports of US \$28.239 million during Ju-(2023-24),ly-December according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the cutlery exports witnessed a nominal decline of 1.82 percent during the month of December 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of cutlery from the country during December 2024 were recorded at US \$4.756 million against the exports of US \$4.844 million in December 2023.-APP

tential of space technology for Pakistan's FAISAL SHEIKH development. The minister stressed the need for increased collaborative re-ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, search with international space agencies and the establishment of a platform for Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday expressed university students and young scientists strong conviction of the government to to explore space and showcase their enhance the country's satellite technolcapabilities. Ahsan Iqbal also proposed ogy, aligning it with international standlaunching the Annual Space Innovation Challenge program, in collaboration with ards. Addressing the national space symposium "Sitaroun Se Agay Jahan Aur Bhi the Ministry of Planning, the URAAN Hain" (Beyond the Stars, There are More PAKISTAN initiative, and SUPARCO, for Worlds), he announced the government's university students across the country. plan to launch 15 space shuttles over the This initiative would allow them to shownext five years as part of its broader efcase their projects and research in space forts to boost Pakistan's capabilities in technology. He advocated for developing space research. The event, held in collaba pool of at least 50,000 youth experts oration with SUPARCO, Pakistan's Naover the next five years to capture both local and international markets in space, tional Space Agency, and the Institute of Space Technology (IST), Islamabad, was satellite, science and technology. "To-

tention to introduce space and satellite education at the school level to inspire students' interest in astronomy and broaden their horizons. He called for a revival of the past glory of Muslim scientists whose groundbreaking research on the nature of light, models of planetary motion and technology in astronomy predated Western scientific advancements. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the importance of leveraging space sciences for socio-economic transformation and commended SUPARCO's contributions, reiterating the government's commitment to integrating space technologies into national strategies to achieve the "Digital Pakistan" goals. The minister emphasized the importance of knowledge, science and technology in ensuring sustainable development across the country, underscoring that research and innovation are critical to driving national progress.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Isphanyar Bandhara, Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani and other MPs posing for a picture during the joint sitting of the parliament on Friday. -DNA

PM reaffirms resolve for education system to balance AI

President Asif Ali Zardari calls for the responsible use of artificial intelligence to revolutionize the education system, said that in the AI world, human will, creativity, critical thinking and decision-making should be prioritized

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As the world observes International Day of Education on Friday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed the government's resolve to advance an education system that embraced the promise of artificial intelligence while safeguarding the essence of human creativity, compassion, and purpose.

The prime minister, in his message to the nation on Education Day annually observed on January 24, acknowledged the educators, advocates, and partners working tirelessly to illuminate lives with the light of knowledge.

"On this International Day of Education, we reflect on the profound role education plays in empowering individuals and communities to navigate the

rapid advancements of technology...Together, let us continue to champion this noble cause and ensure that education remains a beacon of hope for generations to come," he re-

marked. He said that this year's theme, "AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation," was a reminder of the need to ensure that progress in artificial intelligence complements our shared humanity. The prime minister said that as AI-driven systems are increasingly integrated into our lives, the boundaries between human intervention and machine-driven actions continue to blur. This presents both opportunities and challenges, raising the critical question of how we can uphold and enhance human agency amidst the growing tide of automation, he added. "In Pakistan, we recognize the

transformative power of education in preparing our youth to thrive in the evolving technological landscape. By fostering critical thinking, innovation, and ethical responsibility, we aim to equip our citizens with the tools not only to adapt to technological changes but to shape them in ways that uphold our values, protect our freedoms, and advance our society," the prime minister remarked. He highlighted that the government had taken significant steps to prepare the country's educational institutions to embrace technological advancements. These initiatives include the establishment of High-Impact IT Labs in ICT degree colleges, Digital Hubs in rural ICT schools, the Google Center of Excellence, SMART Classrooms, and the E-Taleem Portal for blended learning. Additionally, he said the government had also introduced E-Rozgar Centers, Software Technology Parks, Robotics and Mind Games programs, and STEAM Labs to foster innovation. It is imperative that our schools are equipped with the latest technologies to equip our children with the requisite skills, he added. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday calling for the responsible use of artificial intelligence to revolutionize the education system, said that in the AI world, human will, creativity, critical thinking and decision-making should be prioritized. The president, in his message on the International Day of Education being observed on the day, said that AI-based tools could help tailor the learning process to individual needs. Highlighting this year's theme, "AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation," he called for utilizing

education to achieve a prosperous, inclusive and progressive

Pakistan. The president said that AIbased tools could help bring data-driven reforms in the education system and called for prioritizing investment in educational infrastructure and addressing the persistent challenges in the education system. "Let's pledge to invest in our children and equip them with the necessary skills," the president said and urged educators, policymakers and parents to embrace AI and adopt innovative ways of teaching. He said that AI could help solve problems besides boosting creativity, basic skills of mathematics, science, language, history and critical thinking. It can also equip students with essential skills like communication, teamwork and digital literacy, he added.

Joint sitting of Parliament passes four bills, defers

ISLAMABAD: The Joint Sitting of the Parliament here on Friday passed four bills including [The Trade Organizations (Amendment) Bill, 2021] with majority votes. The other bills included, the Bill further to amend the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 [The Imports and Exports (Control) (Amendment) Bill, 2023], the Bill to provide for the establishment of the National Institute of Technology [The National Institute of Technology Bill, 2024] and the Bill to provide for the establishment of National Excellence Institute [The National Excellence Institute Bill, 20241. The bills in the house were tabled by Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, MNA Zehra Wadood Fatmi and Senator Manzoor Ahmed. The Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that unfortunately no body opposed from the opposition of these bills. —APP

Fate of USC to be decided in next meeting: Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday said that the final decision regarding closure or restructuring of Utility Store Corporation (USC) will be taken in the next meeting. "Emphasized that all decisions regarding the corporation will be made transparently, prioritizing the public's interest," the minister said while chairing a high level meeting regarding USC, said a news release. Federal Minister for Information Technology, Ms. Shiza Fatima. also attended the meeting and presented significant recommendations. meeting discussed the implementation of the Prime Minister's directives concerning Utility Stores and deliberated on the future course of action. Measures to expedite the closure process of Utility Stores were also reviewed. To enhance the productivity of USC employees and outlets, a special committee has been formed. It was highlighted during the meeting that several private companies have expressed interest in the restructuring of the USC.

Pakistan's economic model is highly flawed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Friday said that Pakistan's economic model is highly flawed. He said our flawed economic model cannot achieve any goal except elitism and increasing poverty in the country. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that due to this economic model, the gap between the rich and the poor is continuously widening. Due to increasing poverty, it is becoming difficult for people to access health, education, and food, and social problems are growing. Sha-

hid Rashid Butt said that as long as the life of people with low incomes continues to be made complex, it is impossible to increase investment and productivity. and the economy will have to run on loans. He said that most of the country's policies in its history have been made for the benefit of the influential classes, which has tormented the people. These policies have hindered public development instead of helping people out of poverty. Pakistan has borrowed from the IMF twenty-four times, and many from other institutions, but the economy has deteriorated instead of improving. The social and economic deterioration shows that international institutions are

not interested in improving the Pakistani economy or implementing essential conditions. If the IMF and the World Bank wanted, Pakistan's economy would be in a much better condition at the moment, but he observed they aim to achieve political interests, for which Pakistan must be burdened with debt. The business leader noted that Pakistan's economy has faced persistent challenges, hindering its growth despite having significant potential. One of the primary reasons is political instability. Frequent changes in government and inconsistent policies disrupt long-term economic planning and discourage local and for-

Ahsan vows to elevate Pakistan's satellite technology

day, space technology is being utilized themed "Harnessing Space Sciences and Technology for Socio-Economic Transforcommercially across various sectors, mation in Pakistan." It brought together and for Pakistan to achieve economic leading experts, policymakers, and acagrowth, we must embrace technological demics to explore the transformative poinnovation," he remarked. The minister

also mentioned the government's in-



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Trump's way of MAGA

S President Donald Trump was elected for his "Make America Great Again" (Maga) project, and he seems determined to deliver it. Maga is expected to transform America, for better or worse, in fundamental ways. But what implications does it have for the rest of the world? Trump's territorial ambitions, a key part of the Maga agenda, offer a taste of what his grand scheme has in store for the world. In what CNN called "imperialistic land grabs", Trump has floated ideas about annexing Canada as America's 51st state, buying Greenland and "taking back" the Panama Canal. America's fifth president James Monroe must be chuckling in his grave. He has surely found in Trump a fanatical believer in and practitioner of his eponymous doctrine. In truth, Trump's territorial claims are nothing short of expansionism at work. In doing so, Trump has ditched diplomatic niceties and norms. More importantly, his claims are a blatant violation of the fundamental principles governing international relations that are enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Clearly, the suggestion that Trump has an isolationist tendency is wide off the mark. America under Trump is not likely, as some analysts predict, to withdraw from the world. Given that Trump vowed at his inauguration address to "build the strongest military the world has ever seen", how likely is it that the United States would shrink its military spending, which is by far the world's largest and bigger than the total of the next nine countries combined? Donald Trump goes light on China on Day 1, except where the Panama Canal is concerned Trump's predecessors tried to justify US military operations overseas on various "noble" grounds. George W. Bush invaded and occupied Afghanistan to fight terrorism, and his war against Iraq was intended, as it were, to overthrow tyranny. Meanwhile, Joe Biden repeatedly sent US warships to the South China Sea purportedly to defend the "freedom of navigation". For his part, Trump bases his territorial claims on US national interests, insisting that he wants Canada, the Panama Canal and Greenland for a stronger America. Apparently, America's desire, and that alone, justifies taking the territories of other countries and, for that matter, anything the Maga scheme requires. Trump, for instance, has threatened China with tariffs of up to 100 per cent if it does not approve of the sale of TikTok to the US. For Maga to materialise, Trump sees it as appropriate even for America to brandish the world's most powerful military, if necessary. Indeed, he did not rule out using force to gain control of Greenland and the Panama Canal. Welcome to the Maga era, where Trump throws his weight around. He is expected to use US hegemonic power to force his will on the rest of the world and take things back to when Washington ruled. Biden warns of 'dangerous oligarchy' threatening US democracy in farewell address So for the rest of the world, Maga means a return to the law of the jungle. It also means a darker and poorer world, one divided and increasingly in disarray, with multilateral institutions in crisis. An antithesis to multilateralism and globalisation, Magafavours unilateralism and trade protectionism. It calls for pursuing an "America first trade policy", pulling the US out from UN organisations and international agreements and cutting back on US global public goods - all with adverse economic and social ramifications for the world.

Islamahad POST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 240 Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960



China's soft power moment

RECENT wave of TikTok users flocking to the RedNote app could finally be China's grand moment to showcase its soft power credentials, even as Beijing officials have been caught off guard by the development. RedNote's unexpected global success provides an invaluable lesson to Chinese policymakers – that soft power can emerge spontaneously rather than projected through assiduously planned official campaigns. Earlier this month, ahead of the impending US ban on TikTok, millions of American users of the short-form video app decamped to RedNote, the rival Chinese social media platform also known as Xiaohongshu. In just one day, the number of US iPhone users with RedNote accounts surged from about 400,000 to 1.8 million, according to analytics firm Similarweb, and this number has since risen further. Calling themselves "TikTok refugees", these users downloaded the Chinese app in the same week that TikTok was expected to go offline, making RedNote the No.1 free-to-use app in the US Apple app store. These users have gained a reprieve after US President Donald Trump issued an order on Monday to delay the app's ban. The boon from RedNote comes after China has been seeking for years to boost its soft power, a term popularised by American political scientist Joseph Nye and defined by him as a country's ability to influence others without the use of coercive pressure. During the 17th Communist Party Congress in 2007, former Chinese leader Hu Jintao committed China to using soft power as an extension of foreign policy. Current leader Xi Jinping maintained that commitment, asserting in 2014 that Beijing should "give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's message". Over the years, Beijing has launched various initiatives to expand its clout, including opening Confucius Institutes to propagate Chinese culture and state media branches in overseas cities. Beijing officials have also organised events worldwide, such as celebrations to mark the Chinese Cultural Year, paid for advertisements on New York's Times Square and sent pandas to overseas zoos. But the surge in millions of new RedNote users from the US and elsewhere around the world? That is almost certainly not in Beijing's soft power notebook. Censors working in one of the world's most restrictive internet environments found themselves on unfamiliar terrain when they had to moderate content written in languages other than Chinese. Like all other major Chinese social media platforms, RedNote has to be subjected to surveillance by Beijing - a Reuters report said the app had been scrambling to enhance its capacity to screen user-generated content as demanded by cyberspace authorities. Some influencers had to moderate their content on RedNote to get past censorship, such as user Szarah Jaq, who received a violation notice over a cooking video. She shortened her video and posted it again successfully with her knives removed, - "am I not allowed to show knives", she asked, according to a screenshot shared by the US-based independent China Media Project. The sudden jump in RedNote's international popularity has facilitated greater interaction among users across cultures and countries.

Trump's strategy to contain China (Part-IV)

Qamar Bashir



Additionally, the committee proposed a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy to counter China's influence. This included strengthening military alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, as well as increasing military cooperation through the AUKUS agreement with Australia and the United Kingdom. Senators stressed that our engagements should be aimed at deterring Chinese actions in the South China Sea, where China has allegedly harassed Philippine...

HE recent U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing underscored that China is the most significant long-term threat to U.S. national security. The discussion, led by Senator Marco Rubio, who has been nominated for Secretary of State, emphasized concerns about China's economic, military, and technological ambitions, positioning it as the foremost geopolitical adversary of the United States. Lawmakers pointed to China's alleged aggressive global strategies, including intellectual property matters, cyber warfare, military and economic expansion, as evidence of its intent to challenge U.S. dominance. The committee identified four key adversaries-China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran-with China at the forefront and accused China of involvement in the fentanyl trade, supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, aiding Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East, and reinforcing North Korea's aggressive stance in the Asia-Pacific region. A major concern raised was China's increasing control over global supply chains, including critical industries such as rare earth minerals, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. Senators emphasized that China's technological advancements pose a significant risk to U.S. economic and national security interests. They discussed strategies to counter China's dominance by restricting Chinese access to advanced U.S. technologies, reinforcing domestic manufacturing capabilities, and securing key partnerships with allied nations.

Additionally, the committee proposed a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy to counter China's influence. This included strengthening military alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, as well as increasing military cooperation through the AUKUS agreement with Australia and the United Kingdom. The senators stressed that our engagements should be aimed at deterring Chinese actions in the South China Sea, where China has allegedly harassed Philippine vessels, conducted large-scale military exercises aimed at Taiwan, and simulated a naval blockade of Japan stressing on expanding intelligence-sharing mechanisms and facilitating technology transfers among allies to maintain regional stability.

The hearing also focused on China's alleged cyber warfare activities, including recent cyberattacks on U.S. government institutions such as the Treasury Department. Senators detailed China's alleged involvement in sabotaging undersea communication cables in Asia and Europe, highlighting the broader threat posed by Chinese cyber-espionage. The committee emphasized the need to strengthen U.S. cybersecurity infrastructure and take proactive measures to neutralize cyber threats before they escalate.

Regarding Taiwan, the committee reaffirmed its support for the "Porcupine Strategy," aimed at making the cost of invading Taiwan prohibitively high for China. This strategy includes increasing arms sales to Taiwan, fortifying its missile defense systems, and expanding diplomatic backing to counter China's efforts to isolate Taiwan on the global stage. Senator Rubio and his colleagues emphasized that defending Taiwan is not just about regional security but also about maintaining the credibility of U.S. commitments to its allies. A significant portion of the hearing was dedicated to human rights concerns, particularly China's alleged repression of ethnic minorities such as the Uyghurs. Senator Rubio committed to lobbying against the deportation of Uyghur refugees from Thailand back to China, where they reportedly face persecution. The committee also condemned China's use of forced labor and transnational repression, urging stronger global action to address these human rights abuses. In terms of global security, the committee emphasized that the world is currently facing its most dangerous geopolitical climate since World War II and argued that the U.S. must shift from a defensive to an offensive posture to secure its interests.

However, for anyone watching the hearing live, it was evident that the committee's accusations were largely theoretical, based on perceived and pre-established views. Despite making several allegations, the committee failed to present any irrefutable evidence to substantiate its claims that China was involved in the illegal activities outlined during the hearing. The committee overlooked China's perspective that, while pursuing its legitimate rights and responsibilities toward international peace and prosperity, it adheres strictly to peaceful and lawful means to achieve its objectives without jeopardizing any partner or regional and global stability. Unlike other nations, China asserts that it remains uninvolved in regional and international conflicts, including the war in the Middle East, the Israel-Palestine crisis, and the Russia-Ukraine war. Moreover, China emphasizes that it does not threaten other nations with annexation, such as incorporating Canada as the 51st U.S. state, reclaiming control over the Panama Canal, or occupying Greenland adding that the U.S. forms alliances at both bilateral and multilateral levels specifically to undermine China's legitimate interests. Whereas, China has extended an open invitation to the U.S. and other nations to collaborate in its global efforts to enhance the quality of life for people worldwide. The most questionable assertion of all was on Taiwan given that Taiwan is not a U.S. territory, yet the U.S. assumes the inherent right to interfere in what is essentially a bilateral territorial dispute between Taiwan and China-one that has no di-

quently warns, criticizes, and censures other countries for interfering in bilateral matters of other countries, it continues to reserve the right to intervene in conflicts worldwide as though it were an inherent prerogative. The committee seemed to overlook the U.S.'s own controversial human rights record, including the inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, targeted and extrajudicial killings of declared enemies around the globe without judicial review, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians through military interventions in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Syria, and Libya. Furthermore, the U.S. has been accused of supporting Israel's actions in Gaza, which many have condemned as genocidal. The US Senators' perspective once again highlights the double standards of the U.S. As of today, the U.S. is the world's largest exporter of arms and ammunition, which are among the primary drivers of wars, conflicts, and unrest worldwide. Additionally, the U.S. maintains 257 military bases across the globe, whereas China has none. Despite this, the U.S. assumes the authority to unilaterally determine the legitimacy of other nations' economic and geopolitical pursuits while exempting itself from such scrutiny. Despite the urgency with which the U.S. has framed China as a strategic competitor, the broader implications of such an adversarial approach warrant critical reflection.

While policymakers in Washington now acknowledge the

scale of China's global ascendancy, their recognition comes

at a point where China's dominance over rare earth metals,

control of global supply chains, and economic expansion

Instead of merely labeling China as an adversary, the U.S.

have reached an almost irreversible status.

rect connection to the United States. While the U.S. fre-

should consider an alternative strategy—one that moves beyond confrontation toward collaboration. Engaging China as a preferred partner rather than an existential threat could pave the way for more constructive diplomacy, where both nations focus their vast economic, technological, and geopolitical resources on addressing global challenges. Breaking free from a cycle of rivalry and embracing strategic cooperation could yield substantial benefits not just for the U.S. and China but for the global community as a whole. At this critical juncture, U.S. policymakers must reconsider their approach and explore avenues for constructive engagement. Instead of escalating tensions, fostering

a mutually beneficial relationship could pave the way for

lasting global stability and prosperity.

- Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister at Embassy

of Pakistan to France

Former MD, SRBC

Quorum and its impact on legislative efficiency

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Quorum requirements across countries highlight variations in legislative procedures and governance principles. Pakistan and Singapore both set their quorum at one-fourth of the total membership, reflecting similar legislative frameworks for ensuring parliamentary presence. India, with its one-tenth quorum rule, allows for greater flexibility in legislative functioning compared to Pakistan and Singapore. Countries like the U.S., Germany, and Russia emphasize...

N a parliamentary democracy, elected representatives are entrusted with the legislative duties of debating and passing laws, a critical process governed by established rules and regulations. Among these, quorum holds special significance as it determines the minimum number of members required to be present in the House to conduct its business. Quorum ensures the legitimacy, accountability, and efficiency of parliamentary systems worldwide by mandating sufficient participation for decision-making. The primary purpose of quorum is to guarantee that decisions reflect the involvement of a reasonable number of representatives, preventing undue influence by a small group. It serves as a safeguard against decisions being made without adequate deliberation or oversight, upholding democratic principles and the integrity of legislative processes. Ensuring quorum is generally seen as the responsibility of the ruling party or coalition, as they manage governance and legislative continuity. However, opposition parties frequently raise quorum issues as a political strategy to highlight inefficiencies, exert pressure on the government, or emphasize key issues. Occasionally, even government members point out quorum deficiencies, particularly when dissatisfied or during internal disagreements or during session requisite by Opposition. According to Article 55(2) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007, the quorum is one-fourth of the total membership of the National Assembly (84 out of 336 members). If quorum is lacking, the Speaker must suspend proceedings until the required number is present or adjourn the session if it cannot be met. In Indian Constitution, Article 100 is the power of the Houses to act notwithstanding the absence of a quorum. The Indian Constitution specifies that one-tenth of the total membership of the House should be present to constitute a quorum. According to the 41(1) Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the United Kingdom requires 40 members in the House of Commons, including the Speaker. In the U.S. House of Representatives, a quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct business, as specified in Article I, Section 5 of the U.S. Constitution, which states that a majority of each House constitutes a quorum. A quorum is generally assumed to exist unless challenged by a member, at which point a quorum call may be ordered to verify the count. While certain activities, such as debates, can occur without a quorum, voting on legislation requires one. According to Section 39 of the Australian Constitution, the quorum is one-third of the total number

of members in the Australian House of Representatives,

while in the Canadian House of Commons, the quorum is

20 members, including the Speaker (According to Section 48 of the Constitution Act, 1867). Quorum requirements in several Asian and African nations further illustrate diverse practices. In the Malaysian House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat), the quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct business. According to Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakvat 13. (1), the quorum is 26 members, including the Speaker. Singapore sets quorum at one-quarter of the total membership. In the Parliament of Sri Lanka, the quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct its business. According to Article 73 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Standing Orders of Parliament, the quorum is 20 members, including the Speaker. The quorum of the Senate or of the House of Representatives shall be one-third of all the members of the legislative house concerned according to the Section 54(1) of the Constitution of Nigeria.

According to Article 96 of the Turkish Constitution, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall convene with at least one-third of the total number of members for all its affairs, including elections it holds. Unless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall take decisions by an absolute majority of those present; however, the majority for decision can, under no circumstances, be less than one plus a quarter of the total number of members. In the Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) of Bangladesh, the quorum is 60 members, including the Speaker, according to Article 75(2) of the Constitution of Bangladesh. In the French National Assembly, there is no fixed quorum required for regular debates or general proceedings. However, for certain decisions, such as passing legislation or constitutional amendments, specific quorum rules apply. For example, in the case of constitutional amendments under Article 89 of the French Constitution, a three-fifths majority of both houses of Parliament (National Assembly and Senate) is required during a joint session in Congress. According to the Rule 45 of Rules of Procedure of the German Bundestag and Rules of Procedure of the Mediation Committee, a quorum of the Bundestag shall exist when more than one half of its Members are present in the Chamber. Similarly, the same rule follows in the Russian State Duma i.e. The procedural provisions for the sessions of each of the Chambers of the Federal Assembly are established by their Standing Orders. Of greatest importance in this respect is the matter of quorum, ensuring legitimacy to the sessions and the activities of the Chambers. According to the Standing Orders of the Council of Federation and the State Duma their sessions are considered com-

petent, if they are attended by more than a half of the

total number of Members of the Council of Federation and the Deputies of the State Duma.

Quorum requirements across countries highlight variations in legislative procedures and governance principles. Pakistan and Singapore both set their quorum at one-fourth of the total membership, reflecting similar legislative frameworks for ensuring parliamentary presence. India, with its one-tenth quorum rule, allows for greater flexibility in legislative functioning compared to Pakistan and Singapore. Countries like the U.S., Germany, and Russia emphasize the presence of a majority for business, demonstrating stricter enforcement for legislative legitimacy. The U.K. and Canada, by contrast, have relatively lower quorum thresholds (40 and 20 members, respectively), signifying a pragmatic approach to accommodate smaller parliamentary settings or expedite proceedings. In other countries, the quorum diverges based on historical, legal, and structural considerations. Malaysia and Bangladesh emphasize moderate thresholds (26 and 60 members), ensuring sufficient representation while avoiding excessive disruptions. Turkey's nuanced quorum system accounts for both attendance and decision-making thresholds, reflecting a dual-layered approach to parliamentary integrity. Conversely, France lacks a fixed quorum for regular debates, relying instead on specific rules for critical decisions, like constitutional amendments. These diverse practices illustrate how nations balance legislative efficiency and accountability through their quorum rules, tailored to their unique political and constitutional needs. In Pakistan, quorum deficiencies not only disrupt legislative business but also squander public funds allocated to parliamentary sessions. Strengthening enforcement of attendance rules, introducing digital attendance tracking, and penalizing absenteeism could ensure greater accountability. Furthermore, incentivizing consistent member participation and fostering a culture of responsibility can improve legislative effectiveness and prevent waste of resources. Quorum is more than a procedural requirement; it embodies accountability, democratic representation, and the legitimacy of legislative processes. While the ruling party is primarily responsible for maintaining quorum, the opposition's role in holding the government accountable is crucial. However, using quorum as a political tool to disrupt proceedings undermines the institution's credibility. For Pakistan, the way forward lies in learning from global practices, addressing systemic challenges, and prioritizing national interest over partisan agendas. A robust parliamentary framework ensures that elected representatives fulfill their duties, upholding the trust of the electorate and the principles of democracy.



PM-led task force resolves...

From Page 01 12 FIRs filed, 25 individuals identified, three key suspects arrested, and the names of 16 individuals had been added to the passport control list. The meeting was also updated on the actions taken against suspected FIA personnel and officers. Besides it was also informed about the report from the overseas investigative committee. The prime minister instructed to identify the human trafficking groups and exemplary punishment should be given to them. Federal ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, AzamNazirTarar, Ahad Khan AttaullahTarar, and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi were among the attendees of the meeting.

Chinese investors move SHC...

From Page 01 The interior ministry, chief secretary, IG, CPEC security, officials of Malir district police, Chinese embassy and others were made parties in the case. The court sought a response from the Sindh IG and others within four weeks. Last month, Sindh Senior Minister SharjeelInamMemon said that the federal and provincial governments had always embraced foreign investors. He said the Sindh government was working with an active public-private partnership mode and full facilities will be provided in all respects to the investors on a public-private partnership basis.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan vow to...

From Page 01 governments

committed to facilitating cooperation between their customs authorities and expediting the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on establishing an Advance Electronic Data Interchange between the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan and Pakistan Customs Service.On defense industry cooperation, they agreed to expedite the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defense industry collaboration and enhance joint production and sale of defense hardware.In the energy sector, discussions were held to advance the Strategic Underground Gas Storage (SUGS) project in Pakistan, with Azerbaijan invited to participate in energy infrastructure projects, including the White Oil Pipeline.

Only parliament..

From Page 01 the Amendment Act 2024 in the Supreme Court, with the petitioners claiming that it directly interferes with the independence of the judiciary and the principle of the separation of powers. Tehreek-e-Insaf Pakistan (PTI) founder Imran Khan has also castigated the government over the passage of the amendment. Earlier this week, the incarcerated politician said that the 26th Amendment had distorted the judiciary's structure and compromised the system of transparent justice.

Hamas names 4...

From Page 01 prisoners were released in the first swap. The ceasefire halted the war which began when Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October 2023. About 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken back to Gaza as hostages. More than 47,200 Palestinians, the majority civilians, have been killed in Israel's offensive, Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says. Hamas is also expected to provide information about the remaining 26 hostages due to be released over the next five weeks. This includes the Bibas family - two parents and two children, one of whom, Kfir, was 10 months old when taken captive and is the youngest hostage.

Briefs Serena Hotels sponsors NRC to promote reading culture

The National Readers' Conference 2025 concluded on a high note, leaving participants inspired to play their part in nurturing a love for books and knowledge in their communities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under the Public Diplomacy initiative sponsored the much-anticipated National Readers' Conference (NRC) 2025. The event brought together a vibrant community of readers, writers, educators, and intellectuals to celebrate and promote the culture of reading in Pakistan. The NRC 2025 served as a dynamic platform for discussions on the significance of literacy and education in shaping a progressive society. Esteemed speakers, including the Ambassador of Portugal (H.E. Mr. Frederico Silva), the First Secretary of the Embassy of Belgium (Mr. GillezHachez), the Director General of the Civil Services Academy Lahore (Mr. Farhan Aziz Khwaja), the national prize winners, author (Dr. Rakshanda Parveen) and (Dr. Sadigullah Khan), Mr. Muneer Ahmad (CEO of DEVCOM). The panel consisted of veterans of their fields, including Ms. Sadaf Raza (Reiki Master), Faisal Malik (Edtech Expert), Ms. SanobarNazir (Writer and Activist), and Maya Sofia Hamidi (Principal of RUNG School of Music and Arts), addressed the audience on diverse topics related to literature, education, and the role of books in fostering critical thinking and creativity. One of the highlights of the conference was

the keynote speech delivered by Keynote



Speakers, who inspired the audience with their insights on specific topics. The event also featured engaging panel discussions, book launches, and interactive sessions that provided participants with unique opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals and exchange ideas.

As part of the conference's agenda, Read Pakistan hosted various competitions to encourage young readers and writers to showcase their talents. These included essay writing, poetry recitation, and storytelling competitions. Winners were honored with shields, souvenirs,

and cash prizes generously provided through in-kind support from the Embassy of Portugal and Embassy of Belgium. Speaking at the occasion, Syeda Fatima Hassan Gillani, CEO of Read Pakistan, expressed her gratitude to all attendees and supporters, stating, "The National Readers' Conference is a testament to our collective commitment to fostering a reading culture in Pakistan. We are immensely thankful to our partners, sponsors, and distinguished guests for their invaluable contributions to making this event a success." The National Readers' Conference 2025 con-

cluded on a high note, leaving participants inspired to play their part in nurturing a love for books and knowledge in their communities. Read Pakistan remains committed to its mission of empowering society through the promotion of literacy and education. Serena Hotels is proud to support events that inspire intellectual engagement. This conference served as a dynamic platform for promoting literacy, dialogue, and creativity, and Serena Hotels remains committed to its role in supporting initiatives that contribute to the educational development of Pakistan.

No Pakistani in Test Team of the Year 2024

Lineup features four England players

DNA

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday, announced the men's Test Team of the Year 2024, led by Australia's longer formats captain Pat Cummins. The lineup, comprised of top performing players from across the world, does not feature a single Pakistan player, highlighting the national team's dismal run in the format. India's batting prodigy YashasviJaiswal, who scored 1,478 runs at an impressive average of 54.74, has been selected as the opener alongside England's Ben Duckett, the third-highest run-scorer of 2024 with 1149 runs. New Zealand's ace batter Kane Williamson, despite having an injury-hit season, managed to make a cut into the team on the back of his consistent performances in the format and thus rounds up the top-order. England's Joe Root continued to showcase his prowess in the longest format and topped the run-scoring chart in 2024 with 1,556 runs at an impressive average of 55.57, featuring five centuries. The right-handed batter, placed at number four, is joined by compatriots Harry Brook and Jamie Smith in the middle-order with India's RavindraJadeja to follow. Meanwhile, Australia's Cummins will lead the men's Test team for the second consecutive year as he led his side to monumental series victories over West Indies, New Zealand and India, which helped the defending champions to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final. The 31-year-old also made significant contributions with both bat and ball as he took 37 wickets at an average of 24.02 and scored 306 runs at 23.53. Cummins is joined by India's JaspritBumrah, who also had an equally

Injured Djokovic booed off after quitting semi-final

The 37-year-old Serb had his upper left leg heavily taped after injuring it in Tuesday's quarter-final win over Carlos Alcaraz thing I want to say is, please

WEB DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic was booed off court by some Australian Open fans after retiring injured from his semi-final against Alexander Zverev. Djokovic, who was bidding for a record-extending 11th title, quit after losing the first set 7-6 (7-5) in 80 minutes. The 37-vear-old Serb had his upper left leg heavily taped after injuring it in Tuesday's quarter-final win over Carlos Alcaraz.

"I did everything I possibly could do to manage the muscle tear that I had," said Djokovic, who was also aiming for an all-time standalone record of 25 major titles, "Towards the end of that first set I just started feeling more and more "It was too much to handle for me." After he slapped a volley into the net on set point, seventh seed Djokovic immediately approached Zverev and shook

his hand. He waved to the crowd and gave them a double thumbs up, despite audible boos from some sections inside Rod Laver Arena. Asked by Serbian media, external about the reaction, Djokovic said: "I don't know what to say. "People have come and

paid for the tickets expecting a great match and a big fight, which they didn't get. "From that perspective, I can understand. I am doing my best to understand them, but I am not sure whether they understand me or if they even want to." German second seed Zverev is still bidding for his first Grand Slam title after twice losing in major finals. He will face world number one and defending champion Iannik Sinner in Sunday's final after the Italian beat Ben Shelton.

From the moment Djokovic lunged for a drop-shot towards the end of the first set against Alcaraz and immediately grimaced to his box, there have

Rocky Flintoff

breaks father's

26-year-old record

Rocky achieves the milestone during

tour match against Cricket Australia XI

BRISBANE: Emerging batter Rocky Flintoff broke his fa-

ther Andrew's long-standing record by smashing a defiant

century for England Lions against Cricket Australia XI here

at the Allan Border Field on Thursday. Rocky, who scored

108 off 127 deliveries in the tour match became the young-

est to score a century for the England Lions, achieving the

milestone at the age of 16 years and 291 days. Previously,

the record belonged to his father Andrew, who scored a cen-

tury at the age of 20 years and 28 days against Kenya in

1998. The achievement came amid concerns regarding his

selection in the England Lions squad for the Australia tour

as he had a bleak first-class record to his name. Before the

Australia tour, Rocky had played four first-class and seven

List-A matches. The right-handed batter only managed to

accumulate 87 runs in four first-class matches at a dismal

average of 12.42 and the highest score of just 32. In his bud-

ding List A career, Rocky has scored 167 in seven matches at

23.85 and a strike rate of just over 60. Notably, the legendary

all-rounder became the head coach of England Lions in Sep-

tember this year and on his first tour in charge. - Agencies

been questions over his fitness. Djokovic, as he has on countless occasions in his stellar career, somehow managed to defy the injury to earn a remarkable win against the 21-year-old. But doubts remained how

equipped he would be to play Zverev. "I knew even if I won the first set, that it's going to be a huge uphill battle for me to stay physically fit enough to stay with him," added Djokovic. "I don't think I had that

in the tank." Djokovic had not practised at Melbourne Park since Tuesday night's victory, cancelling a planned hit on Thursday before spending an hour warming up on court shortly before the semi-final. Djokovic did not practise between matches during his 2023 title run and later revealed he had a three centimetre tear in his ham-

2021 title despite tearing

an abdominal muscle in the

third round. "The very first

title with an abdominal tear, he has won this title with a hamstring tear. "If he cannot continue this match, it means he really cannot continue." Former Australian player John Millman, working at Melbourne Park as a television summariser. said the crowd's reaction showed a "total lack of respect". He added in a post on X: "Novak getting booed off is a disgrace. Classless." Diokovic looked way below his best from the start of the semi-final. The former world string. He also won the number one was fortunate

guys, don't boo when a play-

er is injured," said Zverev,

addressing the crowd in his

"I know everyone paid for

tickets and wants to see a

five-set match but you have

to understand Novak Diok-

ovic is someone who has

given absolutely everything

to tennis. "He has won this

on-court interview.

Fourth round of President's Trophy Grade-I to commence on Sunday

not to be punished more

by Zverev as he struggled

badly with his first serve.

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Right-arm pacer Mushtaq Ahmed's five-wicket haul propelled Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) to beat Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) by 62 runs on the final day of the third round of the President's Trophy Grade-I here at the KCCA Stadium on Thursday. Chasing a daunting 321-run target, WAPDA resumed the pursuit from 9/2 on the final day but could accumulate 258 all out despite AyazTasawar's anchoring half-century. The middle-order batter waged a lone battle for WAPDA with an unbeaten 126 off 162 deliveries, studded with 15 fours and four sixes. Besides him, only wicketkeeper batter Bismillah Khan made a noteworthy contribution with a 64-ball 42. Avaz and Bismillah had kept WAP-DA in the hunt with a hundred-run partnership for the sixth wicket until the latter fell victim to Mushtaq. His dismissal opened the floodgates, which eventually resulted in a gruelling 62-run defeat. Mushtaq Ahmed bagged five wickets for 96 runs in his 20 overs, while Arif Yagoob picked up three wickets. At the SBP Stadium, the third-round fixture between Pakistan Television (PTV) and Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) ended in a draw. At the conclusion of the final day's action, PTV were 456/3, leading by 312 runs, courtesy of Mohammad Taha's maiden double century. The opening batter remained the top-scorer for PTV with

OGDCL edge **WAPDA** in **President's Trophy**

226 off 321 deliveries, studded with 17 fours and nine sixes. His opening partner Waqar Hussain was equally impressive, scoring 154 off 255 balls with the help of 11 fours and three sixes. For KRL, Mohammad Qaiser, Rohan Qadri and Naseerullah Khan took one wicket apiece in the second innings. For the unversed, two third-round fixtures of the President's Trophy Grade-I had already been concluded as Ghani Glass romped to a 10-wicket victory over Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Tuesday, while State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) stunned defending champions Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) by seven wickets on Wednesday. It is pertinent to mention that the fourth round of the ongoing tournament will commence on Sunday.

impressive year with both as a bowler and the captain.

charge sheet against them. Former BLA commander renounces...

Sinner beats Shelton to set up Zverev final at AO

Reigning US Open champion Sinner is the youngest man to reach multiple Australian Open finals since Jim Courier in 1993

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURN: Jannik Sinner will face Alexander Zverev in the Australian Open final after the defending champion saw off Ben Shelton in straight sets in Melbourne. World number one Sinner recorded a 7-6 (7-2) 6-2 6-2 victory over American Shelton on Rod Laver Arena - the stage where he claimed his first major title 12 months ago. Earlier on Friday, an injured Novak Diokovic was forced to retire after losing the first set against world number two Zverev.

Zverev, still bidding for a first major title after losing his previous two finals, now faces a daunting task against the in-form Sinner in Sunday's final. "We've had some tough matches in the past. Anything can happen," said Sinner, who has lost four of his six meetings with Zverev. The women's final between two-time defending champion ArynaSabalenka and Madison Keys takes place on Saturday.

Reigning US Open champion Sinner is the youngest man to reach multiple Australian Open finals since Jim Courier in 1993. Italy's Sinner has been near-unbeatable in the past 12 months and will go into the final on a 20-match winning streak, having not lost a match since 2 October last year. Shelton, bidding to reach his first major final, made a confident start by breaking Sinner in the first game of the



match - but that was an advantage the 21st seed surrendered three games later after a series of unforced errors. Shelton, 22, broke again for a 6-5 lead and served for the set but squandered two set points as Sinner dug in to force a tie-break. Sinner took control from then on, reeling off five straight points to close out the breaker before quickly going up a double break of serve in the second.

The daunting prospect of needing to come back from two sets down against the top seed did not discourage Shelton

from entertaining and engaging the crowd. The American reset admirably to force three break points early in the third set. But, after they went untaken, Sinner struck what proved to be the decisive blow in game five to extinguish Shelton's hopes of an unlikely fightback. Despite appearing to limp following an awkward landing, Sinner closed out five straight games to secure victory in two hours 36 minutes. "There was a lot of tension and I had some slight cramps," Sinner said afterwards. "These matches can go very long. Three sets in two-and-a-half hours is quite some time, so I'm happy to finish it in three." Sinner's Australian Open title defence comes against the backdrop of his ongoing doping case, which will be heard at the Court of Arbitration for Sport from 16 April, with the World Anti-Doping Agency seeking a ban of between one and two years.

FIA begins Toshakhana inquiry...

FROM PAGE 01 Bureau (NAB) to provide records and evidence related to the Toshakhana case, along with the accused individuals' records. The team will prepare a supplementary challan based on the evidence received. After obtaining the NAB records, the JIT will record statements from all the accused individuals. Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari was granted presidential immunity in the Park Lane and Toshakhana references. The Accountability Court halted the hearing of references against President Zardari, citing Article 248 of the Constitution, which grants immunity to the President. Judge Nasir Javed issued the verdict, stating that as long as Asif Zardari remains President, no criminal proceedings can be initiated against him. The prosecution did not object to the plea, and no opposition was raised. According to the verdict, under Article 248, no case can be filed against the President, nor can any criminal proceedings be initiated.

PTI to boycott 4th round of...

From Page 01 'charter of demands' within seven working days after the party warned it would boycott the next round of talks if judicial commissions were not formed to probe the May 9 and November 26 incidents. National Assembly speaker AyazSadiq has called the meeting for the fourth round, scheduled to be held on Jan 28 at 11:45am, according to a notification issued by the NA secretariat. The meeting will be presided over by Sadiq and an invitation has been extended to the PTI. Speaking at a press conference outside the Parliament House today, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, flanked by PTI leaders Omar Avub Khan. ShibliFaraz, and Ali Mohammad Khan, said that Imran had approved negotiations despite the long charge sheet against him and the party.

No one will evade mega graft...

From Page 01 Referring to the Al-Qadir University land deal, he stated. "A document was waved in the cabinet meeting, showing 438 acre allocated for the university. The PTI should explain how public money ended up in their accounts." Asif claimed that Al-Qadir University was not a legitimate institution, adding that even referring to it as a college would be an insult. "They argue that Hasan Nawaz also purchased properties, but UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) investigated his transactions. Hasan Nawaz hid nothing and all of his transactions were fully examined," he clarified. He also criticised the collusion of media, politicians, and judiciary in enabling criminal activities. "When these elements come together, crimes are shielded, and the government and the state are blackmailed. They challenge the state and think they can escape accountability through money," he remarked, adding that NAB had filed a detailed

From Page 01

and resolve grievances through peaceful means, warning against becoming tools of foreign powers. Abdul Rasheed and 18-year-old Changez Khan shared similar experiences of radicalization and regret. Changez recounted how military intervention enabled his escape from militancy. Provincial Minister Zahoor Ahmed Buledi condemned the exploitation of young Baloch by militant handlers, calling it a "heinous game" of terrorism. He emphasized the government's open-door policy, stating, "The state welcomes those who lay down arms and aims to reintegrate them into society." DIG CTD highlighted the role of propaganda in radicalizing youth and revealed investigations into financial networks, including money laundering and hawala transactions, funding militant groups. He added, "A special FIA task force is working with other agencies to counter these operations.'



US arrests,

deports hundreds

of 'illegal immigrants'

WASHINGTON:US author-

ities arrested 538 illegal

migrants and deported hun-

dreds in a mass operation

just days into President

Donald Trump's second ad-

ministration, his press sec-

"The Trump Administra-tion arrested 538 illegal

immigrant criminals," Kar-

oline Leavitt said in a post

on social platform X, adding

"hundreds" were deported

by military aircraft. "The

largest massive deportation

operation in history is well

underway. Promises made.

Promises kept," she said. Trump promised a crack-

down on illegal immigration

during the election cam-

paign and began his second

term with a flurry of exec-

utive actions aimed at over-

hauling entry to the United

States. He has signed or-

ders declaring a "national

emergency" at the southern

border and announced the

deployment of more troops

to the area while vowing to

deport "criminal aliens."

Early on Thursday, Newark

city mayor Ras J. Baraka

said in a statement that

Immigration and Customs

2024

waves had the biggest im-

UNICEF's executive director

Catherine Russell warned

children are "more vulner-

able" to extreme weather.

"They heat up faster, they

sweat less efficiently, and

cool down more slowly than

adults," she said in a state-

ment. "Children cannot con-

centrate in classrooms that offer no respite from swel-

tering heat, and they cannot

get to school if the path is

flooded, or if schools are

washed away." Human activi-

ty, including the unrestricted

burning of fossil fuels over

decades, has warmed the

planet and changed weather

patterns. Global average tem-

peratures hit record highs in

2024, and over the past few

years they temporarily sur-

passed a critical 1.5 degrees

Celsius warming threshold

for the first time. That has

left the wet periods wetter

and the dry periods dryer,

intensifying heat and storms

and making populations more vulnerable to disas-

Weekly

inflation

goes down

by 0.77pc,

ters.–APP

retary said late Thursday.

Briefs

UAE minister meets Syria's FM in Davos

DUBAI: The UAE's Minister of Cabinet Affairs Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Gergawi had a meeting this week with Asaad Al-Shibani, Syria's foreign affairs minister in the transitional government, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, state news agency WAM reported on Friday. During the meeting, Al-Gergawi reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to supporting Syria's independence and sovereignty. He emphasized the UAE's support for all efforts to achieve peace, stability, and a dignified future for the nation's people.-APP

Rupee sheds 03 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Friday depreciated by 03 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.75 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.72.Pakistani cuisine recipesHowever, 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 Rs1.90 to close at Rs291.61 against the last day's closing of Rs289.71, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 02 paisa and closed at Rs1.79, whereas an increase of Rs 2.52 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs345.29 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs342.77. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paisa each to close at Rs 75.89 and Rs74.31 respectively.-APP

Gold prices up by Rs 2.900 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 2,900 and was sold at Rs 289,600 on Friday against its sale at Rs 286,700 on a previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,486 to Rs 248,285 from Rs 247,799 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs 227.603 from Rs 225.323. The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.31 to Rs.3,432 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.27 to Rs 2,942 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$29 to \$2,772 from \$2,743, the Association reported.-APP

Iraqi president calls for more global action on desertification

DAVOS: Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid has called for more action on desertification, amid global concerns of land degradation that has affected agricultural productivity, caused pollution in waterways and resulted in increased frequency of droughts. "We attend many conferences, joined many groups for solving desertification but unfortunately the actua achievement has been very little to show for. I appeal to you, once we make decisions for decreasing desertification, let us act on it," Rashid said on Friday. Speaking during a World Economic Forum panel "On Firmer Ground with Land Restoration," the Iraqi leader told participants that land restoration was not just an environmental imperative but also a moral duty. "In Iraq, we face the consequences of environmental challenges. Nearly 40 percent of our land is affected by desertification, and our water resources essential for agriculture and livelihood are under severe strain. These problems are made worse by climate change, rising temperatures, reduced river flows from our neighboring countries," the president, a British-educated engineer, said.-APP

Pak Pavilion celebrates Silk Road E-commerce Carnival

It features a variety of jewelry, handicrafts, and food items from Pakistan, highlighting the country's cultural heritage and resources for Chinese consumers

DNA

SHANGHAI: As the Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year, approaches, the Pakistan National Pavilion at the Shanghai Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone is hosting activities to mark the occasion and introduce Pakistani culture to a global audience. From January 22 to January 24, the Pavilion is participating in the Silk Road E-commerce Carnival for Spring Festival through platforms such as Douvin (the Chinese version of TikTok) and others, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Fri-

day. The carnival integrates Chinese New Year celebrations with an exhibition of Pakistani culture and products. It features a variety of jewelry, handicrafts, and food items from Pakistan, highlighting the country's cultural heritage and resources for Chinese consumers.

The hybrid event, which includes both online and offline elements, provides insights into Pakistan's landscapes, traditions, and craftsmanship. To engage consumers, the carnival includes interactive features such as live-streaming sessions with Pakistani artisans and entrepreneurs, who share their stories, demonstrate their skills, and present their products. Additionally, visual materials are screened, and attendees have the opportunity to sample Pakistani snacks, offering a multi-sensory experience. Promotions and discounts are also a key component of the event, aimed at increasing accessibility and affordability of Pakistani goods. Limited-time offers, flash sales, and special discounts on selected products are available during the carnival. Taking place during the peak shopping season for Chinese New Year, the event is part of a broader trend in global e-commerce.

More than 400 specialty products from over 90 brands across 17 Belt and Road Initiative countries have seen an increase in online sales. Participating countries include Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan, among others. Beyond commerce, the carnival serves as a platform for cultural exchange. By incorporating elements of Chinese New Year alongside Pakistani traditions, the event fosters mutual understanding. Traditional Chinese decorations are displayed, folk dances are performed, and stories and customs

sion included progress re-

view of ongoing projects

in water sector including

Dasu Hydropower project,

Tarbela extension project,

strategies for improving

infrastructure, enhanc-

ing energy efficiency, and

facilitating technological

innovation to bridge devel-

opmental gaps. Both par-

ties acknowledged the crit-

ical role of tailored policy

measures and investments

in achieving a balanced

and sustainable trajectory

of projects.Dr Musadik

remarked that a capital

investment management

framework may be utilized

for improving efficiency

together with discipline

of planning. Mr Raiser opined that it could be an

excellent initiative for mu-

tual benefit. The meeting

concluded with a shared

commitment to continue

dialogue and collaboration.

Participants included Sec-

retary Water Resources and

officials of ministry. Kishan

Abeygunawardana: Special

Assistant to Vice President,

Mohammad Anis: Senior

Energy Specialist, Program

Leader, Eva Liselotte Le-

scrauwaet: Senior Opera-

associated with the Spring Festival are shared. On December 4, 2024, the Chinese Spring Festival was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This designation highlights the festival's cultural significance, as it embodies values such as peace, harmony, and goodwill. "We are delighted to be part of this event," said Aqeel Chaudhry, head of the Pakistan National Pavilion. "It is a valuable opportunity to introduce Pakistani crafts and products to a broader audience, especially during such an important festive period in China."

Iranian vice president

DUBAI: Iran's Vice President Shina Ansari, along with Reza Ameri, Iranian ambassador to the UAE, visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, state news agency WAM reported on Friday. Ansari was accompanied by Yousef Al-Obaidli, director-general of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center, during the tour. The delegation was introduced to the mosque's history, architecture, distinctive Islamic art, and collection of items representing Islamic civilization. They also learned about the significant role of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center in promoting Islamic culture, cross-cultural dialogue, and the values of coexistence and tolerance, inspired by the legacy of Sheikh Zayed. At the end of the visit, Ansari was presented with a piece of art featuring a verse from the Qu'ran in Kufic script, one of the Islamic art styles used in decorating the mosque's domes, along with a copy of the book "Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque: Lights of Peace," the latest publication from the center _APP

visits Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Enforcement (ICE) agents "raided a local establishment... detaining undocumented residents as well as citizens, without producing a warrant". Earlier in the week the Republican-led US Congress green-lit a bill to expand pretrial incarceration for foreign criminal suspects.—APP 242m children's schooling disrupted by climate shocks in UNITED NATIONS, United States:Extreme weather disrupted the schooling of about 242 million children in 85 countries last year - roughly one in seven students, the UN children's agency reported Thursday, deploring what it said was an "overlooked" aspect of the climate crisis. Heat

Musadik, Martin commit for continued engagement in projects



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Water Resources met on Friday with Martin Raiser, World Bank's Vice President for South Asia. to engage in comprehensive discussions aimed at deepening cooperation and

tiatives. The meeting, held in Islamabad, underscored the mutual commitment to fostering strong economic relationships and addressing shared challenges such as energy security. Both leaders emphasized the significance of collaborative efforts in driving transformative projects.

IPO- Pakistan,

NCA collaborate for

Intellectual Property

Rights awareness

LAHORE: The Intellectual Property Organisation Pakistan

enable Pakistan to secure its rightful claim in mapping a culture

of creative art community. The Chairperson observed the rele-

vance of the World IPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic

Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge and NCA's

preciation for the World Bank's continued support in critical development projects in energy, infrastructure, social sectors, highlighting the importance of partnerships in achieving strategic eco-nomic and development goals. "A robust collaboration with internation-

World Bank is pivotal in elevating our sustainable development ambitions. enhancing economic resilience, and uplifting communities," Minister Dr Musadik Malik noted. Martin Raiser reaffirmed the World Bank's dedication to supporting transformative initiatives in the

'Nerve-racking'

tions Officer.

Inside the aerial battle to tame Los Angeles fires

(IPOP) and National College of Arts (NCA) will collaborate to promote Intellectual Property Rights awareness.Pakistani cuisine recipes In this connection, IPO-Pakistan Chairperson Farukh Amil met NCA Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Murtaza Jafri and senior faculty to discuss strategies for enhancing understanding and implementation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) among students and faculty at NCA, a premier institution renowned for its contributions to art and design in Pakistan. The meeting highlighted the importance of IPRs in protecting the rights of artists, designers, and creators, enabling them to safeguard their innovative work and foster a culture of creativity. With the creative sector rapidly evolving, the need for robust knowledge of intellectual property has never been more critical. The Chairperson of IPO-Pakistan emphasized the importance of IPRs in promoting innovation, creativity, and economic growth, and the need for awareness and education among students and faculty. The VC Prof. Dr. Murtaza Jafri expressed enthusiasm for the initiative, noting that educating students about IPRs is essential for the advancement of Pakistan's cultural and creative industries. The VC invited the Chairperson of IPO-Pakistan to hold interactive sessions with the students to promote IPR awareness, and discussed the possibility of collaboration between the two institutions to

but nothing prepared him for the scale and the challenge of the devastating blazes that ripped through Los Angeles. I've never seen anything the scale that we saw the first night," he told AFP. Fires erupted almost simultaneously in two separate neighborhoods during a furious windstorm on January 7. Whole streets were engulfed as hurricane-force gusts flung fireballs from house to house. Forecasters had been warning of extreme fire risk for days because of punishing dryness and winds up to 100 miles (160 kilometers) an hour, saying any small fire would quickly spread. Extra resources were positioned all over the at-risk region, which extended for miles around the sprawling metropolis. But the fires, when they came, were overwhelming, defeating the hundreds of firefighters on the ground. Only an air assault would stop them. A terrifying 24 hours after the first smoke blackened the air, winds dropped just enough for helicopters to take to the skies. "It was some of the most turbulent wind I've seen," said helicopter coordinator John Williamson. Under the

careful eye of experienced operators like Williamson, each pilot took turns in an elaborate airborne ballet. The life-saving airshow they put on for nearly two weeks became a defining feature of the fires, watched with awe and gratitude by a terrified region. Television viewers were transfixed by the incredible skills of helicopter pilots loading up hundreds of gallons (liters) of water into the bellies of their aircraft while hovering over a reservoir, then dumping it with pinpoint accuracy on a wall of flames. The sight of huge jet planes swooping over a fire line and unleashing a trail of bright red retardant thrilled and relieved those whose homes were threatened. But while they might have made it look easy, the pilots say the reality was far from it, with strong winds and unfamiliar terrain a constant challenge. "There were definitely some uneasy moments going over the mountains where the crew was looking for me to see if I'm comfortable," said Thomas. "There's definitely some times where the aircraft's 23,000 pound (11.5 tons), and you're getting rocked around, thrown around in the air." Paul Karpus, who has overseen operations at an airbase in Camarillo, 45 miles (70 kilometers) west of Los Angeles, said the opening days of the firefight were like nothing he has experi-"Every season, you say, I've seen it all... And then you're surprised," he told

AFP. "Seeing the amount of devastation for the first time, when the sun was coming up, and the amount of structures lost, it takes your breath away." Aerial teams operated 24 hours, pulling long shifts that left them exhausted and fraught. "On a scale of one to 10, this one was a 10, stress-wise," said Karpus.-APP

decelerates to 0.52pc on YoY

basis ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), went down by 0.77 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 16 and decelerated to 0.52 percent on year-on-year (YoY) basis, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 320.21 points as compared to 322.71 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 0.52 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed decrease of 1.04 per cent and went down to 311.47 points from last week's 314.75 points.-APP

Pakistan navy ships visit Oman during overseas deployment Attaches of various coun-

DNA

ISLAMABAD: stan Navy Ships TABUK and RAH NAWARD visited Port Sultan Qaboos, Muscat, Oman. Upon arrival at the port, Pakistan Navy ships were warmly received by Omani authorities. During the visit, Mission Commander, along with the Commanding Officers, held meetings with naval leadership of Oman. He called on Director General Ops and Plans Royal Navy of Oman, Commander Maritime Security Centre and Commandant Said Bin Sultan Naval Base. During these interactions, matters of mutual interest, Navy-to-Navy engagements, and cooperation in maritime security were discussed. Ambassadors,

diplomats and Military

tries also visited the ships. Pakistan Navy Ships were opened for visitors, wherein large number of Pakistani community including students from Pakistan School, Muscat visited onboard PN ships. Following the port call, PNS TABUK conducted a Passage Exercise with a Royal Oman Navy ship AL SHAMIKH. The exercise at sea aimed to enhance interoperability between the two navies and promote shared learning through coordinated activities. Pakistan and Oman are maritime neighbours and frequent visits of dignitaries, port calls by ships, joint exercises and coordinated patrols are regular feature. The visit of PNS TABUK and RAH NA-WARD will further strengthen bilateral relations between the two navies.





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Briefs

Biden turned down Aafia's plea, IHC told

US refusal to release Dr Aafia exposes Pakistan's standing: IHC

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was informed on Friday that for mer US President Joe Biden had rejected Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's mercy petition. IHC bench, headed by Justice SardarEjazIshaq Khan, heard the petition regarding Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release and return to Pakistan.

During the proceedings, the petitioner's lawyer, Imran Shafiq, revealed that the United States had also turned down a proposed prisoner swap arrangement with Pakistan. The court was further informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had submitted a report responding to the court's queries, including information about the foreign visits of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

It was noted, however, that the Pakistani ambassador in the US had not attended meetings regarding Dr. Aafia's case. Expressing concern over the lack of progress, Justice SardarE-jaz remarked, "The US is showing us our worth." The judge also criticized the US administration, drawing a comparison between Biden's pardoning of his son's sentence and the denial of clemency for Dr. Aafia, a Pakistani citizen. The IHC adjourned the hearing for two weeks, with further deliberations expected.

Addl registrar challenges contempt notice

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Additional Registrar (Judicial) of Supreme Court Nazar Abbas has challenged the contempt of court notice issued to him following the controversy regarding fixing the case. The apex court has formed a six-member bench, headed by Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. The members of the bench include Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed and

Justice Musarrat Hilali. The bench will take up the plea of additional registrar, who was removed from the post following the controversy, on Jan 27 (Monday). Earlier, the top court following the controversy regarding fixing the case removed Additional Registrar (Judicial) Nazar Abbas from his post. A notification issued by Additional Registrar (Administration) stated that Nazar Abbas had been made an officer on special duty (OSD). According to the statement, Abbas was found guilty of a blunder by scheduling a constitutional bench case for hearing before a regular bench. The notification further stated that the additional registrar's action wasted court's and litigants' time and resources.

Urdu translation of Portuguese novel 'Blank Gaze' launched

This translation is adding to other literary works translated from Portuguese into Urdu, including literary masterpieces by Portuguese authors such as José Saramago and Fernando Pessoa



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Academy of Letters hosted the launch of the Urdu translation of Portuguese author José Luís Peixoto's novel Nenhum Olhar (Blank Gaze), with the participation of Ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva. The acclaimed novel, now beautifully rendered in Urdu as

Afghan Taliban reject

ICC arrest warrant

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government said on Friday

an arrest warrant sought by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for its leaders was "politically motivated". It comes a day after the ICC chief prosecutor said he was

seeking warrants against senior Taliban leaders in Afghan-

istan over the persecution of women - a crime against

humanity. "Like many other decisions of the (ICC), it is

devoid of a fair legal basis, is a matter of double standards

and is politically motivated," said a statement from the Af-

ghan Foreign Ministry posted on social media platform X.

"It is regrettable that this institution has turned a blind eye

to war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by

foreign forces and their domestic allies during the twen-

ty-year occupation of Afghanistan." It said the court should

"not attempt to impose a particular interpretation of hu-

man rights on the entire world and ignore the religious and

national values of people of the rest of the world". The Tal-

iban swept back to power in 2021 after ousting the Ameri-

can-backed government in a rapid but largely bloodless mil-

itary takeover, imposing a severe interpretation of Islamic

law on the population and heavily restricting all aspects of

women's lives. Afghanistan's deputy interior minister Mo-

hammad Nabi Omari, a former Guantanamo Bay detainee,

said the ICC "can't scare us". "If these were fair and true

courts, they should have brought America to the court, be-

cause it is America that has caused wars, the issues of the

world are caused by America," he said at an event in east-ern Khost city attended by an AFP journalist. - Agencies

Viran Nazar by the renowned Pakistani author Muhammad Atif Alam, is a testament to the power of literature to bridge cultures and foster mutual understanding between nations, bringing the literary treasures of Portugal closer to Urdu-speaking readers. The translation has been done by the initiative of Pakistan Academy of Letters through their distinguished Chairperson, Ms. NajeebaArif and the Director Gener-

al, Mr. Sultan Nasir. It is a follow up of the 2024 interaction sessions held between the Embassy of Portugal, the author José Luís-Peixoto and the Pakistan Academy of Letters in Islamabad. This translation is adding to other literary works translated from Portuguese into Urdu, including literary masterpieces by Portuguese authors such as José Saramago and Fernando Pessoa. José LuísPeixoto is one of Portugal's most

prominent contemporary writers, known for his evocative literary work and profound exploration of human emotions and relationships through novels, poetry, musical lyrics, and short stories. His debut novel, NenhumOlhar (Blank Gaze), won the prestigious José Saramago Literary Prize in 2001. earning international acclaim. His works have been translated into more than 30 languages, captivating readers worldwide.

Rightsizing efforts aim to improve govt efficiency

Cabinet Committee on rightsizing holds meeting on key presentations

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Rightsizing of the Federal Government was held today, chaired virtually by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeh, from Davos, Switzerland. The meeting featured detailed presentations from both the Revenue Division and the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety regarding their mandates, organizational structures, budget allocations, expenditures, and the impact of their work on public services. The presentation by the Revenue Division highlighted key aspects of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) transformation plan, focusing on initiatives designed to modernize the Customs Department. The transformation plan, approved by the Prime Minister on September 19, 2024, aims to improve operations, including automation and technology integration, such as the Faceless Customs Assessment and Examination. The Rightsizing Committee was briefed on steps taken by the Revenue Division to streamline operations, including the abolition of 158 posts (BS-18 and below) and the designation of 27 posts (BS-16 to 20) as "dying posts" as part of the Cabinet decision on August 27,

2024. In response to challenges faced by the FBR, the Revenue Division proposed a one-time dispensation from the requirement to abolish 60% of vacant posts within its field formations. Senator Aurangzeb acknowledged the challenges the FBR had faced due to under-investment over the years and reiterated the importance of embracing technological advancements, such as the implementation of automation systems, to improve efficiency and service delivery. The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety also presented its work, which spans across multiple departments with overlapping functions. The Minister remarked that while much progress had been made, the fragmented approach to various departmental verticals had hindered scaling up the impact on public policy outcomes and public service delivery. The Chair commended the presentation and emphasized the need for a more integrated approach. The Minister tasked the sub-committee of the Rightsizing Committee with conducting a thorough review of both the Revenue Division and the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety to better assess the structure, functions, and efficiencies of these federal government organs. The sub-committee will engage with both entities to identify opportunities for improved public service outcomes in line with the committee's mandate.

Aurangzeb assures 'transparency' in FBR vehicle procurement

"FBR officials cannot just sit in offices and continue their work,' says finance minister

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has assured that "transparency" would be ensured in the procurement of 1,010 vehicles for the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) after the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue urged to call off the aquisition. "Procuring vehicles for the FBR officials is an important requirement... They cannot just sit in offices and continue their work," the minister said in response to a letter by Senate Standing Committee Chairman Senator Saleem-Mandviwalla. In a letter dated January 22, Senator Mandviwalla highlighted apprehensions regarding the procurement process, emphasising that the timing and scale of

such an acquisition raised "considerable doubts about the transparency and integrity of the process" which needed further review. The tax authority issued a letter of intent on January 13 for the Rs6 billion procurement. The first phase will see 500 vehicles delivered, with an advance payment of Rs3 billion already made. The delivery schedule for the vehicles is planned in phases, beginning with 75 units in January, followed by 200 in February, and 225 in March. The second phase will include 250 vehicles in April and the final 260 in May. Mandviwalla stated in the letter that committee members, during a recent meeting, pointed to the deliberate exclusion of competitors in the bidding process, raising suspicions of mismanagement and mala fide intent. The procurement, estimated to be significant in scope and expense, has been criticised for compromising the principles of transparency and fairness fundamental tenets of government procurement policies. The letter requested that the purchase order issued to the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues (AGPR) should be cancelled and the payment should be halted

4th aid convoy reaches Kurram

SHAMIM SHAHID

PARACHINAR: A fourth convoy carrying relief goods reached violence-marred Kurram, the district administration confirmed on Friday. The vehicles included in the convov are laden with medicines, food items, and other daily essentials aimed at addressing acute shortages in the crisis-hit area. The 70-vehicle convoy was also carrying flour, sugar, fruits, vegetables and medicines. The convoy's security, added the sources, was provided by the police and district administration along with the availability of security forces as well. They also said that the distribution of compensation among Kurram victims will also commence today The development comes as over 100 villages in Upper and Lower Kurram remain under siege for over three and a half months. The region has been facing severe tension, particularly after an attack on a convoy travelling from Peshawar to Parachinar on November 21, 2024, which resulted in the deaths of 50 people, including women and children.

German Chancellor Scholz slams Musk

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sharply criticized businessman Elon Musk, accusing the tech billionaire of using his social media power to interfere in global affairs and support far-right movements.

In a wide-ranging interview with Anadolu ahead of Germany's Feb. 23 early elections, Scholz voiced particular concern about Musk's influence on democratic processes in Europe.

"I met with Mr. Musk a long time ago. When he inaugurated his factory in Brandenburg, we had a conversation. Later we had another phone conversation, which was also about his business interests," Scholz said. "However he has recently started using his newly acquired media power to interfere all over the world," he lamented, referring to Musk's high-profile political advocacy in the US, Britain, and Germany, among others. The German chancellor, who is running as the Social Democratic Party (SPD) candidate for a second term, drew from historical perspectives in addressing Musk's influence. "I'm familiar with interventions from powerful media entrepreneurs - they often don't do it on the side of my party, the Social Democrats. This is something we've been witnessing since the 19th century, Scholz said. - Agencies

Only arms embargo will stop Israel

WASHINGTON: US lawmaker Rashida Tlaib reiterated her call for a full arms embargo on Israel in its ongoing war in the Gaza Strip. 'The Israeli apartheid regime is continuing to kill Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinians have been so dehumanized that it hasn't even made headlines. "The ethnic cleansing has not ended. They will never stop until there's an arms embargo," Tlaib said on X. Her remarks came after an Israeli sniper shot and killed a Palestinian child Monday and injured another in central Rafah in southern Gaza despite a ceasefire and prisoner swap deal between Israel and Hamas.

The child, Zakaria Hamid Yahya Barbakh, was killed near Al-Awda Square in central Rafah when Israeli forces opened fire. Another child was injured while attempting to retrieve Zakaria's body. The killing marked a significant violation of the truce. No comments have been issued from Gaza authorities, ceasefire mediators in Egypt, Qatar, and the US, or Israeli officials. The ceasefire agreement took effect Sunday, with the first phase set to last 42 days, during which negotiations are to take place on the second and third phases, mediated by Egypt, Qatar, and the US. Under the agreement, Hamas released three Israeli women in exchange for 90 Palestinian prisoners, most of whom were women and children. - Agencies

Ethiopia, Pakistan agree to advance trade relations

"We have taken a common understanding that if the two countries work together with their population and production potential, we can achieve better mutual results," he remarked



FOREIGN DESK

ADDIS ABABA: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have agreed to work cooperatively for further strengthening the trade and commerce relations between the two countries. A bilateral meeting to this end was held today in Addis Ababa at the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration

of the FDR Ethiopia. Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, who is currently in Addis Ababa on a working visit, led the Pakistan side while the Ethiopian side was led by Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, H.E. KassahunGofe.

Both sides discussed bilateral trade relations between the two countries during the meeting and explored new avenues to forge strong cooperation for enhancing the bilateral trade. On the occasion, the Trade Minister noted the longstanding diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries. "We have taken a common understanding that if the two countries work together with their population and production potential, we can achieve better mutual results," he remarked. The Minister assured the Pakistani side of full cooperation for holding the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa in May, 2025. On the other hand, H.E. Ambassador Hamid congratulated Ethiopia for the outstanding performance in export trade and agreed to work closely for enhancing the trade relations between the two countries. A day earlier, the two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Addis

JAN/FEB 2025

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