



Islamabad POST

Monday, January 27, 2025

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Justice Mansoor criticizes hasty bench formation

Detailed News On Page-08



'Malicious fabrications'

Naqvi spurns claims of attending anti-China event in US

Interior minister says certain elements instigating US Congress against Pakistan

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday refuted reports of him attending an event considered "anti-China" during his visit to the United States. His clarification comes after various posts on social media as well as a local and an Indian media report claimed that Naqvi attended an event hosted by a lobbying group that campaigns against the neighbour's ruling Chinese Communist Party. Pakistan has held strong bilateral relations with China which has supported it through many investments and development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which was termed as a "lifeline" for the country's economy. Responding to reporters' queries in Houston, Naqvi termed the reports "propaganda". He asserted, "Neither have I attended nor have I gone to any kind of anti-Chinese state event." The minister acknowledged that he attended an event organised by Gunster Strategies Worldwide, a public relations firm in the US, which "they connected as being anti-China". "They can do as much propaganda as they want. It does not matter," Naqvi quipped, reiterating his clarification that he did not attend "any anti-China function". The interior minister has been on a visit to the US this week, where he has participated in various events and held important meetings. US lawmakers being incited against Pakistani govt: Naqvi While Naqvi termed his meetings with the US Congress members as positive, he said members of the US House of Representatives were being incited against Pakistan, state-run media reported. "A lot of dirt was being spread about Pakistan and its government here, clearing which was necessary," Naqvi said, speaking about his interactions in the US. "Congressmen and senators here are being poisoned against Pakistan, which I would term as enmity against the country. You should do politics, it is your right,

Continued on Page 06

Roadside blast leaves 1 dead, in Khuzdar

Deceased's body shifted to Combined Military Hospital, wounded taken to Trauma Centre Khuzdar

DNA

KHUZDAR: A roadside explosion in the Khori area of Balochistan's Khuzdar has resulted in at least one fatality while injuring seven others, the Levies confirmed in a statement on Sunday. The incident occurred on the M-8 Motorway when a passenger bus, on its way to Rawalpindi from Khuzdar, passed by an explosives-laden roadside vehicle. A total of 13 people were travelling in the bus which had a total capacity of 40 passengers. The deceased's body has been shifted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) whereas the wounded have been taken to Trauma Centre Khuzdar. The unfortunate incident comes as the province along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has faced the brunt of terrorist attacks which have witnessed a surge in recent months. Earlier this month, at least four people were killed while 32 others sustained injuries in an explosion in Turbat. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Serious Crime Wing Zohaib Mohsin was also injured in the blast, police said. Six members of his family had also sustained injuries in the blast claimed by the outlawed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). Before that,

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Briefs

Lawmakers meet PM Shehbaz

Discuss issues of their constituencies

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Member of National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Ghaffar Wattoo and Member of the Punjab Assembly (MPA) Fida Hussain called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Sunday and discussed with him issues of their respective constituencies. MNA Usman Awaisi also met the premier, separately. The parliamentarians also discussed with the prime minister overall political situation in the country. Former federal minister Khawaja Saad Rafique and Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan also called on the PM and exchanged views on the political situation of the country.

Gas pierces details unfurled

Gas tariff rises to Rs. 3,500/MMBTU for captive industry from February 1

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government, in response to OGRA's determinations of SNGPL and SSGCL's Review of Estimated Revenue Requirement for FY 2024-25, has issued advice on gas sale prices. Effective February 1, 2025, the gas sale price for General Industry (Captive) has been revised from Rs. 3,000/MMBTU to Rs. 3,500/MMBTU. However, it did not agree to increase the tariff to protect domestic consumers from additional burden. However, the ECC directed the Petroleum Division to take necessary steps to impose grid transition levy on captive power plants to enhance the efficiency of energy sector.

Rejects PECA legislation

Jl announces nationwide protest on January 31

Jamaat-e-Islami announces nationwide protest on Jan 31 over IPP issue and lawmakers' salary hike

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has announced a nationwide protest on January 31 over the issue of Independent Power Producers (IPPs). During a press conference in Karachi, JI chief Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, stated that protests would be held simultaneously across the country on January 31. He questioned why the public had not received any relief if the IPPs were benefiting from the agreements. Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan has rejected the controversial Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), calling for a reconsideration of the ordinance. JI Pakistan Emir, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, stated that the government has introduced the PECA ordinance, which they do not accept. He noted that similar ordinances were brought by the PML-N in 2016 and later during the PTI government. He added that the PECA ordinance was previously introduced through the Punjab government, and during the PTI regime, several journalists were forcibly abducted, with selective journalists being used to make narratives.

Continued on Page 06

IHC to hear plea against acquittal of Bushra, Imran

Khawar Maneka challenged the July 13, 2024, decision by an additional sessions judge acquitting the couple in the case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has scheduled the hearing of Khawar Maneka's appeal against the acquittal of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and wife Bushra Bibi in the iddat case for Monday. Justice Azam Khan, recently appointed to the Islamabad High Court, will preside over the hearing. Maneka had challenged the decision issued by an additional sessions judge on 13 July 2024, which acquitted the couple in the case.

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REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



ISLAMABAD: Geetika Srivastava, Charge d Affaires of the Indian High Commission and Heads of Missions of SAARC countries cutting cake to mark the Republic Day of India. - DNA

Indonesian president's Pak visit postponed

The visit is likely to take place in February 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The anticipated visit of the Indonesian President to Pakistan Prabowo Subianto, who is in office since 20 October 2024, initially scheduled to commence on January 27, has been postponed, with no new dates announced yet. According to senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry, the postponement came in

Continued on Page 06

Contempt case verdict against addl registrar today

The bench had on Thursday reserved the verdict

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A two-member bench of the Supreme Court will announce its reserved verdict in the contempt of court case against Additional Registrar Nazir Abbas today (Monday). The bench had on Thursday reserved the verdict. The court also sought arguments on the formation of a full court on the matter of

Continued on Page 06

Amid political tensions Imran Khan urges overseas Pakistanis to boycott remittances

PTI founder also calls for nationwide demonstrations on February 8, marking contentious 2024 elections as a "Black Day"

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Former prime minister Imran Khan, currently serving a jail sentence, on Sunday reiterated his call for overseas Pakistanis to boycott sending remittances, escalating political tensions as his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), faces off with the government. "Once again, I urge overseas Pakistanis to continue their boycott of foreign currency remittances," Khan said in a post on X. "Sending money to this government strengthens the very hands that are tightening the noose around your necks." The appeal comes as talks between the government and PTI, initiated last month, broke down this week.

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Govt, PTI bicker over commission as talks face uncertainty

Barrister Gohar says seven-day deadline ended; PML-N's Siddiqui says won't respond to PTI's "threats"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has refused to respond to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) charter of demands before January 28, the day the next round of talks is scheduled to take place, with the former ruling

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United States threatens Taliban leaders with 'big bounty'

In the early morning post, the new top US diplomat claimed that the Taliban was holding "more American hostages" than reports said



Tehran, Kabul call for more economic ties

AGENCIES

KABUL: Iran's foreign minister has lauded neighborly relations between Tehran and Kabul, calling for the expansion of economic ties to secure the national interests of the two Muslim countries. Abbas Araghchi made the statement in

Continued on Page 06

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: In a drastic shift from the old administration, the United States' new administration has taken a tough stance against Afghanistan's leadership, threatening the ruling Taliban leaders with placing a "big bounty" on their heads. Last week, media reports said the Biden administration and the Taliban had successfully accomplished a deal to exchange prisoners. However, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio issued a harsh warning via social media to Taliban leaders on Sunday. In the early morning post, the new top US diplomat claimed that the Taliban was holding "more American hostages" than reports said. Just hearing the Taliban is holding more American hostages than has been reported. If this is true, we will have to immediately place a VERY BIG bounty on their top leaders, maybe even bigger than the one we had on Bin Laden. "Just hearing the Taliban is holding more American hostages than has been reported," Rubio wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Rubio warned that the bounty placed on their heads might be even bigger than the one offered for Osama bin Laden, the Al-Qaeda leader killed in Pakistan by US forces in 2011. "If this is true, we will have to immediately place a

Continued on Page 06

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Fire near Nathiagali controlled after timely rescue operation

This incident highlights the importance of preparedness and rapid response in safeguarding both natural and man-made assets in vulnerable regions

DNA

NATHIAGALI: A fire broke out in the forest near the popular tourist spot of Nathiagali, close to Roomy Hotel and Jesus Burger on Sunday. The incident caused widespread concern among locals and tourists, given the dry conditions prevailing in the region due to unusually low precipitation this season. The dry weather and persistent lack of rainfall in the area had made the forest highly susceptible to fires, leading to rapid spread of flames. A joint effort by Rescue 1122, the Galayat Development Authority (GDA), and personnel from the Pakistan Air

Force (PAF) Base Kalabagh was initiated to contain the fire and prevent it from causing extensive damage. The firefighting teams, prepared with specialized equipment and vehicles, worked tirelessly in challenging conditions. The operation demanded coordinated efforts due to the difficult terrain and the speed with which the fire spread in the dry forest. After several hours of relentless effort, the combined teams successfully brought the fire under control. Their timely intervention and efficient coordination prevented the flames from reaching nearby hotels, which could have resulted in severe property damage and posed risks to

human lives. Officials acknowledged that the region's ongoing dry spell and lack of precipitation this season have significantly heightened the risk of forest fires. Authorities have urged residents and visitors to exercise caution and report any signs of fire immediately to minimize risks. This incident highlights the importance of preparedness and rapid response in safeguarding both natural and man-made assets in vulnerable regions. Local authorities are also being advised to take preventive measures, such as creating fire breaks and raising awareness among the public, to mitigate similar risks in the future.



PESHAWAR: Child Protection Specialist UNICEF Muhammad Sohail visiting painting stall during the closing ceremony of PDA Food & Culture Family Festival with the support of UNICEF at Regi Model Town Park. —APP

Govt to lower electricity prices in April: Rana

DNA

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain announced on Sunday that the government is set to decrease electricity prices in April, a move expected to benefit the agriculture sector significantly. Speaking at a gathering at Muridke, the minister emphasized that the government is working tirelessly to develop the agricultural sector. He highlighted ongoing discussions with countries like Belarus and China to foster agricultural advancements in Pakistan. Rana Tanveer said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is striving to make Pakistan globally competitive in agriculture. As part of this effort, young Pakistani researchers are being sent to China to enhance their expertise in agricultural research, he added. Despite these efforts, the minister expressed concern that Pakistan's per-acre production remains stagnant at 30/maund, underscoring the need for transformative measures. Criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Rana Tanveer stated that the party has consistently focused on Pakistan's destruction, causing severe damage to the agricultural sector. He accused the party's founder of continuing to harm the nation. However, he asserted that the public has rejected the PTI, marking the end of its political relevance.

Punjab CM stresses importance of clean, renewable energy

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has underscored the crucial role of clean and renewable energy for the survival of our planet, calling it an urgent necessity of our time. In her message on the International Day of Clean Energy, being celebrated on Sunday, the CM stated, "Clean and renewable energy is vital for our survival and the need of the hour." She reaffirmed Punjab's commitment to phasing out fossil fuels and ushering in a new era of clean and green energy. To modernize the province's energy infrastructure, she introduced the CM solar panel program, which aims to replace traditional energy sources with sustainable alternatives. "The CM solar panel program will ease the economic burden on citizens and bring a revolu-

tion to the energy sector," she noted. Additionally, the government has launched a solarization project for agricultural tube wells, ensuring that farmers have access to affordable and clean energy for their agricultural needs. "This initiative will provide farmers with sustainable, cost-effective energy, boosting agricultural productivity," the CM remarked. Addressing the transport sector, the CM highlighted significant steps taken to introduce clean energy solutions. "We are introducing the E-Vehicle regime in Punjab to reduce smoke and pollution," she stated. In a bid to promote eco-friendly transportation among students, Maryam Nawaz also spoke about the government's pioneering approach in introducing Pakistan's first-ever comprehensive environmental policy, where clean energy is a core focus. "Clean energy is a key component of this policy, aimed at safeguarding the environment for future generations," she emphasized.

help reduce fuel costs. "These e-bikes will empower students to live a green and cost-efficient lifestyle," she added. On the public transport front, Punjab has recently procured 27 electric buses, with plans to order 500 more, marking a significant shift toward electrified public transportation. "This will further reduce emissions and improve the public transport system in the province," the CM said. Maryam Nawaz also spoke about the government's pioneering approach in introducing Pakistan's first-ever comprehensive environmental policy, where clean energy is a core focus. "Clean energy is a key component of this policy, aimed at safeguarding the environment for future generations," she emphasized.

Police dismantle weapons & drug syndicate, arrest 446 suspects

ISLAMABAD: In a major crackdown, Islamabad police have arrested 446 suspects involved in illegal weapons possession and drug trafficking during the current month. According to a statement on Sunday by Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG) Raza the law enforcement authorities seized a total of 492 pistols of various calibers, 42 modern automatic rifles with magazines, and over 24,000 rounds of ammunition from the arrested suspects. In addition to firearms, significant quantities of illegal drugs were also recovered. Police seized 65,530 grams of heroin, 24,033 grams of hashish, 8,181 grams of ice, 1,607 liters of alcohol, and 63 narcotic tablets from the suspects. A public relation officer told APP that the arrested individuals have been booked under relevant charges, and further investigations are ongoing. The Islamabad police have assured the public that all efforts will be made to bring these criminals to justice. DIG Raza also emphasized the police's commitment to maintaining security in the city. "Islamabad police remains fully prepared to tackle anti-social elements," he stated. "Street crime and other serious offenses have decreased, and the police are continuously striving to provide safety and protection to citizens." Ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and property remains the top priority of the Islamabad police, as reiterated by DIG Islamabad, Syed Ali Raza.—APP

Rs 1.5m for production lab at Journalism dept at UoP

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, has said that journalism is the fourth pillar of the state, and its value should be recognized by professional journalists as well as intellectual and sensitive circles of society. The provincial minister expressed these views as the chief guest at the closing ceremony of a five-day national workshop jointly organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Peshawar, and the Women Media Center Karachi here on Saturday. On this occasion, he was accompanied by Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, Professor Dr. Muhammad Naem Qazi, Chairperson of the Journalism Department Dr. Mehnaz Gul, other faculty members including Dr. Bakht Zaman, Media and Protocol Officer Ali Imran, and senior journalist Nasir Hussain. Meena Khan Afridi announced the release of 1.5 million rupees for the immediate construction and installation of the production lab for the Journalism Department at the University of Peshawar. He also expressed hope that the university's female journalism students would play an active role in raising awareness about emerging societal issues using the production lab. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peshawar appreciated the minister's efforts for the university and said that his team is working towards the provincial government's policy of self-reliance.—APP

Building reservoirs vital to combating intensifying drought risks

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing severe winter drought, which has adversely affected winter sowing, particularly wheat in the country, is in fact a part of the larger trend of increasing climate variability that threatens to disrupt agriculture, exacerbate water shortages and elevate the risks of future droughts across the country. But building more water reservoirs, restoring wetlands, and promoting drought-tolerant crop varieties can go a long way in mitigating recurring and intensifying drought risks in the country. This was stated by Muhammad Saleem Shaikh, a climate policy expert and spokesperson for the climate change and environmental coordination ministry, in a press statement issued here on

Sunday. He said that the country is currently grappling with a unusual winter drought because of 40pc below normal rains between September 2024 to January 2025, which has put productivity of winter crops and livelihoods of farming communities at risk. Due to acutely low rains, water stress has already exacerbated further in cultivated lands in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, in particularly in rain-fed regions, due to the limited supply of irrigation water from river system for Rabi crops, he added. "If the rainfall situation does not improve anytime soon, wheat production may suffer up to 50pc," the ministry official Muhammad Saleem Shaikh warned, urging farmers to use water resources avail-

able for irrigation in any form more judiciously. He highlighted that reduced water availability due to low rainfall was adversely impacting the growth of crops like wheat, a staple food as well as vital cash crops like potato, leading to fears of lower production and rising food prices and their shortages in future. He said that the ongoing winter drought conditions in the country underscore the urgent need for a unified response to address the country's water crisis. "It is imperative that all stakeholders work together to build a sustainable future, strengthen water resilience and safeguard the livelihoods of millions of people depending on agriculture and water resources for survival," the ministry official emphasized.

Govt fails to make serious efforts to secure release of Dr Aafia: Siraj

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: Former Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Siraj-ul-Haq, stated that over the past 22 years, governments have failed to make serious efforts to secure the release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, who has been imprisoned in the U.S. since 2003. He criticized the Pakistan Muslim League (Q), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), four caretaker governments, and the current coalition government of PDM for their negligence. He expressed these views during his Friday sermon at Jamia Masjid Dar-ul-Islam Colony in At-

tock, media interactions, the inauguration of the operation theater at Al-Khidmat Medical Center, and the graduation ceremony of Quranic studies students at Jamia Tafheemat-e-Islamia. Prominent attendees included Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Attock Sardar Amjad Ali Khan, President Jamia Tafheemat-e-Islamia Maulana Jabir Ali Khan, Principal Maulana Naemullah, and others. Students from various parts of Pakistan who completed their Quranic education were also honored. Siraj-ul-Haq criticized former U.S. President Joe Biden, who released 800 prisoners before leaving office, stating that even the last Afghan prisoner has been freed, but the Pakistani

government has failed to secure Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release. He mentioned reports that the U.S. seeks the release of Dr. Shakeel Afridi in exchange for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and stated that if releasing Afridi would free an innocent sister, it should be considered. He emphasized the need to transform Pakistan into a true Islamic state and criticized the law and order situation in the country, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. He condemned the failure of the government to provide security and expressed concerns about worsening conditions, warning of dire consequences if stability is not restored. He also highlighted the severe economic challenges

facing the country, including inflation and unemployment, which have made life unbearable for the common man. He condemned reliance on IMF loans and the imposition of Western culture. He expressed frustration over the lack of progress in implementing an interest-free economic system and the neglect of merit in governance. Siraj-ul-Haq condemned the negligence in addressing the plight of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and criticized the disconnect between religion and politics. He called on people to choose righteous leaders through their votes and warned of accountability in the hereafter for voting for corrupt individuals.

Food points penalised over hygiene violations

DNA

MULTAN: Under the directions of Director General Punjab Food Authority (PFA), Muhammad Asim Javed, the authority launched a crackdown against food safety violations in Multan. The operation, led by Deputy Director Operations Tahir Saeed, resulted in the inspection of dairy shops, water plants, hospital canteens, and samosa pastry production units. During the inspections, serious violations of food safety laws were uncovered, leading to the closure of four food units until compliance was

ensured. At a dairy shop in WAPDA Town, adulteration in yogurt was confirmed, resulting in the registration of a FIR at the BZU Police station and the immediate suspension of production. A bakery in Kot Rabnawaz was shut down due to the unhygienic environment in which food was being prepared. Similarly, a water plant on Northern Bypass was sealed after bacteria were detected in the water supply. In Samijabad, a samosa pastry production unit was stopped from operating due to the presence of a washroom within the production area, violating hygiene protocols.

The crackdown also extended to hospital canteens and drink corners. The canteen at Cardiology Hospital was fined Rs. 25,000 for storing expired beverages in its freezer, while a drink corner on Kothewala road, Shah Rukn-e-Alam, was fined Rs. 10,000 for selling expired juices. Additionally, 37 liters of expired cold drinks and 20 kilograms of expired confectionery items were discarded during the operation. DG PFA Muhammad Asim Javed emphasized that strict actions were being taken to eliminate the sale of expired and substandard food items to protect public health.

Multani Mitti remains top choice amid beauty trends in rural areas of S Punjab

MULTAN: In the ever-evolving world of beauty and skincare, where countless products promise miraculous results, the centuries-old remedy, Multani Mitti continues to hold its ground with unmatched charm and efficacy. The mitti is also commonly known as Fuller's Earth. This natural wonder has been cherished for generations and is experiencing resurgence in popularity as a go-to solution for skin care enthusiasts around the rural areas of South Punjab. Multani Mitti is more than just clay; it is a powerhouse of minerals that work wonders for the skin. Known for its gentle yet effective properties, it is widely acclaimed for deep cleansing,

soothing inflammation, and revitalizing dull and tired skin. Its ability to absorb excess oil and impurities makes it best treatment for those with oily or acne-prone skin, while its cooling effect provides relief from sunburn and irritation. The Mitti is often used as a base ingredient in face masks, blended with other natural ingredients like rose water, honey, or turmeric, creating customized solutions for various skin types and concerns. From reducing blemishes to improving skin tone, its benefits are boundless. What truly sets Multani Mitti apart is its accessibility and affordability. In an era of expensive chemical treatments, this humble clay

offers a natural, cost-effective alternative that aligns with the growing trend of eco-friendly and organic skincare. Rich in minerals like magnesium, calcium, and silica, Multani Mitti has become a sought-after solution for those battling oily and acne-prone skin. Syedia Aliza Gillani, a local beautician, informs about Multani Mitti's ability to absorb excessive oil and impurities, attributing its effectiveness to the natural elements embedded in this versatile clay. Multani Mitti is like nature's vacuum for the skin, said Aliza Gillani. She added that Multani Mitti's natural exfoliating properties work wonders, unclogging pores, and leaving the skin with a radiant

and smooth texture. But its benefits don't stop here, she remarked. Multani Mitti is highly beneficial in reducing blemishes, scars, and pigmentation and thus offering a natural solution for achieving an even skin tone. The clay's cooling and soothing effect also make it the best natural remedy for sunburns, rashes, and various skin irritations, she claimed. To a query about possible allergic issues, Gillani maintained the importance of conducting a patch test before using Multani Mitti. She added that generally it was safe for most skin types, however a patch test was vital to identify any potential allergic reactions or sensitivities," she advised.

Another beautician, Asifa Bashir Chaudhary, also shared some benefits of Multani Mitti. She stated "It leaves the skin feeling exceptionally soft, radiant, and with a noticeable glow. Usually, incorporated into facial routines, it acts as a transformative step that enhances the overall texture and luminosity of the skin". Multani Mitti is not only a skincare marvel but it does wonders for the hair too. She termed it a game-changer for those struggling with excessive oil and dandruff. About usage, mixed with other ingredients like rose water, lemon juice, or honey, Multani Mitti transforms into a powerhouse treatment for luscious locks.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA	Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Palestine	Palestine Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Sudan	National Day
Jan 04 / Myanmar	Independence Day
Jan 06 / Iraq	Armed Forces Day
Jan 12 / Tanzania	Armed Forces Day
Jan 14 / Uzbekistan	Armed Forces Day
Jan 15 / Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Mali	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Laos	Armed Forces Day
Jan 25 / Thailand	Armed Forces Day
Jan 26 / Australia	National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan's Minister for Defence Industry Vugar Mustafayev visited Pakistan Monument and Museum with delegation.

Sehat Sahulat needs to improve service delivery

The study underscores the importance of establishing a comprehensive and structured grievance redressal system to address challenges in service delivery and ensure timely resolution of complaints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has unveiled an in-depth study on the Grievance Redressal (GR) system of the Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP). Pakistani cuisine recipes. This landmark program, which provides health insurance to over 7.9 million families across 68 districts in Pakistan, has emerged as a crucial lifeline for Pakistan's marginalized communities. Supported by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, World Health Organization (WHO), the study highlights the program's successes, critical insights into strengthening grievance mechanisms to ensure its sustainability and greater efficiency, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Authored by Dr. Shujaat Farooq, Director Research PIDE, and Nabila Kunwal, Research Fellow PIDE, the report commends SSP's efforts in ensuring access to healthcare for marginalized populations and highlights its role in reducing the burden of catastrophic health expenditures. It acknowledges the program's strong foundation but notes that as it evolves, the grievance redressal system (GRS) must also adapt to meet the growing needs of beneficiaries. According to the Press Release issued from PIDE, the study underscores the importance of establishing a comprehensive and structured grievance redressal system to address challenges in service delivery and ensure timely resolution of complaints. Key observations include the need for a standardized

framework to tackle issues such as enrolment difficulties, denial of services, and limited empanel hospitals. Currently, there are limited options for a citizen to register a complaint or acquire information about program. The sole source to register the complaint is the call center, and it requires consistent upgradation and adequate staffing. The program requires a centralized complaint management system (ICMS) to efficiently handle the complaints. Pakistani cuisine recipes At the design level, the SSP needs to improve various areas, i.e., build a national consensus on the federal-provincial role and promote competition in service delivery as there is a single vendor right now (State Life Insurance Corporation). The government has to opt a principal decision on

financing inpatient financing to public hospitals as both the insurance and financing is not viable simultaneously. Ideally the public hospitals should compete with the private hospitals to finance their inpatient expenses. The program should not pay the premium for all citizens and opt some co-payment formulas to optimize public resources, i.e., the government should pay the premium of only poor households. Currently, a limited number of hospitals are on-board for inpatient services, and many of them opt for a 'pick and choose behavior'. To incentivize, the treatment packages must be market-based, so every hospital feels an incentive to participate. Additionally, the provincial regulatory framework must ensure that every private and public hospital with inpatient health facilities is part of scheme. The report also highlights the need to expand

the program's regional presence. Establishing local offices and enhancing public awareness campaigns will improve engagement and accessibility for beneficiaries. An integrated and automated grievance system, equipped with dashboards for real-time monitoring, is recommended to streamline complaint handling and enhance transparency. Linking this system with health management information systems (HMIS) will enable more effective service delivery. Policy-level interventions are essential to address systemic gaps, including increasing hospital availability, streamlining enrollment processes, and implementing live data updates in collaboration with NADRA. These steps will help resolve recurring challenges and enhance the program's overall performance.

100 student volunteers' complete friends of police program

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police's Friends of Police Program, aimed at promoting awareness about traffic laws and road safety, marked a significant milestone with the successful completion of its student volunteer batch, consisting of 100 students from prominent universities, on Sunday. A public relation officer told APP that the program was initiated under the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, with students from leading universities actively participating. The Islamabad Police's Friends of Police program, which seeks to educate citizens about traffic laws and road safety, celebrated the successful completion of its student volunteer batch. "set it in one" A formal ceremony was held at the Traffic Police Headquarters in Faizabad, where Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, welcomed the volunteers and commended them for completing their training. The ceremony was attended by university students and members of the Islamabad Police education team. On the occasion, CTO Muhammad Sarfraz Virk emphasized the importance of shaping students' minds for a better society and highlighted the difficulty of changing public perceptions about the police. "We are presenting our processes and services to the public so that people understand the true role of the police," he stated. "I do not believe in lofty claims but in working practically 24/7. Those who serve the public are chosen by Allah Almighty. The police department is the first to respond in difficult times. We are aligning the police with the demands of the modern era," said CTO Virk. He further added, "The Islamabad Police are the guardians of the blood of martyrs.

Quarterly medicated pedicure advised to prevent foot issues

ISLAMABAD: Medicated pedicure is a procedure performed in a clinic to treat various foot problems, including nail fungus, ingrown toenails, corns and calluses. Talking to APP on Sunday, Podiatrist Salma Roshan said that medicated pedicure is recommended every three months to prevent foot-related issues. She explained that performing the pedicure helps in preventing the spread of fungus from its initial stage to advanced stages. Explaining

the procedure, Salma said that medical-grade cutters are used to trim hard nails, while spatulas are used to gently remove dead skin. She said that surgical blades are carefully used to remove calluses and corns. "Nail grinding, drilling and filing machines are also utilized to correct nail deformities," she added. She said that the procedure begins with cleaning the feet with antiseptic to prevent the spread of germs. She said that the nails are then

cut using sterilized tools. Following the cutting, nail filing is performed to manage discoloration, remove dust, and trim cuticles, she maintained. Salma highlighted the importance of exercising extra caution when treating diabetic patients, particularly those taking blood thinners. "Diabetic patients with ingrown toenails, corns, or calluses should avoid attempting to cut their own nails to lead to serious complications,"

she warned. She noted that nail buffing and grinding are performed for patients experiencing extra nail growth, thick nails or fungal infections. The podiatrist explained that hard skin and fissures can develop due to wearing ill-fitting shoes and walking on uneven surfaces. "To address persistent issues, custom orthotics or shoe inserts are used, which help in dealing with abnormal arches, hammertoes and bunions," she said.—APP

EPA DG announces ban on plastic bags below 75 microns


ISLAMABAD: Punjab's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Director General Imran Hamid Sheikh announced that the provincial government is taking bold measures to combat pollution, including a ban on plastic bags thinner than 75 microns and promoting plastic recycling. In an interview with a private news channel, Imran Hamid stated that Punjab is now implementing aggressive policies and emergency measures under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz Sharif to tackle environmental issues. Specifically, they are focusing on recycling plastic materials into useful products such as chairs, benches and kids' swings, he added. He stated that while a complete ban on plastic bags is not yet in place, a strict prohibition has been imposed on the use of plastic bags thinner than 75 microns, and such bags will no longer be accepted. He explained that to gather accurate data on plastic usage, the government is transitioning from irregular to regular supply chains, enabling them to track and monitor consumption, production and supply of plastic materials. DG also revealed that Pakistan generates a staggering 3.3 million tons of plastic waste annually, highlighting the enormity of the plastic pollution problem in the country. This alarming figure underscores the need for effective waste management strategies and policies to mitigate the environmental and health impacts of plastic waste, he added. He emphasized that the government is conducting extensive awareness drives not only in rural areas but also in urban schools and colleges, aiming to educate the younger generation about the importance of proper waste disposal and the hazards of plastic pollution.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participating in a protest demonstration in front of the Indian High Commission rganized by All Parties Hurriyat Conference to observe the Indian Republic Day as Black Day.


VC AIOU terms role of religious scholars as vital for reforming society

ISLAMABAD: Vice-Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized the importance of translations in promoting Islamic values, traditions, and culture. He stated that translation is the most effective means of intellectual progress and serves as a window to understanding other languages and civilizations. Therefore, the process of translations in Pakistan needs to be expanded, and scholars and the religious community can play an exemplary role in this noble cause. Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of a five-day training workshop titled "Translation as a Science," held yesterday at the university. He further stated that the promotion of Islamic values and traditions has, unfortunately, remained a distant dream, which now needs to be realized. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the elevated status of religious scholars in society, noting that their words carry weight, and people trust and believe what they say. He urged religious scholars to take the lead in promoting Islamic values and contributing to societal reform.—DNA



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Briefs

DC directs for successful completion of Suthra Punjab Program

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi and Chairman Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC), Hassan Waqar Cheema has directed for utilizing all resources to ensure the successful completion of "Suthra Punjab Program". While attending a briefing at RWMC he emphasized the immediate resolution of public complaints regarding sanitation and stressed the importance of using modern techniques and equipment to maintain high standards of cleanliness. He urged all units to remain active and to encourage citizens to become responsible by raising awareness about cleanliness through public campaigns. He appreciated the performance of the staff working under the Suthra Punjab Program and expressed his expectations that they would continue to fulfill their duties with dedication and honesty. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of teamwork for the success of the program, stating that these efforts would contribute to transforming Rawalpindi into a model city. Earlier, CEO RWMC Rana Sajid Safdar and other senior officials provided a detailed briefing on the "Suthra Punjab Program." The CEO informed the Deputy Commissioner and Chairman RWMC about the progress, challenges and future plans of the Suthra Punjab Program. He highlighted that numerous measures were being undertaken to ensure cleanliness in both urban and rural areas, with a special focus on the Zero Waste Policy.—APP

Relations between Bangladesh, Pakistan to grow stronger

DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Iqbal Hussain Khan Saturday said that his country is moving towards democracy after current changes and relations with Pakistan would further strengthen with each passing day. He was addressing media persons in Peshawar Press Club here. Bangladesh Press Attaché, Muhammad Tayyab, President Peshawar Press Club, M Riaz and senior journalists were also present on the occasion. Iqbal Hussain Khan said that Bangladesh people firmly believe in democracy adding that country is fast moving towards democracy after current changes. He said that change of the setup in Bangladesh would lead country towards better future, development and freedom of press. He said that speed for democracy is very strong in Bangladesh where people love freedom of press and expression. He said that elections would be held in Bangladesh in December 2025 or start of 2026. Highlighting old cultural and traditional similarities between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he said that there are many vistas of future cooperation between two countries in sectors of trade, commerce, tourism, health, education and gemstone sector.—APP

Hundreds of employees rendered jobless due to restaurants closure

The wildlife law applies equally to Islamabad Club, Riding Club, Polo Club, Gun Club and more than 100 restaurants and commercial centers located in The Margalla Hills National Park. Shah-Allah Ditta, Shakarparian, Club Road and all the commercial centers in Saidpur are still doing their business

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At the behest of chairperson Islamabad Wildlife Board, La Montana and Monal were not only closed, but the buildings of these restaurants built with government money were also demolished. Margalla National Park has a law and boundary, Margalla Hills, and Pir Sohawa Road have neither any legal status nor any separate law. If the Chairperson Wildlife Board has discovered such a law, then the general public should also be informed about it. The wildlife law applies equally to Islamabad Club, Riding Club, Polo Club, Gun Club and more than 100 restaurants and commercial centers located in The Margalla Hills National Park. Shah-Allah Ditta, Shakarparian, Club Road and all the commercial centers in Saidpur are still doing their business. Chairperson Wildlife Board, Our question is about the double standards of the ordinance, why do officers have separate laws for their children and separate for public spaces? At the behest of the Chairperson Wildlife Board, demolishing only two restaurants out of 113 commercial centers in the national park is not personal enmity, then what else is? Our only demand to the Chairperson Wildlife Board is that all the restaurants used by officers and their children in Margalla National Park should also be brought under the preview of the National Park Law. What could be a greater example of the excesses



of the Chairperson Wildlife Board than the fact that after the demolition of Monal and La Montana, a huge restaurant in Daman Koh was licensed to do business within the limits of Margalla Park. But the Chairperson Wildlife Board refused to meet the 1,100 employees who were rendered unemployed. These actions of the Chairperson Wildlife Board made us unemployed on the one hand and on the other hand, the entire

area was made a hub of criminal activities. In the last four months, three murders and several robberies have taken place on Pir Sohawa Road, the record of which is available at Kohsar police station. Not only this, Pir Sohawa Road is also completely damaged at this time and garbage and dirt are seen everywhere. Why don't the so-called environmental pollution authorities see all this now? With the closure of the 4 acres restau-

rants in the 31,000-acre Margalla National Park, which were located in the name of chowki in the Master Plan of Islamabad and have been providing entertainment to the general public, has the wildlife in Margalla National Park been relieved of all the problems faced by them? Due to the demolition of both the restaurants, has the wildlife started using Pir Sohawa Road? not at all, it is a blatant joke and

lie. We demand from the Chairperson Wildlife Board that all unemployed employees should be given licenses to open kiosks on the land adjacent to Monal and La Montana and if our legitimate demand is not met, our next step will be a sit-in in front of the Islamabad Club and will continue till the law of the Wildlife Board is equally implemented on Islamabad Club. Hope it doesn't happen.

ANF recovers over 52 kg drugs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 7 operations across the country, managed to recover over 52 kg drugs worth over Rs 5.9 million and arrested 6 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday. He informed that 25 grams cocaine hidden in a speaker was recovered from a parcel sent to Karachi through Lahore Airport. In 2nd operation, 21.6 kg hashish hidden in secret cavities of a car was seized on M-1 Motorway, Islamabad and an accused was arrested. In third operation, 18 kg hashish was recovered from a rickshaw intercepted near Narowal Road, Lahore and an accused was rounded up during the operation. 1.030 kg heroin, 4.8 kg hashish and 1.030 ice drug were recovered from a car near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza, Sheikhupura and a woman was arrested. 2.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near GT Road, Jhelum. 2 kg hashish was seized from a car checked near Sohrab Goth, Karachi and a drug dealer was netted during the operation. In 7th operation, 1.2 kg hashish was recovered from a woman nabbed near Iqbal Shaheed Toll Plaza Attock. Separate cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

Tarar lauds role of University of London in Pak educational system

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that the University of London has been playing an important role in Pakistan's education system. Addressing the alumni of the University of London here, the minister remarked that the university played an important role in raising the standard of legal education in Pakistan. He said that meeting the alumni of the University of London was a source of joy for him as he had started his career as a tutor at that university. Appreciating the University of London for its invaluable partnership with Pakistan, the minister remarked that graduates from the university were today making outstanding contributions in important sectors of the country. They have a key role in the development of Pakistan and the field of law, he opined. The minister said the alumni network of the University of London has been continuously developing for the past several decades expressing hope that it will continue to develop in the future as well. He said that the Father of the Nation Quaide-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the great thinker and philosopher poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal got their education from the great educational institution of England Lincoln's Inn. Both of these great personalities played an important role in the establishment of Pakistan and shaping its future through their legal expertise and political insight, he stated. The federal minister for information paid tributes to Dr. Khadija, CEO of Roots School System, for her outstanding services in the field of education. He said it was encouraging to see women leaders coming forward as in our society they had to face difficulties from the beginning of life. "It is a good sign to see the increase in the number of female graduates of the University of London," he said. The minister appreciated the educational system of the University of London, which provided the best learning experience for its students to succeed in the professional field.

Pakistan's sesame seed export to China surpass \$226m

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of sesame seeds to China exceeded \$226 million in 2024, marking a significant development in bilateral trade relations. This export growth reflects the increasing demand for Pakistani agricultural products in the Chinese market and highlights potential areas for further economic cooperation, according to Ghulam Qadir, Trade and Investment Counsellor at Pakistan's Embassy in China. Ghulam stated that the rise in sesame seed exports in recent years can be attributed to several factors, including enhanced agricultural practices, improved quality control measures, and the establishment of direct trade links between Pakistani farmers and Chinese importers. Known for their nutritional value and diverse culinary applications, Pakistani sesame seeds have gained popularity among Chinese consumers, contributing to the surge in demand. Ac-

ording to the latest data from General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), China imported 177,640.638 tons of sesame seeds from Pakistan between January and December 2024, with a total trade value of \$226.52 million. Pakistani farmers report that Chinese importers have expressed satisfaction with the quality of the seeds, which are widely used in cooking oil, snacks, and health foods. The seeds are also recognized for their health benefits, including high levels of antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals, making them a preferred ingredient in the health-conscious Chinese market. Overall, China imported 1,182,602.068 tons of sesame seeds worth \$1.86 billion from global suppliers in 2024. Niger, Tanzania, and Pakistan were the top three sources, with exports valued at \$514 million, \$229 million, and \$226 million, respectively, Gwadar Pro reported.—APP

Police arrest three kite sellers with over 3060 kites

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police on the directives of City Police Officer are making efforts to control kite flying and managed to arrest three kite sellers on recovery of over 3060 kites and 25 kite flying string rolls, said a police spokesman here on Sunday. He informed, that Sadiqabad police arrested two kite sellers namely Adeel and Khalid and recovered over 2000 kites and 20 kite flying string rolls. Gujjar Khan police netted a kite seller namely Ethesam on recovery of 1060 kites and five kite flying string rolls. Separate cases have been registered against the accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

Afghan dacoit gang busted: DIG

The suspects, Salam Khan (alias Rizwan) and Faisal Khan, were identified as Afghan nationals residing in Sohan. One accomplice remains at large, and efforts are underway to ensure their arrest

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Syed Ali Raza held a significant press conference on Saturday at the Rescue-15 Field Office, announcing the arrest of two members of an organized Afghan gang involved in home invasions and armed robberies. Stolen goods worth over PKR 35 million, along with weapons used in the crimes, were recovered. Detailing the incident, DIG Syed Ali Raza stated that unidentified culprits broke into a residence in the Aabpara area, looting gold jewelry, cash, watches, artificial jewelry, and other valuables at gunpoint. In response, DIG Raza stated that a special police team, led by SSP Operations/Investigation Muhammad Arsalan Shahzeb, was constituted. Using technical resources and human intelligence, the team swiftly apprehended two suspects identified as Salam Khan and Faisal Khan. The arrested suspects were found in possession of 1,117 grams of gold, artificial jewelry, watches, and other valuables, all worth over PKR 35 million. The weapons and ammunition used during the robberies were also recovered. DIG Ali Raza commended the police team for their prompt action and announced cash rewards for their efforts. He further emphasized that Islamabad Police is actively working to apprehend suspects involved in heinous crimes, including murder. Efforts to reduce crime rates in the capital city have led to a noticeable decline in criminal activities. The suspects, Salam Khan (alias Rizwan) and Faisal Khan, were identified as Afghan nationals residing in Sohan. One accomplice remains at large, and efforts are underway to ensure their arrest.—DNA

Scientific research – A reformation direly needed

SHUMAILA NOREEN

ISLAMABAD: Scientific research serves as the backbone of progress in advanced economies fostering innovation and providing solutions to critical challenges in healthcare, energy, agriculture and education sectors. However, in Pakistan it remains a rare trodden path with limited investment in research and development (R&D) leaving the country to continuously struggling to address critical challenges and achieve socio-economic progress. According to UNESCO, Pakistan spends only about 0.25 percent of its GDP on research and development which is far below than the recommended 1-3 percent for developing countries. This underinvestment has resulted in

brain drain, insufficient research infrastructure and missed opportunities for economic competitiveness and experts believe that investment in this sector is inevitable to take strides for development and self-sufficiency. "Modern global progress is fundamentally knowledge-driven. Today, sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development is rooted in technology and knowledge, not merely in natural resources," remarked Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Choudhary. "Even with abundant natural resources and a large population, a nation's development hinges on its advancements in relevant technologies and their effective implementation," he explained. Dr. Choudhary asserted that research and devel-

opment (R&D) are indispensable for Pakistan's progress, particularly in addressing the country's pressing crises in water, energy and food security. "To overcome these challenges, we must explore technological solutions tailored to our unique circumstances." He also underscored importance of technological innovation in addressing social challenges, particularly in education. "To achieve national development, we need to educate millions of out-of-school children in Pakistan. With our large youth population, rich in creative potential, we must focus on skill development and technology-driven education to prepare them for global and local job markets." He also highlighted need for a robust higher education system and well-established R&D

institutions. "Investing in education and research is critical. Unfortunately, in our political landscape, this sector often remained sidelined despite its global recognition as bipartisan priorities." He said there was time when higher education thrived in Pakistan, but financial hardships led to reduced funding, deteriorating research capacity and brain drain, with of our brightest minds seeking opportunities abroad. "Therefore, we need an urgent action to reverse this trend to boost employability and retain talent." Giving a comparison, Dr. Choudhary said, globally, the average spending on scientific research is 0.8 percent of GDP. Pakistan allocates less than 0.2 percent, lagging behind even Sub-Saharan African nations and several Muslim countries.



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Vol: 05 Issue: 241

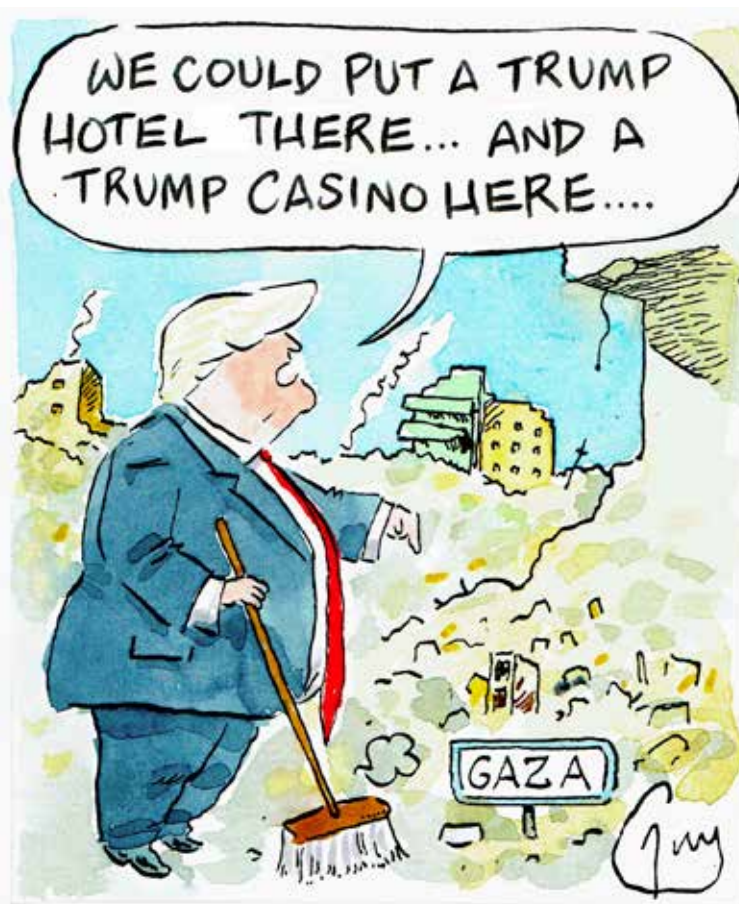
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Gaza demands justice, not exile

THE recent remarks by former U.S. President Donald Trump, proposing the mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza to neighboring nations like Egypt and Jordan, represent a deeply flawed and alarming approach to resolving the region's chronic crises. His call to "clean out" Gaza and relocate over two million Palestinians to other countries reflects a vision that disregards historical, humanitarian, and political realities. Such proposals not only fail to address the root causes of the conflict but also risk exacerbating the suffering of an already beleaguered population. The Gaza Strip, home to 2.3 million Palestinians, has long been a symbol of resilience amidst adversity. Years of blockades, wars, and displacement have turned this tiny, densely populated enclave into one of the most tragic humanitarian hotspots in modern history. The recent escalation of violence, which has left thousands dead and almost the entire population displaced multiple times, has only compounded Gaza's misery. Yet, suggesting that the solution lies in uprooting its people from their land undermines the fundamental principles of justice, human rights, and international law. Forced displacement, as proposed by Trump, is not only a gross violation of international humanitarian standards but also an erasure of the Palestinian people's right to live in their homeland. The suggestion to build housing for Palestinians in other countries, under the pretext of fostering peace, echoes a disturbing historical parallel: the Nakba of 1948, during which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes. To propose a similar solution today dismisses the painful legacy of displacement that remains central to the Palestinian experience. The people of Gaza, despite decades of hardship, remain deeply connected to their land. This connection is not just physical but also cultural, historical, and spiritual. It is not merely a matter of geography but a fundamental part of their identity. Efforts to displace them, whether "temporary" or permanent, ignore the resilience they have shown in remaining steadfast in the face of ongoing aggression. Trump's plan also places undue pressure on Egypt and Jordan, countries that have already borne the brunt of hosting millions of refugees over the years. Both nations face significant socio-economic challenges, and the idea of absorbing more than a million additional displaced Palestinians is neither feasible nor fair. Such proposals threaten to destabilize these nations, potentially creating new political and economic crises in a region already fraught with tension. Furthermore, the suggestion undermines the broader struggle for Palestinian self-determination. By shifting the responsibility for Gaza's population onto neighboring countries, it absolves Israel of its obligations as an occupying power under international law. It also perpetuates the narrative that Palestinians can simply be relocated rather than having their legitimate rights recognized and restored. Trump's suggestion to "clean out" Gaza reduces the conflict to a simplistic and transactional solution that overlooks the complexities of the situation. Building housing in other countries may offer a temporary respite, but it does nothing to address the underlying causes of Gaza's suffering: the ongoing occupation, the suffocating blockade, and the denial of Palestinian statehood.



US surveillance

DONALD Trump's interview with Fox News last week had a jaw-dropping moment. The president seemed to dismiss the supposedly existential danger posed by TikTok to America: "Is it that important for China to be spying on young people watching crazy videos?" Of course, the US ban-or-sell order was never about that. The real but unspoken fear is not that Beijing would use TikTok to spy on American youth. Rather, the real US concern is that TikTok has been following American laws and regulations to a tee, thus hindering law enforcement and intelligence agencies in accessing its user data through clandestine means. Since the groundbreaking revelations of Edward Snowden, we know practically all the major US-owned telecoms and social media platforms have "back doors" left open for US government agencies to access. The "Twitter files" released by Elon Musk after the tycoon bought it showed how US agencies frequently demanded access to its user data. As pointed out by the Washington-based Brennan Centre for Justice, among others, "there are other [US] laws, as well as gaps in the law, that are increasingly enabling warrantless surveillance of Americans ... [The] government can access some of the same information it obtains through back-door searches - and evade legal privacy protections - by simply purchasing the information from data brokers, all without a warrant." In the context of so-called TikTok refugees, it is revealing that hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of users, prefer risking potential Chinese surveillance and censorship than actual American ones by migrating to RedNote. Meanwhile, the same logic - the need to expand surveillance - applies to Washington's multi-year attempt to destroy Huawei. Washington's global efforts to undermine the tech giant's international telecoms business are well-known. What is less discussed, but perhaps even more important in terms of geopolitics, is the US success in rolling back HMN Tech - formerly Huawei Marine Networks - with its once world-beating business in laying and maintaining submarine telecoms cables. In 2020, the Chinese Hengtong Group took over the majority ownership, from parent Huawei, but that did not stop the American hostility. Last September, Washington warned Vietnam not to proceed with its plan for HMN to build new undersea cables to replace aging ones, otherwise it risked losing US investments. It is applying similar pressure to Qatar, which is planning to use HMN to build fibre optic cables for its biggest offshore oilfield. In 2021, the World Bank, and Nauru, Kiribati and Micronesia killed a contract bid by HMN to lay undersea cables. We now know why. Their strategic territories are being integrated into the Aukus military alliance - between the US, Britain and Australia - against China. As part of the "US Clean Network Programme", launched in 2020, companies from allied and partner states have been told to stay away from HMN under Hengtong. Until then, HMN had a global market share of about 10 per cent in the undersea cable business, including building or maintaining about 100 of the world's key 400 submarine cables. The ostensible reason is that the Chinese could access HMN-served undersea cables transmitting data for the world economy. But the other side of the coin is that US agencies would not be able to access those same cables.

Innovations, risks and global dynamics

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The implications of quantum computing are vast, extending from national security to economic growth. One of the most immediate concerns is the potential of quantum computers to crack encryption methods currently safeguarding global communication networks. This capability, though not yet realized, has spurred governments and institutions to invest in quantum-resistant cryptography to protect sensitive data from future threats. Beyond security, quantum computing offers transformative applications in fields like pharmaceuticals, energy and materials science

QUANTUM computing, a groundbreaking technology that operates on the principles of quantum mechanics, has the potential to revolutionize various sectors and redefine global technological leadership. Over the past decade, the race for quantum supremacy has gained momentum, with countries like the United States and China investing billions to secure their dominance in this transformative field. At its core, quantum computing diverges significantly from classical computing. Classical computers, which rely on bits to process information as 0s and 1s, follow the principles of Boolean logic. In contrast, quantum computers use quantum bits, or qubits, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously due to a phenomenon called superposition. This unique capability enables quantum computers to perform complex calculations at unprecedented speeds, exploring numerous possibilities in parallel. For example, solving optimization problems or simulating molecular interactions becomes exponentially faster with quantum technology. The origins of quantum computing trace back to the theoretical insights of Nobel laureate Richard Feynman in the early 1980s. Feynman proposed that to simulate the quantum mechanical world effectively, a computational system must itself adhere to quantum mechanics. This vision laid the foundation for decades of research and innovation, culminating in today's prototypes and early-stage quantum processors. While still in development, these systems hold immense promise for addressing challenges beyond the scope of classical computing. The implications of quantum computing are vast, extending from national security to economic growth. One of the most immediate concerns is the potential of quantum computers to crack encryption methods currently safeguarding global communication networks. This capability, though not

yet realized, has spurred governments and institutions to invest in quantum-resistant cryptography to protect sensitive data from future threats. Beyond security, quantum computing offers transformative applications in fields like pharmaceuticals, energy and materials science. For instance, it could enable the precise simulation of molecular interactions, accelerating drug discovery and the development of efficient catalysts for energy production. Countries worldwide have recognized the strategic importance of quantum technology, leading to significant investments and policy initiatives. China has emerged as a frontrunner, committing over \$15 billion to quantum research and establishing advanced hubs for development. Similarly, the United States enacted the National Quantum Initiative in 2018, allocating substantial resources to maintain its technological edge. Multilateral collaborations, such as the Quantum Development Group and discussions within frameworks like AUKUS and the Quad, further underscore the geopolitical significance of quantum advancements. Despite the rapid progress, quantum computing faces formidable challenges. Building reliable, scalable and cost-effective quantum processors requires overcoming technical hurdles such as qubit stability and error correction. Qubits are highly sensitive to environmental disturbances, necessitating sophisticated designs and ultra-cold operating conditions. Researchers are exploring various approaches, including superconducting, photonic and ion trap qubits, to identify the most viable path forward. Companies like IBM, Google and Amazon, along with academic institutions, are at the forefront of these efforts, striving to integrate complex components into functional quantum systems. The global race for quantum leadership also hinges on the development of robust supply chains and skilled workforces. Fabricating quantum processors involves specialized equipment and expertise spread across mul-

multiple countries. Effective international collaboration, supported by policies that facilitate talent exchange and resource sharing, is essential to advance the field. Programs like DARPA's Quantum Benchmarking Initiative and international competitions aim to foster innovation and address real-world challenges through quantum algorithms. Quantum computing's potential extends to areas like artificial intelligence, where it could enhance machine learning by processing quantum data more efficiently. Moreover, quantum systems may uncover solutions to optimization problems that classical computers find intractable, impacting industries such as logistics, finance and healthcare. For example, quantum-enabled optimization could revolutionize supply chain management and resource allocation, driving economic efficiency. However, the transformative power of quantum computing comes with inherent risks. The misuse of this technology for malicious purposes, such as data theft or the development of advanced weaponry, poses significant ethical and security concerns. Policymakers must establish comprehensive frameworks to ensure that quantum advancements are harnessed for societal benefit while mitigating potential dangers. This includes fostering public awareness and facilitating informed debates on the ethical implications of quantum technologies. The journey toward fully functional quantum computers is a long-term endeavor, requiring sustained investments and interdisciplinary collaboration. Achieving milestones such as logical qubits, error correction and scalable systems will be critical to realizing the technology's full potential. Estimates suggest that practical quantum computers capable of breaking encryption or performing complex simulations may emerge by the late 2030s. Until then, the focus remains on incremental progress and preparing for the societal shifts that quantum computing will inevitably bring.

Shab-e-Miraj: A divine journey and its impact on us

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The lessons of Shab-e-Miraj are profound and far-reaching. The journey demonstrates the limitless power of Allah, the importance of steadfastness in faith, and the necessity of fulfilling our spiritual obligations. Salah, as the key commandment of this night, is not just a ritual but a means of achieving spiritual elevation, discipline, and moral clarity

SHAB-E-MIRAJ, or the Night of Ascension, is one of the most profound and miraculous events in Islamic history. It marks the extraordinary journey of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Masjid al-Haram in Makkah to Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and then through the seven heavens to the divine presence of Allah. This night is not merely a testament to the greatness of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also a source of immense guidance and inspiration for Muslims worldwide. One of the most remarkable aspects of Shab-e-Miraj is the suspension of time during the journey. This extraordinary event defied the natural laws of physics and human understanding. Although the journey encompassed vast distances—earthly and celestial—it all occurred in a fraction of a night. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned, his bed was still warm, and the water he had used for ablution had not yet spilled. This suspension of time illustrates the infinite power of Allah and His ability to transcend the limitations of human perception. During this miraculous journey, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was shown numerous signs of Allah's greatness and was given glimpses into the realities of the Hereafter. He saw the rewards awaiting the righteous and the punishments for sinners, providing clear reminders of the consequences of our actions in this life. Among the remarkable sights, he witnessed rivers of milk, honey, and wine in Paradise, which symbolize the eternal blessings for those who remain steadfast in their faith. He also saw the torments of Hell, where individuals were being punished for sins such as dishonesty, arrogance, and neglect of Salah, emphasizing the importance of leading a righteous and God-conscious life. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) ascended through the seven heavens, he met several prophets and noble personalities. At

each level, he was welcomed with greetings of peace and brotherhood. In the first heaven, he met Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), the father of humanity. In the second heaven, he encountered Prophet Yahya and Prophet Isa (peace be upon them). The third heaven brought him face-to-face with Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him), renowned for his unparalleled beauty. In the fourth heaven, he met Prophet Idris (peace be upon him), and on the fifth, Prophet Harun (peace be upon him). The sixth heaven was where he encountered Prophet Musa (peace be upon him), and on the seventh, he met Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him), who was leaning against the Al-Bayt Al-Ma'mur, a celestial house of worship where angels continuously perform Tawaf. These meetings with the prophets signify the continuity of the divine message and the unity of the prophetic mission. They also highlight the unique status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the Seal of the Prophets and the mercy for all creation. At the pinnacle of this journey, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reached Sidrat al-Muntaha, the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary, beyond which no creation has ever ventured. Here, he was granted the unparalleled honor of being in the divine presence of Allah. It was at this moment that the obligatory five daily prayers (Salah) were ordained for the Muslim Ummah. Initially, fifty prayers were prescribed, but upon the Prophet's (peace be upon him) repeated requests—guided by Prophet Musa's (peace be upon him) advice—Allah, in His infinite mercy, reduced the number to five while retaining the reward of fifty. This signifies the immense importance of Salah as the cornerstone of a believer's life and a direct link between the Creator and His creation. The lessons of Shab-e-Miraj are profound and far-reaching. The journey demonstrates the limitless

power of Allah, the importance of steadfastness in faith, and the necessity of fulfilling our spiritual obligations. Salah, as the key commandment of this night, is not just a ritual but a means of achieving spiritual elevation, discipline, and moral clarity. It strengthens our connection with Allah, reminding us of our purpose and the transient nature of worldly pursuits. This sacred event also inspires us to reflect on our lives and the changes we need to make to align ourselves with the teachings of Islam. Shab-e-Miraj teaches us humility, gratitude, and the importance of prioritizing our spiritual well-being over material concerns. It serves as a reminder that faith, sincerity, and devotion can elevate us to unimaginable heights. For Pakistan, the lessons of Shab-e-Miraj hold great relevance. The miraculous journey underscores the values of unity, justice, and adherence to divine principles. To overcome challenges such as corruption, intolerance, and social inequality, we must draw upon the teachings of this night and implement them in our collective lives. If leaders and citizens alike embody the virtues of honesty, fairness, and accountability, Pakistan can move toward a brighter and more prosperous future. In conclusion, Shab-e-Miraj is not merely a historical event but a timeless source of guidance, inspiration, and hope. It reminds us of the boundless power of Allah, the profound responsibilities of faith, and the transformative potential of sincere worship. By internalizing the lessons of this miraculous journey and incorporating them into our lives, we can bring about positive change both individually and collectively. For Pakistan, embracing these lessons can provide a path to overcome its challenges and achieve its aspirations as a nation rooted in the principles of Islam. Let this blessed night inspire us to strengthen our faith, lead righteous lives, and work together for a better tomorrow.

Briefs

Naqvi spurns claims of attending...

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but do not go to the extent that it harms Pakistan," he added. His statement comes days after a handful of US lawmakers and rights activists urged the new Congress to take a stand against the military trials of civilians in Pakistan, and to advocate for the reversal of anti-democratic measures allegedly targeting the PTI. Responding to a question about the rise in terrorist activities in Pakistan last year, Naqvi stressed the main aim of his US visit was to formulate an effective strategy against terrorism with the coordination of US politicians. The interior minister made it clear that "anyone who would take up arms against the state of Pakistan" would be dealt with iron hands. Naqvi highlighted that terrorism was not just Pakistan's fight, but a common war.

Roadside blast leaves 1 dead, in...

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two people were killed and four others were injured in a blast in Turbat in December 2024. It is to be noted that the year 2024 turned out to be the deadliest for civil and military security forces in a decade with at least 685 fatalities and 444 terror attacks, according to "CRSS Annual Security Report 2024" issued by the Centre for Security and Strategic Studies. Equally alarming were the cumulative losses of civilians and security personnel, i.e., 1,612 fatalities, accounting for over 63% of the total recorded this year, marking 73% more losses compared to 934 outlaws eliminated.

US threatens Taliban leaders...

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VERY BIG bounty on their top leaders, maybe even bigger than the one we had on bin Laden," he said. The US had placed a \$25 million bounty on the head of bin Laden. Rubio's harsh warning to the Taliban leaders comes just days after American prisoners held in Afghanistan were exchanged for an Afghan imprisoned in the US. Two Americans, Ryan Corbett, and William Wallace McKenty, were swapped with Khan Mohammad, an Afghan inmate serving a life sentence in a federal prison in California. The Taliban foreign ministry described the Afghan inmate, who was held in the US on alleged drug trafficking and terrorism charges, as a "fighter."

Tehran, Kabul call for more...

FROM PAGE 01
a meeting with his acting counterpart in the Taliban-ruled government in Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, in the capital Kabul on Sunday. Describing Iran and Afghanistan as brothers and friends, Araghchi said the two neighbors enjoy strong cultural and historical bonds and have maintained close relations throughout history. "Although there have been ups and downs, our relations with our brothers in Afghanistan have, by and large, been very good and brotherly," he said.

Contempt case verdict against...

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powers of Supreme Court benches. The Supreme Court had on January 20 issued a show-cause notice and removed Additional Registrar (Judicial) Nazir from his post, declaring him guilty of "serious misconduct." The court directed the registrar to look into the matter. According to an announcement, the additional registrar (judicial) inadvertently scheduled a case which was for the constitutional bench for hearing before a regular bench, resulting in a waste of time and resources of the Supreme Court and the parties.

Merciless Jannik Sinner wins back-to-back Melbourne titles

The 27-year-old German becomes the sixth man in the Open era to lose his first three Grand Slam finals, having also been beaten at the 2020 US Open and 2024 French Open

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Jannik Sinner underlined why he is the world's best men's player by securing back-to-back Australian Open titles with a merciless victory over Alexander Zverev. Italian top seed Sinner delivered in the decisive moments to win 6-3 7-6 (7-4) 6-3 against second seed Zverev. Despite an ongoing doping case hanging over him, Sinner has been able to block out the noise to claim a third Grand Slam title. After sealing victory with a composed cross-court winner on his first championship point, the 23-year-old calmly raised his hands into the air before walking over to celebrate with his team. "It's an incredible tournament for me, I hope I can keep it going," said Sinner, who is the first Italian player to win three majors. The straight-set win was a demonstration of Sinner's relentless baseline game, physical power and mental steeliness. Zverev could not create a single break point in the match and grew increasingly frustrated as his game failed to trouble Sinner. The 27-year-old German becomes the sixth man in the Open era to lose his first three Grand Slam finals, having also been beaten at the 2020 US Open and 2024 French Open. After slumping forlornly into his chair, a visibly upset Zverev hunched forward and covered his face with a towel. "It sucks



standing next to this trophy," said Zverev, whose speech was delayed by a heckling spectator. "I was hoping to be more competitive but Jannik was just too good - as simple as that." Backing up the finest season of your career - and one of the most dominant in recent memory - is the challenge facing Sinner this year. The manner in which he has swept to the Australian Open suggests he is more than capable of reaching the same heights which led to two major trophies, six more ATP titles, a Davis Cup triumph with Italy and an overall record of 73 wins from 79 matches. What makes his achievements even more extraordinary is the unsettling situation surrounding his ongoing doping case. It was announced in August that Sinner had tested positive for the banned substance clostebol, sending shockwaves around the sport. While he was cleared of wrongdoing by the International Tennis Integrity Agency, the World Anti-Doping Agency has appealed against the decision and is seeking

a one to two-year ban. In a difficult time, the tennis court has become his sanctuary. Sinner's coping mechanism has been to try and "isolate" himself but his coach Darren Cahill provided a telling insight when he said nobody is "bulletproof". However, Sinner has been as close to fully-armoured as he could have been in the circumstances. He has swatted his way through the draw with relative ease, with the hot and humid conditions in his fourth-round match against Denmark's Holger Rune being his toughest opponent. The way in which he ruthlessly dismantled Zverev was a stark contrast to the fight he needed to recover from two sets down against Daniil Medvedev last year. Calmly converting his first championship point - luring his opponent forward with a drop-shot before drilling a backhand past him - illustrated the ease he felt. Being dubbed the 'best men's player not to have won a Grand Slam title' is a tag Zverev is desperate to shake off. As a teenager, Zverev followed older brother Mischa around on tour, but his talents soon saw him labelled as a prospective major champion. Still the wait goes on. From the opening exchanges against Sinner, Zverev looked more likely to break down in the baseline rallies. He became impatient when Sinner targeted his more vulnerable forehand, with errors from that swing contributing to the German losing serve at 4-3.

Balochistan wins Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman Memorial Polo Cup



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Team Balochistan defeated Army by 6-4 in the thrilling final to clinch the trophy at the Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman Janjua Memorial Polo Cup, sponsored by JS Bank on Sunday. A large and enthusiastic crowd gathered to witness the final match. The event's chief guest, Lt Gen Farooq Ahmed Khan,

graced the occasion, accompanied by JS Bank Regional Head Majid Qureshi, Brig Badr-uz-Zaman (R), the son of Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman, and Maj Ali Taimur (R), the club secretary. Numerous polo players and enthusiasts were also in attendance. Prior to the final, an exhibition two-chukker match between Young Girls and Young Boys teams was held, where the Girls' team outclassed their opponents

with a 4-0 victory. The final match between Team Balochistan and Team Army was a gripping contest. Team Army maintained a lead through the first three chukkers. However, Team Balochistan showcased exceptional performance in the fourth chukker to secure the win. For Team Balochistan, Raja Mikael Sami led the scoring with three goals, while Ahmed Bilal Riaz, Mumtaz Abbas Niazi,

and Lt Col Shahyan Abbasi contributed one goal each. On the other hand, Team Army's two goals were scored by Raja Samiullah, with an additional two and a half goal handicap advantage. The award for the best pony was given to Tatli, owned by Ahmed Bilal Riaz, while the best player of the final was awarded to Raja Mikael Sami. In the subsidiary final, Diamond Paints defeated DS Polo by 7-4 goals.

Paul Hughes beaten by Usman Nurmagomedov in Bellator title

DUBAI: Paul Hughes' bid to become Bellator lightweight champion fell agonisingly short as Usman Nurmagomedov claimed a thrilling majority decision win in Dubai. Nurmagomedov retained the belt and extended his unbeaten streak to 19 fights after the judges scored the fight 47-47, 48-46, 48-46 in his favour. It is a devastating result for Irishman Hughes, who had hoped to take his career to the next level after an impressive win over AJ McKee in October. And while the 27-year-old did his reputation no harm in what was his second defeat, it was ultimately Nurmagomedov's night. "I underestimated this guy. It was my little mistake but I'm still undefeated," said Nurmagomedov. "Bellator lightweight champion Usman Nurmagomedov, thank you so much. The wrestling, takedown defence he did very well. He is strong brother, you're really strong." A visibly crestfallen Hughes said he was "so gutted" after a fight which "played out how I expected", while calling for a rematch in Belfast. "I really thought I won that one. I should have pushed harder," he said. "We're gonna fight again, I really respect Usman, I probably left some in the tank but I won't next time. "I really thought I was going to win tonight, I'm heartbroken. We have to do the rematch in Belfast, it has to be in Belfast. I think I've earned this. All the guys in Dagestan, you will be welcome in Ireland." Before the headline fight, Hughes said he was ready to take Nurmagomedov to the "depths of hell" and vowed to knock the champion out in the second round. And while the bout ultimately did not pan out that way, a smiling Hughes caused huge problems for his unbeaten opponent in a highly technical and entertaining main event at Coco-Cola Arena. Having intensified their rivalry in the build-up, the fighters showed each other respect during a cagey and technical opening round in which they both landed accidental groin shots. In round two, Hughes caught Nurmagomedov - who had his cousin and former UFC lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov in his corner - with a switch kick while the Irishman defended the champion's repeated takedown attempts impressively. The fight's momentum stalled in the third round when Nurmagomedov caught Hughes with another accidental groin shot which left Hughes in considerable pain on the canvas and handed the Russian a point deduction. - Agencies

ICC announces men's emerging cricketer of year

DNA

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday named Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis as the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year for 2024, recognizing his outstanding performances in the red-ball format. Mendis, who scored 1451 runs across all formats at an average just above 50, stood out alongside some of cricket's greats in 2024. Having made only one Test appearance for Sri Lanka before the year began, the left-handed batter ended the year not only solidifying his place as a key player in all formats but also becoming Sri Lanka's go-to player in moments of crisis and high-stakes situations. He played a pivotal role during Sri Lanka's campaign for their maiden ICC World Test Championship Final spot. The 26-year-old delivered a series of crucial innings, making him one of the six batters to surpass 1000 Test runs in the calendar year, and he averaged the highest among them. The middle-order batter capitalized on his opportunities, hitting five centuries and three fifties in his impressive run tally. His match-winning contributions helped Sri Lanka secure vital Test victories against New Zealand, Bangladesh, and England, both at home and abroad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presents a cheque of Rs2.5 million to Muhammad Asif in recognition of his brilliant performance in winning the recent SAARC Snooker Championship. - DNA

WI spinners dominate as Pak crumble at 76/4
Pakistan require 178 more runs to win the Test series 2-0

DNA

MULTAN: Pakistan's batting lineup crumbled under the West Indies' spin dominance on Sunday as the hosts ended day two of the final Test in a precarious position, chasing 254 runs to clinch the series. The West Indies bowlers struck early, leaving Pakistan in tatters at 5/2 within the first three overs. Openers Shan Masood and Mohammad Hurraira fell cheaply to Kevin Sinclair and Gudakesh Motie, both managing just two runs each. Babar Azam and Kamran Ghulam attempted to rebuild with a 43-run stand for the third wicket. However, Jomel Warrican broke through Pakistan's resistance, dismissing Ghulam for 19. The hosts found themselves at 48/3, with the pressure mounting. In a late blow to Pakistan's hopes, Sinclair returned to remove Babar for a well-ought 39, leaving the team reeling at 76/4 after 24 overs at stumps. Pakistan now requires another 178 runs to secure a series victory, while the West Indies bowlers are well-positioned to seal the match with their early momentum. Earlier in the day, Pakistan's spinners dominated proceedings, bundling out the visitors for 244 in their second innings. Despite solid contributions from the West Indies' batsmen, the

Pakistan bowlers, led by their spin attack, managed to keep the target within reach. West Indies resumed their second innings following Pakistan's collapse and got off to a solid start with a 50-run opening partnership. However, Noman Ali struck in the 12th over, dismissing Mikyle Louis for just seven runs. Captain Kraigg Brathwaite fought back with a resilient half-century, but Noman Ali had the last laugh, dismissing Brathwaite for 52 in the 23rd over. This left the West Indies at 92/2, with Pakistan making



significant strides in the match. Amir Jangoo and Kavem Hodge tried to stabilize the innings, scoring at a steady pace. However, Pakistan's Sajid Khan made the breakthrough, dismissing Jangoo for 30 and leaving the West Indies at 106/3 in 27.3 overs. Noman was quick to follow up, claiming his third wicket by removing Hodge for 15, with the score at 124/4 in the 32nd over. The Caribbean side's momentum faltered further when Noman struck again, sending Alick Athanaze back to the pavilion for just six runs. This reduced the West Indies to 129/5 at lunch on day two, with a lead of 138 runs. After the break, Pakistan's bowlers continued to dominate. Abrar Ahmed claimed his first wicket, dismissing Justin Greaves for 10. The West Indies' lower order fought back as Tevin Imlach and Kevin Sinclair contributed a crucial 51-run stand for the eighth wicket. The partnership was broken by Sajid Khan, who picked up his second wicket by removing Sinclair for 28. Pakistan's pacer Kashif Khan then made his mark, dismissing Imlach for 35 and reducing the West Indies to 206/8. Warrican and Motie carried forward their sensible batting approach and added a 27-run stand. However, it was soon cut short as Gudakesh Motie was dismissed for 18, leaving the side at 233/9 in 61 overs. Pakistan claimed the final breakthrough with Sajid dismissing Warrican for 18, bowling the West Indies out for 244 in 66.1 overs.

JI announces nationwide protest on...

FROM PAGE 01

He emphasised that while fake news must be eradicated, this should not come at the expense of press freedom. Hafiz Naemur-Rehman further criticised the lack of consultation on the PECA ordinance, expressing solidarity with journalists and calling for the development of a code of conduct that does not infringe upon freedoms. The JI leader also highlighted the situation in Gaza, stating that while the region has been turned into rubble, the Palestinian people have remained resilient, and Israel has faced defeat in Gaza.

IHC to hear plea against acquittal...

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The appeal calls for the annulment of the lower court's verdict. On July 13, 2024, the additional sessions judge had acquitted Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi of charges related to their alleged marriage during Bushra Bibi's iddat (a waiting period prescribed by Islamic law after a woman's divorce or husband's death). Previously, the district and sessions court in Islamabad overturned the seven-year prison sentence handed down to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, granting them an honourable acquittal in the case.

Imran Khan urges overseas...

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The deadlock followed the PTI's refusal to participate without judicial commissions to probe protests on May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024. Khan also called for nationwide demonstrations on Feb. 8, marking the contentious 2024 elections as a "Black Day." PTI alleges election rigging by the caretaker government and the Election Commission of Pakistan. Both entities deny the claims. "Prepare to observe a nationwide 'Black Day,'" read another post from Khan's account. "People from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern Punjab should gather in Swabi for protests, while others must hold demonstrations in their respective cities."

Govt, PTI bicker over..

FROM PAGE 01

party insisting on the formation of judicial commission for continuity of negotiations. "As per the agreed communique, no response will be given before seven-day deadline... we will respond to PTI's demand for judicial commission at the next round of talks," PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui - who is also the spokesperson for the government negotiation committee - said while speaking to a private channel on Sunday. Uncertainty looms over the future of the negotiations, facilitated by National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, as conflicting statements emerge from the embattled former ruling party with PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan saying ongoing talks were put on hold, a shift from the party's earlier announcement of calling them off.

Indonesian president's..

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the wake of India's reaction to the planned visit. Chaudhry alleged that the Indian government conveyed to the Indonesian President that he might face a cold reception in India if his itinerary included Pakistan. In light of this, sources suggest the Indonesian President decided to defer the visit to a more suitable time. Pakistan and Indonesia have historically shared strong bilateral relations, and this visit was expected to further strengthen diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between the two nations. Officials from Pakistan's MOFA remain optimistic, stating that the visit is likely to be rescheduled soon. When asked about the reported Indian reaction influencing the postponement, MOFA sources refrained from commenting, leaving room for speculation about the underlying reasons for the delay.

Briefs

Pakistani
hairtail,
aquatic
products gain
popularity in
China

BEIJING: Pakistani aquatic products, particularly hairtail (a type of ribbonfish), are gaining increasing traction in the Chinese market. According to the latest data from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), imports of frozen hairtail (HS Code 03038910) from Pakistan have risen by 27.6% in 2024, reaching USD 3,565,373, up from USD 2,793,326 in 2023. Commenting on this trend, Jessie Hao, International Trade Manager at Prestige International Trading Co., Ltd., said, "China's demand for high-quality seafood is immense, with annual consumption of hairtail alone reaching up to 1 million tons. Pakistani exporters are seizing this opportunity by offering a wide variety of nutritious and flavorful aquatic products that cater to the tastes of Chinese consumers." Prestige International Trading Ltd, which has managed the Pakistan National Pavilion on JD.com for the past three years, has recently expanded its offerings to include aquatic products. The company's inaugural shipment - comprising 53 tons of frozen hairtail and 22 tons of frozen shrimp - arrived from Karachi Port to Qingdao Port. These products are now being sold through various offline channels, including restaurants, canteens, hotels, and wholesalers. —APP

Atif calls
for bringing
markup rate
to single digit

Islamabad: President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the markup rate should be brought to single digit in the review on January 27. State Bank has scope to bring the policy rate down to 7 percent so this month the central bank has a good chance to bring the interest rate to single digit. Economic indicators are positive and inflation rate has decreased. It is also important to convey the benefit of reduction in inflation to the common man. President Federation Atif Ikram said that the expected government package for the construction industry will also bring prosperity to the country. Reduction in markup rate will increase the circulation of money, the money lying in the banks will be used in the industries, which will increase the production of the industries and create employment opportunities. The unemployment rate in Pakistan is up to 7%, reducing the unemployment rate will directly reduce poverty. —APP

India celebrates
Republic Day
with Indonesian
president as
chief guest

NEW DELHI: India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on Sunday with a colorful parade in New Delhi displaying its military might and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as the guest of honor. Thousands of people gathered in the capital to watch the long parade commemorating the official adoption of India's Constitution on Jan. 26, 1950, after gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Indian troops and their bands were marching on the Kartavya Path, or the Boulevard of Duty, as the 90-minute parade showcased motorbike stunts and a number of cultural performances involving thousands of artists in colorful costumes. A contingent comprising about 350 members from the Indonesian military also participated in the parade, marking the first time that troops from Southeast Asia's biggest economy have joined any foreign parade. Prabowo attended the event as the chief guest and was flanked by India's premier and president, joining a list of foreign leaders who were invited to witness the spectacle, as per the country's tradition. —APP

Pak Customs achieves success
in modernizing its performance

The Chairman FBR declared the World Customs Theme-2025 "Customs delivering on its commitment to efficiency, security and prosperity" as very important for Pakistan Customs as it strives to make itself a modern, dynamic and future-thinking institution

DNA

KARACHI: Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Rashid Mahmood Langrial on Sunday said that Pakistan Customs has achieved significant success in modernizing its performance, including the implementation of the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and Faceless Customs Assessment (FCA) System, which have made the trade process faster, transparent and easier, resulted in significant increase in revenue and enabled the clearance of export goods in a short time. The Chairman FBR said this while addressing as chief guest in the ceremony held to mark International Customs Day-2025 at the Customs House Karachi. Referring to his recent interactions with the traders' community, Rashid Mahmood Langrial said that the traders' bodies in Karachi are glad because of introduction of FCA System by Pakistan Customs. The Chairman FBR declared the World Customs Theme-2025 "Customs delivering on its commitment to efficiency, security and prosperity" as very important for Pakistan Customs as it strives to make itself a modern, dynamic and future-thinking institution. On the occasion, the Chairman FBR also hoisted the flag and laid wreaths at the Martyrs' Monument and recited Fateha. Earlier, in his opening remarks, Collector Customs Enforcement Karachi, Moinuddin Wani thanked Chairman FBR, Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Member Customs Operation (FBR), Ju-



naid Jalil and other guests for their presence. At the end of the ceremony, Member Customs Operation (FBR) Junaid Jalil in his address, thanked Chairman FBR Rashid Mahmood Langrial and other guests for attending the ceremony. He reiterated the commitment that in the future as well, Pakistan Customs will continue to play its active role in combating smuggling and stabilizing the country's economy

and promoting as well as facilitating business activities across the country. Junaid Jalil lauded the Customs officials for playing their role in stabilizing the country's economy by utilizing their capabilities and expressed the hope that they will play their role in the same way in the future as well. Pakistani cuisine recipes He highly appreciated and expressed gratitude to the organizers of the event. Later, Chairman FBR Rashid Mahmood

Langrial distributed certificates of appreciation among the officers on their outstanding performance. It may be noted here that, International Customs Day is celebrated all over the world on January 26. Like in previous years, this year too, World Customs Day was celebrated in all the Collectorate of Customs across Pakistan including the grand ceremony at the Customs House Kara-

chi under the auspices of the Collectorate of Customs Enforcement Karachi. The event was attended among others by the Consul Generals of Oman, Indonesia, Kuwait, and the representatives of Russian and UAE consulates, chief commissioners, chief collectors, collectors, other senior officers of Customs, representatives of law enforcement agencies, business and social figures.

 Hamas holds
Israel responsible
for any violation
affecting ceasefire
deal

GAZA: The Hamas Movement has held the Israeli occupation government responsible for any disruption that may affect the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and its remaining stages. "The occupation is still stalling the implementation of the ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement through persisting in blocking al-Rashid street and preventing the return of displaced people who try to go by foot from the south to the north," Hamas said in a statement on Saturday. A citizen was martyred on Saturday afternoon when the Israeli occupation forces opened fire at a gathering of citizens who were in the east of an-Nuseirat refugee camp waiting for a chance to return to their homes in northern and central Gaza. In a related incident, the IOF continued to open fire at thousands of displaced civilians who were gathering in the streets of Salahuddin and al-Rashid in the east of Gaza and injured at least five of them, including a child on Sunday morning. Those citizens were waiting to be allowed to return to their homes in northern and central Gaza after al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas handed over a new group of Israeli captives in Gaza City yesterday. Palestinian officials in Gaza also accused today the IOF of continuing to violate the ceasefire agreement through closing the Netzarim corridor area and barring displaced citizens from returning to their homes. Meanwhile, The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened fire at hundreds of Palestinian citizens on Saturday evening as they were in the east of an-Nuseirat refugee camp waiting for a chance to return to their neighborhoods in northern Gaza. One citizen was reportedly martyred in the shooting attack in the area, according to media sources. Eyewitnesses said that Israeli forces opened fire intensively at hundreds of citizens and killed one of them as they gathered on the Salahuddin road. They added that those citizens were waiting to be allowed to return to their homes in northern and central Gaza after al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas handed over a new group of Israeli captives in Gaza City in the afternoon. Medical sources said the martyr was 43-year-old Ra'ed Nofal from an-Nuseirat camp. Israeli officials threatened today the Israeli army would not allow the return of displaced Palestinians to northern Gaza, which was expected to begin today as part of the ceasefire agreement, until Arbel Yehud, a female civilian, was released. — Agencies

ECC repeated hikes in
gas tariffs leave industry
uncompetitive: BMP

Nisar says 26% rise in gas rates to put Rs 847b extra burden

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: As the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet has decided to approve upward revision in gas tariff for the industry by up to 26pc to generate Rs847b during current fiscal year the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has observed that the repeated increase in the gas and electricity prices to an unbearable level has left the trade and industry uncompetitive. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that the gas tariff hike has threatened the industrial sector, besides increasing unemployment. The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Saturday decided to approve upward revision in gas tariff for industry captive power plants from 3000 rupees per MMBTU to 3500 rupees per MMBTU to ensure required revenue for the gas sector during Fiscal-year-2024-25. The Economic Coordination Committee also instructed the Petroleum Division to take necessary measures for the imposition of a grid transition levy on the captive power plants to enhance the energy sector efficiency. The committee

met to discuss a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division for an upward revision of the indigenous gas tariff for industry (captive power) as well as non-protected domestic slabs. The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) requested the federal government to increase gas rates by up to 26 percent to generate about Rs. 847.33 billion during the current fiscal year. Under the new tariff structure, the average gas price has been set at Rs. 1,762.51 per MMBTU for Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), and Rs1,778.35 per MMBTU for Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL). Mian Anjum Nisar said that the every government had poor economic policies that unleashed the free fall of rupee against the dollar, ensuing in in-pull cost escalation to put down the manufacturing growth. He warned that the continued escalation of gas prices could result in the closure of numerous industries, amplifying unemployment rates and diminishing Pakistan's export capabilities, appealing to the government to reverse this decision promptly and establish a fixed gas price of Rs1,800 per mmbtu for industries. Emphasising the need for the government to explore and provide affordable energy alternatives for the

industry, he stressed that such measures are crucial for ensuring the competitiveness of Pakistani products in the global market. As the industrial sector grapples with the ramifications of the gas price hike, the BMP leader's stance advocates for the preservation of industrial stability and the prevention of potential economic setbacks for Pakistan. The chairman condemned the recent increase in gas tariff in the larger interest of national economy and to save the industries from collapse. He warned that in case the decision is not withdrawn the industries will close down, resulting in decline in exports and mass unemployment. In an appeal, he said that the business community was given assurance for 9 cents per KWh electricity tariff. The assurance brought a sigh of relief and hope for the business community that the new tariff will help in reduction of production cost and they will be able to continue production unabated and deliver export orders on time. However, contrary to the assurance given, POL, electricity and gas tariff are being increased

constantly by the government. He said that currently, the national economy is passing through severe crisis. To run an industry is no more a profitable business. He questioned the caretaker prime minister as to how economy of the country can be stabilised and strengthened in the absence of industrial and business activities? Unfortunately, the government has taken no step to provide competitive environment to industries, lower the cost of production and reignite the engine of national economy, which has left the industrial community in despair, he remarked. He vehemently rejected the surge in gas prices, asserting that this decision poses a severe threat to the industrial sector, potentially leading to increased unemployment. He expressed concern over the already elevated production costs in the region, rendering industrialists less competitive compared to their counterparts in neighboring countries. Showing their profound concerns many industries, they claimed to have already stopped their production in the country with several others fearing a closure because of the unviable trade, which may also pulled the country's exports further down.

Turkiye says
will fight terror
after death
of Iraqi border
guards

ISTANBUL: Turkiye vowed to work closely with Iraq to secure their common frontier after two Iraqi border guards were killed in a shooting blamed on outlawed PKK militants. On Friday, Iraq's interior ministry said the two Iraqi guards were killed near the Turkish border in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. "When the Iraqi border forces were carrying out their duties securing the Iraq-Turkish border, they were fired at by terrorists from the banned PKK organization" in Zakho district, the ministry said. A third guard was wounded, it added. Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Öncü Keçeli, in Response to a Question Regarding the Killing of Two Iraqi Soldiers by the PKK Terrorist Organization <https://t.co/PX19F5NYNbcg> Twitter.com/sp3wYcbicG The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought a decades-long insurgency against the Turkish state, has several outposts in Iraq's northern Kurdistan region, which also hosts Turkish military bases. —APP

PIAF wants speedy work on Pak-Iran pipeline
amid rising gas prices

Faheem Saigol said that the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project began in 2013, and several deadlines have already been missed due to long-standing US sanctions against Tehran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amidst continuous rising gas prices in the country, the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has called for initiating speed work on 80-kilometer of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project within its borders after a long delay and hoped that it would proceed expeditiously, as the project is bound to bring an industrial revolution in Pakistan PIAF Chairman Faheem Saigol in a joint statement along with senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, said the businessmen had already been pressing the government hard for procuring

the required energy resource from whatever source suits to it to relieve the country of the mounting shortage of gas. Faheem Saigol said that the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project began in 2013, and several deadlines have already been missed due to long-standing US sanctions against Tehran. According to reports, Pakistan was trying to negotiate with Tehran to avoid a whopping \$20 billion in liabilities as the long-stalled project's deadline approaches this year. Last year, government also approached Washington, requesting a solution to the lingering imbroglio, but received no response. Nasrullah Mughal said that we are convinced that Iranian source was the most feasible, financially as well as from the point

of view of proximity. He observed the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline would serve Pakistan's national interests and go a long way in mitigating the energy issues, asserting that an early completion of this mega project of national importance would be a great favour to the business community as its very survival was at stake at the moment. The availability of gas would also help government achieve economic targets. It is to be noted that in a landmark development, the Cabinet Committee on Energy had approved the initiation of work on the 80-km segment (Iranian border to Gwadar) of the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project, and deferred the filing of application for waiver of US sanction on the project due to

geo-political situation. A summary of Petroleum Division regarding IP Gas Pipeline was presented to the Cabinet Committee on Energy in its meeting, giving its nod to the recommendations of the Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC) for the IP Project. The committee recommended to start work on the 80-km segment of the pipeline inside Pakistan i.e. from Pakistan border up till Gwadar in the first phase. Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary said that the project will be executed by Inter State Gas Systems (Pvt) Ltd and will be funded through Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC). All the concerned divisions gave a positive nod to move ahead with the project to ensure gas supplies to the people of Pakistan, thereby

addressing the increasing energy needs of the country. Pakistan has decided to kick-off construction work on 80 kilometre portion of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project from Iranian border to Gwadar to escape a potential penalty of \$18 billion, in case Tehran decided to move to the Paris-based International Arbitration for non-execution of the project. Initially, it has been decided that in first phase of IP project work on 80-km portion from Pak-Iran border to Gwadar will be started. The PIAF leaders said that the estimated cost of the 80-km Pak-Iran border to Gwadar portion of the project will be \$158 million and it has been decided to fund it through Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC).

Afghan Taliban
supporters
rally against
ICC arrest
warrant
requests

GHAZNI: Some 200 Taliban supporters rallied in central Afghanistan on Sunday against the International Criminal Court chief prosecutor's request for arrest warrants for two Taliban leaders. The rally followed the announcement by the ICC on Thursday that chief prosecutor Karim Khan was seeking arrest warrants for Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani over the persecution of women. The Taliban government has imposed a raft of restrictions on women and girls, which the United Nations has described as "gender apartheid," since sweeping back to power in 2021. Demonstrators in Ghazni city condemned Khan's move, chanting slogans that included "Death to America" and "long live the Islamic Emirate" — the Taliban authorities' name for their government. "We have gathered here to show the West that their decision is cruel and rejected by Afghans," said Ghazni resident Noorulhaq Omar. "It will never be accepted because the Afghan nation will sacrifice their life for their emir," he said, referring to Akhundzada. Hamidullah Nisar, Ghazni province's head of the information and culture department, joined residents at the rally. —APP

US has not
stopped
military aid
to Ukraine:
Zelensky

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday the US has not stopped military aid to Ukraine after newly sworn in US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced he would pause foreign aid grants for 90 days. Zelensky did not clarify whether humanitarian aid had been paused. Ukraine relies on the US for 40 percent of its military needs. "I am focused on military aid; it has not been stopped, thank God," he said at a press conference with Moldovan President Maia Sandu. The two leaders met in Kyiv on Saturday to discuss the energy needs of Moldova's Russian-occupied Transnistria region, which saw its natural gas supplies halted on Jan. 1 due to Ukraine's decision to stop Russian gas transit. Ukraine has said it can offer coal to the Transnistrian authorities to make up for the shortfall. The future of US aid to Ukraine remains uncertain as President Donald Trump begins his second term in office. The American leader has repeatedly said he wouldn't have allowed Russia's invasion of Ukraine to start if he had been in office, although he was president as fighting grew in the east of the country between Kyiv's forces and separatists aligned with Moscow, ahead of Putin sending in tens of thousands of troops in 2022. —APP

Briefs

Justice Shah stresses alternative ways for litigants

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has stressed the need for adopting alternative ways to settle litigants' disputes. Speaking at a seminar, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan said the number of judges was quite low as only 13 judges were available for 1 million people. In 2023, 1.7 million cases were disposed of. Even today cases are pending with the courts as it is. "We will have to adopt alternative ways to settle litigants' disputes. Most of the issues are due to the lawyers. Cases are delayed," Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said.

Drought alert issued for Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued a drought alert for various districts in Sindh, including Karachi, due to scarce rainfall. According to the PMD, the current season has seen a 52% decrease in rainfall in Sindh, raising concerns about drought. The PMD has predicted that the dry spell is likely to persist until February and March, exacerbating drought conditions. Districts such as Naushahro-Feroze, Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Jamshoro are particularly at risk. To mitigate the effects of drought, the PMD has directed deputy commissioners in Karachi to take alternative arrangements, while district administrations in Khairpur and Tharparkar have been instructed to take precautionary measures. Earlier, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) warned of an emerging drought conditions in the country after scarce rainfall.

Israel violates agreement with Lebanon

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Ten Lebanese citizens were martyred and 83 others were injured on Sunday morning while trying to enter their towns still occupied by Israeli forces, violating the 60-day deadline for withdrawal under the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon. The Lebanese Ministry of Health reported that Israeli aggressions against citizens attempting to enter their still-occupied towns resulted in an initial toll of ten martyrs and 83 injuries in a preliminary count of casualties. It earlier announced that one martyr was reported in Hula along with nine injuries, who were transferred to Tebnine Government Hospital for treatment.

Shooting for a Cause



ISLAMABAD: Khazar Farhadov, wife of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, actively participated in a shooting drill at the Fun Gala hosted by the Red Maple School Carnival for a Cause. The event aimed to raise funds for charitable initiatives, with all proceeds directed towards supporting those in need. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan and Head of the School/Managing Director Maleeha Hammad were also present on the occasion. - DNA

Pak, Italy vow to boost defence, security cooperation

During these meetings, General Mirza discussed the evolving geo-strategic landscape with his Italian leadership

DNA

ROME: Pakistan and Italy have reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and exploring new avenues of cooperation in defense and security sectors. The resolve was expressed during separately-held meetings between Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, and Italian officials, including Minister of Defence Guido Crosetto, Chief of Defence Staff General Luciano Portolano, Chief of Staff of the Italian Army General Carmine Masiello, and CEO of Leonardo, Carlo Gualdaroni. During these meetings, General Mirza discussed the evolving geo-strategic landscape with his Italian leadership. The Italian civil and military leadership praised the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces and acknowledged their significant sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. Upon his arrival at the Italian Armed Forces Headquarters, a smartly turned-out military contingent presented a "Guard of Honour" to Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Ethnic cleansing feared as Donald Trump calls "clean out" Gaza

Bassem Naim, a Hamas leader said, "Our people, as they have thwarted for decades all plans for displacement and alternative homelands, will also fail such projects"

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump says he would like to "just clean out" Gaza, urging Egypt and Jordan to take in more Palestinians from the coastal enclave. Speaking with reporters on board Air Force One on Saturday, Trump said he had a call earlier in the day with King Abdullah II of Jordan and would speak with Egypt President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi later on Sunday. "I would like Egypt to take people," Trump said. "You're talking about probably a million and a half people, and we just clean out that whole thing and say: 'You know, it's over.'" Trump said he complimented Jordan for having successfully accepted Palestinian refugees and that he told the king, "I would love for you to take on more, 'cause I am looking at the whole Gaza Strip right now, and it's a mess. It's a real mess." Israel's genocide in Gaza

displaced almost the entire 2.3 million people in Gaza, some of them multiple times. Trump said Gaza's inhabitants could be moved "temporarily or could be long term". "It is literally a demolition site right now, almost everything is demolished and people are dying there," he said. "So, I would rather get involved with some of the Arab nations and build housing in a different location, where they can maybe live in peace for a change." Bassem Naim, a leader in Hamas, told that, "Our people, as they have thwarted for decades all plans for displacement and alternative homelands, will also fail such projects," referring to Trump's proposal. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) condemned the US president's suggestion, calling it an encouragement of "war crimes". Describing Trump's idea as "deplorable", the group, which has fought a war with Israel alongside Hamas until last week's ceasefire, said his "proposal falls within the framework of encouraging war crimes and

crimes against humanity by forcing our people to leave their land". It also said Trump's statement was "in line with the worst of the agenda of the extreme Zionist right and a continuation of the policy of denying the existence of the Palestinian people, their will and their rights" and called on Egypt and Jordan to reject his plan. The leadership of the Resistance Committees in Palestine strongly condemned Trump's statements calling for the displacement of the Palestinian people under the guise of transferring parts of the Gaza population to Egypt and Jordan. In a statement on Sunday, the Committees described these statements as aggressive and fascist, aligning with the schemes of the Zionist criminals in the extremist Israeli government and executing their myths and Talmudic fables. It urged the sisterly governments of Egypt and Jordan to reject Trump's malicious statements and to confront the plans for displacement and uprooting targeting the Palestinian

people and cause. It affirmed that the Zionist-American failure to displace the Palestinian people through thousands of tons of bombs and missiles will never succeed in imposing any criminal decisions on them. It emphasized that "our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and everywhere in our blessed Palestinian land are steadfast, rooted, and attached to their land despite the destruction caused by Zionist-American missiles and the tens of thousands of martyrs among children, women, and youth. The slogan of our people is that the people of the land remain, and the hopes, dreams, and delusions of the Zionists will come to an end." For its part, the Mujahideen Movement strongly condemned Trump's statements calling for the displacement of the Palestinian people under the guise of transferring them to Egypt and Jordan, which adopt the plans of religious Zionism and its criminal leaders in the Israeli government.

Pak Navy is all set to host 9th Aman exercise

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy is set to host AMAN-25; the ninth edition of multinational AMAN exercise from February 7 to 11. A key feature of this year's exercise will be the AMAN Dialogue, where Chiefs of Naval Forces, heads of Coast Guards, and senior leaders from around the world will convene to discuss regional maritime security and devise joint strategies to counter evolving maritime threats. Around 60 countries will participate in AMAN-25, contributing with ships, aircraft, Special Operations Forces (SOF), Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, Marines, and observers. Delegations from across the globe will also attend the inaugural International AMAN Dialogue, which will take place alongside the exercise. The AMAN series has been a hallmark of the Pakistan Navy's efforts to promote regional peace and cooperation. Launched in 2007, the inaugural exercise saw the participation of 28 countries. By 2023, the number of participating nations had grown to 50, including major naval powers. The motto of the AMAN series, "Together for Peace," reflects its core mission, while this year's theme, "Secure Seas; Prosperous Future," emphasizes the importance of maritime security for global prosperity.

JP Singh new Indian envoy to Israel



NEW DELHI: Jitender Pal Singh (JP Singh), currently serving as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Israel. He is expected to assume his new role shortly. JP Singh has previously served in Pakistan, including as the Chargé d'Affaires, during a particularly tense period in India-Pakistan relations. This was a time when both nations had expelled each other's diplomats, and bilateral ties were at a historic low. Despite the challenging circumstances, JP Singh leveraged his diplomatic acumen to help ease tensions and foster dialogue between the two rival nations. His efforts demonstrated his exceptional skill in managing complex and sensitive diplomatic situations. - DNA

Government and opposition agree to raise lawmakers' salaries

PTI, PPP, PML-N, others on same page on parliamentarians' remuneration; NA speaker sends recommendations to PM

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Providing a major financial boost to parliamentarians, the National Assembly's Finance Committee has approved a proposal to raise the salaries and privileges of Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and senators to Rs519,000 per month, a Pakistani newspaper reported on Sunday. Parliamentary sources said that the NA committee held a meeting with the National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq before approving the increase in salaries and privileges of the parliamentarians. Senior members of all the parliamentary parties, including the Pakistan

Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and others held an informal meeting with Sadiq and pleaded their case for an increase in salaries of the MPs. They also added that the speaker had sent the finance committee recommendations to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for approval. The adjustment in lawmakers' salaries aligns their remuneration with that of federal secretaries and brings it on par with the benefits received by the Punjab Assembly members. The lawmakers, as claimed by the sources, had demanded a salary of Rs1 million per month but the proposal was rejected by Sadiq. With no official announcement of the meeting, the sources noted that an increase of Rs15,000 was approved in the salaries of parliamentarians seven years ago and their remuneration had not been increased since then. Meanwhile, despite their existing political differences, all parliamentary parties from both sides of the benches including the PPP, PTI, PML-N and others are on the same page with regard to the increase in salaries.

Pakistan can become \$1 trillion economy by 2035: World Bank Vice President

The WB Vice President said that Pakistan would require annual growth rate of seven percentage to achieve the target

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the World Bank for South Asia, Martin Raiser, said on Saturday that Pakistan can become \$1 trillion economy by 2035 with an annual growth rate of seven per cent, saying achieving the same was "absolutely" feasible. During an interview for a private news channel, the World Bank representative said that long-term projections are always a little tricky but Pakistan's homegrown economic revival plan has the potential to make the country a trillion dollar economy in the next decade. Raiser sat down with The Review team on the heels of World Bank's promise to provide \$20 billion to Pakistan in the next 10 years. The WB Vice President said that Pakistan would require annual growth rate of seven percentage to achieve the target. "Is that feasible," Raiser questioned before answering "absolutely." Is it currently projected, he further questioned, adding that it was probably not. He, however, emphasized the need to look at

the key reforms that will make it possible. To a question if WB reached out to other political players, Raiser replied in affirmative, saying the WB has consulted across the political spectrum. This is part of our preparation process that we do these consultations with the right group of civil society, he said, adding "we have talked to the opposition as well." Commenting on Pakistan and India's trade ties and foreign investment, Raiser said that Pakistan should focus on what it has under its own control, emphasizing that there are many things that it can do to attract more investment. To a question if \$20 billion loan to Pakistan was a guaranteed or indicated lending, Raiser said that its indicative. Under the lending instruments of the WB, he explained, Pakistan has access to both concession funds from the International Development Agency and to non-concessional official lending from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He said that Pakistan has an exposure allocation that corresponds to the size of its economy and its ability to repay.

JAN/FEB 2025

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