



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

**Steve Smith becomes fifth fastest to 10,000 test runs in historic feat**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Gilani calls for cementing Pak-Ireland ties**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Israel has no right to shutting down UNRWA**

Detailed News On Page-08



## Demands immediate action

# US weapons in Afghanistan a threat: FO

Pakistan has repeatedly urged the interim Afghan government to take all necessary steps to prevent these weapons from falling into the wrong hands. The retrieval of these arms is seen as a crucial step in countering the threat posed by terrorist elements

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed deep concern over the presence of advanced US weapons in Afghanistan, emphasizing that these arms have been used by terrorist groups, including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), to carry out attacks within the country. Responding to media queries regarding the US decision to reclaim the weapons left behind following its military withdrawal in August 2021, a spokesperson for Pakistan stated, "The presence of US advanced weapons in Afghanistan has been a matter of profound concern for the safety and security of Pakistan and its citizens." The spokesperson reiterated that Pakistan has repeatedly urged the interim Afghan government to take all necessary steps to prevent these weapons from falling into the wrong hands. The retrieval of these arms is seen as a crucial step in countering the threat posed by terrorist elements operating in the region. The move aligns with Pakistan's ongoing efforts to ensure regional security and stability while continuing diplomatic engagements with Afghan authorities to curb cross-border militancy. Earlier, US President Donald Trump says that future financial assistance to Afghanistan will be contingent upon the return of U.S. military equipment by the Taliban leaders currently in power. Trump's remarks at a Sunday rally in Washington on the eve of his

Continued on Page 06

## Grenell 'may have been misled' into supporting Imran

Gentry Beach, who is in Islamabad, says Grenell stopped tweeting in support of PTI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Texas hedge fund manager and a close associate of the Trump family has said that President Donald Trump's aide Richard Grenell "may have been misled" over his support for the release of Imran Khan's campaign by a lobby working in the United States. Gentry Beach, who is in Islamabad leading a business delegation, said that he was sure that Grenell has a much better understanding of the complicated issues facing Pakistanis and that may have been the reason he has stopped tweeting in support of PTI. Grenell, who is working closely with President Trump, has deleted

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: A leading US Investor Gentry Beach calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

## President signs PECA bill amid media protest

President also signs Digital Nation Pakistan Bill and National Commission on the Status of Women Bill on Wednesday

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, has signed the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Bill 2025 (PECA), officially endorsing the legislation aimed at combating digital crimes. In addition to the PECA bill, President Zardari also signed the Digital Nation Pakistan Bill 2025, a significant move towards enhancing Pakistan's digital infrastructure. Furthermore, President Zardari has signed the National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment)

Continued on Page 06

## PTI announces rally at Minar-e-Pakistan on Feb 8th

Aliya warns against severe backlash if permission not granted

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) applied for permission to hold a public gathering in Lahore on February 8 to observe a "Black Day" following the collapse of negotiations with the coalition government. The opposition party submitted an application to the deputy commissioner's office and sought the local administration's approval for a public gathering at

Continued on Page 06

## Also removed IG KP PM dismisses FIA chief amid human trafficking cases

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to remove the FIA chief is seen as a strong message that negligence or complicity in human trafficking will not be tolerated

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to curb the escalating issue of human trafficking, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has dismissed Ahmed Ishaq, the Director General (DG) of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The decision comes in response to a surge in human smuggling incidents that have resulted in the deaths of numerous Pakistanis attempting to reach Europe through illegal routes. In recent months, there has been an alarming increase in cases of Pakistanis falling victim to human traffickers. Many individuals, desperate for better economic opportunities, have undertaken perilous journeys via illegal migration routes. These routes, often controlled

Continued on Page 06

## Prime Minister assures conducive environment to facilitate investors

Gentry Beach commended Pakistan's immense economic potential

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to facilitating foreign investors by ensuring a conducive business

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Bilawal Bhutto heads to US

PPP Chairman will attend Trump's breakfast event

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has left for the United States to attend a special breakfast hosted by US President Donald Trump. According to sources, the PPP chairman left Karachi for Dubai, where after a brief stay, he will continue his journey to the US. Sources also revealed that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be accompanied by his personal security team. During his stay in the US, he will attend several meetings and will also take part in a special breakfast hosted by former US President Donald Trump. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari departed on flight EK601 and will continue his journey to Germany after his US visit.

### Pakistan to honour HR obligations, EU team told

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The European Union delegation, headed by Ambassador Olof Skoog, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, and accompanied by Dr. Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, met with Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Wednesday. The meeting focused on Pakistan's ongoing efforts to strengthen its human rights framework and its commitment to international human rights conventions. During the meeting, the minister reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to upholding human rights as a cornerstone of its governance framework and underscored the significance of cooperation with the EU.

## Govt agrees to form Parliamentary instead of judicial commission

Govt response to PTI mentions constitutional, legal points why judicial commission can't be formed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The government has formally responded to the opposition PTI's demands, addressing key issues such as the release of political prisoners, including former premier Imran Khan, and the formation of a judicial commission as demanded by the party. In its response, sent to the National Assembly speaker, the government suggested the formation of a special or parliamentary committee as an alternative to a judicial commission. According to sources, the government's response highlighted constitutional and legal points, explaining the reasons why a judicial commission could not be formed. It also proposed granting the status of a parliamentary committee to the existing committee headed by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. The government also cited legal and judicial decisions regarding the PTI's demand for the release of its founder, Imran Khan, and other prisoners, stating that it would not object to bail or release if granted by the courts. The government has also demanded that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

Continued on Page 06

## Govt uninterested in talks, claims Barrister Gohar

Gohar stated that PTI had formally requested judicial commission to address concerns, but government failed to respond

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has accused the government of deliberately avoiding negotiations and ignoring the party's demand for a judicial commission. Speaking to the media outside Rawalpindi Kacheri on Wednesday, Gohar said PTI had formally requested a judicial commission to address key concerns, but the government failed to respond.

Continued on Page 06

## Envoys of various countries present credentials to President

These include envoys of Angola, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Uruguay & Malta; they are all non-resident envoys based in other countries



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Non-Resident envoys of Angola, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Uruguay & Malta presented their diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari during a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. The President received credentials from the Ambassador-designate of Angola, Mr Julio Belarmino Gomes Maia; the Ambassador-designate of Jamaica, Mr Arthur Williams; the Ambassador-designate of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr

Roland Reiland; the Ambassador-designate of Oriental Republic of Uruguay, Mr Beraldo Roque Nicola Flaniguen, and the High Commissioner-designate of Republic of Malta, Mr Raymond Bondin. Welcoming the envoys, the President congratulated them on their appointments and expressed the hope that they would play their role in further strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan in the areas of trade, economy, investment, culture, and people-to-people contacts. Earlier, the envoys were accorded a guard of honour by a contingent of the Pakistan Armed Forces upon their arrival at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

**Asian Wok**  
by MONAL

LUNCH: BGWLS, THE ASIAN WOK WAY!

DELIGHT IN OUR HEARTY CHICKEN, BEEF, OR SEAFOOD GRAVIES, SERVED WITH YOUR CHOICE OF RICE OR CHOW MEIN AND COMPLIMENTARY MINT MARGARITA AND FISH CRACKERS.

Starting at just Rs. 1195 +tax  
Available daily from 12 PM to 6 PM

Lower Ground Floor, Mosaic District, 1-8 Markaz  
0300-5845530 | 051-8840526 | 051-8840527



# KP follows zero-tolerance against corruption: Sadozai

Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Energy Engineer Tariq Mehmood Sadozai said that during the next five years energy plan, number of ongoing energy projects will be completed within the stipulated timeline

DNA

PESHAWAR: Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Energy, Engineer Tariq Mehmood Sadozai has made it clear that the current provincial government is strongly against political interference in government institutions and believes 100% in merit. Moreover, keeping in view merit policy of present provincial government, the Energy and Power department and all its subsidiaries should ensure the completion of all ongoing projects to control the energy crisis in the province, in light of public welfare, all the officers and officials should devote all their energy to perform their duties as Right man for right job motto. Sadozai further added that during the next five years energy plan, number of ongoing energy projects will be completed within the stipulated timeline, which will usher in a new era of prosperity in the province and stabilize the economy of the province.

He expressed these views while addressing a high-level meeting with the heads of Energy and Power department and all its subsidiaries PEDO, KP Oil and Gas Company Limited, KP Transmission and Grid Company, Electric Inspectorate regarding the merit-based measures of the provincial government against corruption in the province. Additional Secretary Energy Shah Fahad and other senior officers were also present in the meeting. During the meeting, Special Assistant Tariq Sadozai explained that under the next five-year energy plan, 40.8 MW of Koto Hydropower Project, 11.8 MW of Karora Hydropower Project and 10.2 MW of Jabori Hydropower Project have been successfully produced this year. Transmission and Grid Company regular operation will also be started, he added. SA Power further explained that during 2026-27, 84 MW Matiltan HPP, 69 MW Lawi hydropower projects and 1,30,000 households will be solarized under the free solar energy

program. Similarly, 27.9 MW 142 mini micro hydro stations will be constructed by 2028 under the second phase in areas deprived of electricity. In addition to this, 470 MW Lower Spot Gah Power Project, 96 MW Battakundi Power Project and 47 MW Kalkot Brikot Patrak Hydropower Projects will be completed by 2030 with the cooperation of the private sector. He categorically stated that recruitment, transfer posting and promotion process in the department will be done on merit. The provincial government KP has a zero-tolerance policy regarding corruption, that's why an internal accountability committee will be established in the institution. The meeting, opposing the deputation, it was emphasized to made as zero. Moreover, all the officers should perform all the matters in the best interest of the organization as following the prevailing rules, the Special Assistant Sadozai concluded.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain with delegation from BGI Group, led by Dr. Wang Jian Chairman BGI South Asia to discuss enhanced cooperation in food security, agricultural genomics, and research.

## Adiala prisoner ended talks after losing deal hope: Azma

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information Azma Bokhari said on Wednesday the prisoner in Adiala Jail ended negotiations with the government committee after losing hopes for a deal. "A person who uses back doors does not believe in negotiations," Azma Bokhari said. In response to Barrister Saif's statement, she said politics of these people was still incomplete unless they mention Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz. "The certified corrupt leader of PTI, along with his corrupt family, is desperately seeking an NRO (a deal) and this is not Nawaz Sharif's fault," she added. Azma said, "Maryam Nawaz is busy serving people of Punjab. Every day she is introducing revolutionary projects for the people of Punjab." Azma said, "Nawaz Sharif did not tell the prisoner in Adiala Jail to incite rebellions on May 9 and November 26." She pointed out that "the founder of PTI had lived his entire life relying on crutches, and a person walking on crutches can never become a leader." She added, "A person who gives no importance to anyone except himself, negotiating with such a person is a waste of time." Azma Bokhari concluded by saying, "Look at the irony of time, today terrorists of May 9 and the thieves of Toshakhana are searching for back doors to seek an NRO."—APP

## Efforts afoot to environment friendly power generation: Awais

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Energy Awais Ahmed Leghari on Wednesday said that the current government was promoting environment friendly electricity generation from alternative sources instead of expensive imported oil. Briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, the federal minister said that before today, power generation plants were being set up under different policies, but now we have introduced a new system in which power plants will be set up through a competitive process. He said that so far, the Ministry of Energy had closed five factories running on expensive imported furnace oil. These factories used to generate 2,500 megawatts of electricity, he said, adding that these factories were not only polluting the environment but were also putting a heavy burden on the national exchequer. Awais Leghari said that the closing of these factories saved billions of rupees for the national treasury. He said that converting electric tube-wells to solar energy in Balochistan can save 80 to 100 billion rupees annually. He said that our farmers should water their crops through

drip irrigation, which can save more than 80 percent of water. He further said, I myself water my lands through drip irrigation and I am saving 82.2 percent of the water. We will have to save groundwater, otherwise it will go down very low after some time. The federal minister said that to promote electric vehicles and motorcycles in the country, the price of electricity at charging stations has been reduced from Rs. 71 per unit to Rs. 39.70. He said that if banks and international institutions are ready to provide loans, it will yield positive results.—APP

## PHC halts medicine supply tender process for govt hospitals

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has imposed a ban on the tender process for supplying medicines to government hospitals. A two-member bench, comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Waqar Ahmad Wednesday heard the case related to the supply of medicines to public hospitals. The court directed that tenders of companies proven to have supplied counterfeit medicines should be halted and issued a notice to the health department. Petitioner's counsel, Advocate Shumail Ahmad Butt, argued that the health department had allowed a company, previously banned for supplying counterfeit medicines, to participate in the government supply process. He stated that, according to the rules, a company whose medicines are declared counterfeit or substandard cannot be awarded a supply contract. Under the Provision of Superior Drug Act, such companies are completely prohibited from supplying medicines to the government hospitals. The lawyer further highlighted that in the 25/2024 medicine supply advertisement, a crucial clause was removed by the health department, allowing a previously banned company to participate in the tender process. He stressed that granting a contract to such a company could have severe consequences for public health, affecting the lives of people. The Peshawar High Court while suspending the tender process until the next hearing, issued a notice to the health department, seeking a response.—APP

## Int'l moot on water security, climate change begins at UET

LAHORE: A two-day International Conference on Water Security and Climate Change (ICWSCC) 2025 inaugurated at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore on Wednesday. The event was hosted by Center of Excellence in Water Resource Engineering (CEWRE) UET Lahore, USPCAS-W at MUE T Jamshoro and sponsored by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan. The conference was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Shahid Munir, Vice Chancellor of UET Lahore, who graced the event as the chief guest. The conference brought together distinguished national and international speakers to share their expertise on a wide range of topics, including the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in water security, climate change and water resource management, flood and drought management, integrated water resource management, technological and innovative solutions, policy and governance, risk management, social and economic dimensions, the water-energy-food nexus, disaster management and resilience, and specialized focus areas. The conference saw active participation from Deans of various faculties, Heads of teaching departments.—APP

## Alhamra Film Club all out to reviving cinema, engaging audience

LAHORE: The Alhamra Film Club is not just a platform for screening classic and contemporary films; it is an initiative dedicated to exploring the art of filmmaking, its history, and its profound impact on society. The enthusiasm surrounding this initiative has been remarkable, as audiences eagerly engage in discussions and gain a deeper appreciation for the cinematic arts. During the screening of 'The Battle of Algiers', Chairman Alhamra Razi Ahmed highlighted the significance of the Film Club stating, "Alhamra Film Club is committed to showcasing

the best of Urdu and Punjabi cinema while also encouraging meaningful discussions on film as an art form and its influence on culture and society." Executive Director Alhamra Syed Tauqeer Haider Kazmi further emphasised the club's educational role, stating, "Recently, Alhamra successfully conducted a film workshop, and through this initiative, we aim to connect the younger generation with the art of filmmaking and its importance." Kazmi said, "Alhamra is progressing with a modern vision, continuously introducing new initiatives that are

gaining widespread public acclaim." The screening of 'The Battle of Algiers' captivated the audience with its compelling storyline, powerful dialogues, and historical significance. Previously, the club also showcased Jinnah, a film based on the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which was met with immense appreciation. The Alhamra Film Club is a testament to this vision, providing a space for film lovers, students, and creatives to engage with cinema beyond entertainment. This initiative is shaping a more informed and culturally enriched audience.—APP

## Turkiye envoy, MD APP discuss official news agencies cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Türkiye Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu on Wednesday called on Managing Director, Associated Press of Pakistan Muhammad Asim Khichi and discussed news cooperation between the official news agencies of both the countries. Pakistani cuisine recipes Türkiye Ambassador, MD APP discuss news cooperation between official news agencies The Ambassador was keen to further enhance news exchange and cooperation between Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) and Anadolu News Agency (AA). Ambassador Neziroglu said that it was an era of information and both the official news agencies should cooperate in exchange of news of mutual interest and to counter negative propaganda against each other's countries. He said communication linkages between two countries would pave way for future contacts including people to people, media, cultural, business, tourism, energy and especially in education field and other sectors for bringing the two nations more closer to each other. The ambassador said that Pakistan and Türkiye had historic ties and both the countries are two nations with one future. The Managing Director APP assured Türkiye's Ambassador that news cooperation between the two nations' official news agencies would be further enhanced for mutual benefit of the two countries. Türkiye Ambassador, MD APP discuss news cooperation between official news agencies. Later, the Managing Director APP presented souvenir to the ambassador.

## DC chairs meeting for eradication of Polio

SUKKUR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sukkur, Dr Raja MB Dharejo on Wednesday has said district Sukkur had demonstrated better performance in comparison to other districts of the province regarding eradication of polio. He said this while presiding over a meeting at his office to review performances and arrangements of the upcoming Polio Campaign which will be launched on Feb 3rd across the Sukkur district. The DC said that the eradication of polio is the top priority of the Sindh government. He said that efforts are underway to achieve 100 percent coverage so that polio disease can be eradicated from the district.—APP

## Kundi for healthier lifestyles to combat rising heart disease rates

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in his address, emphasized the importance of quality education as the key to progress in the modern world

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday initiated a symposium on heart disease prevention and safety measures at the Governor House and stressed that raising awareness about adopting a healthy lifestyle was a pressing need in today's society. The event was attended by prominent personalities, including Dr. Miqdad Ali Khan, Head of the Cardiology Department at Rahim Medical Institute (RMI), Dr. Chiragh Hussain, Associate Professor at Hayat Medical Complex, heart disease specialists, doctors and medical stu-

dents, among others. In his opening address as the chief guest, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi welcomed health experts to the Governor House, emphasizing the importance of tackling this highly sensitive and prevalent health issue. He urged both private and public institutions to organize similar programs to address health concerns. "To build a healthier society, everyone must contribute their part. We must ensure that the public has access to the best healthcare services," he said. He further said that cardiovascular diseases have become a silent epidemic not just in

Pakistan, but around the world. Governor Kundi highlighted the importance of modern research and technology in combating heart diseases, and encouraged making lifestyle changes to prevent the spread of this health crisis. He concluded by reiterating that promoting healthy activities is key to fostering a healthy society. Meanwhile, a meeting of the 36th Board of Governors of the Institute of Management Sciences (IM Sciences) was held under the chairmanship of Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. During the meeting, the Director of IM Sciences presented

detailed updates on the institute's new initiatives, including the Women Center of Excellence, the National Center for Branding, the National Growth Center, the Software House, a 900 KW solar system, and the acquisition of 20 kanals of land for further expansion. The Board of Governors also received updates on the success of the institute's weekend programs, which have been well-received. In addition, recommendations from the Executive Committee and the Academic Council were presented for approval, along with the minutes of a committee's review on the absence of five faculty mem-

bers, which was also put forward for approval. Further discussions included the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee's meetings, which were likewise presented for final approval. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in his address, emphasized the importance of quality education as the key to progress in the modern world. "It is crucial that educational institutions align with modern technology and research to stay relevant," he said. He also stressed the importance of equipping students with digital skills in addition to traditional education to stay competitive on the global stage.—APP

**MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN**

**WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED**

JUDO  
KARATE  
KUNG-FU  
JU-JITSU  
TAEKWONDO  
UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

**Ashraf**

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD  
127 C, Industrial Estate  
Sialkot-61340, Pakistan  
Phones: +92-51-3258000 / 3255788  
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JANUARY

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

## Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

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



## Enquiry

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



## Hospitals

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



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NADRA introduces lifetime Identity Cards

A spokesperson for the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) confirmed that these changes will soon be reflected in the issuance of new identity cards, marking a progressive step towards inclusion

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has approved amendments to the National Identity Card Act of 2002 aimed at improving accessibility and recognition for individuals with disabilities and organ donors in Pakistan. A spokesperson for the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) confirmed that these changes will soon be reflected in the issuance of new identity cards, marking a progressive

step towards inclusion. The amended law will introduce separate, lifetime-valid identity cards for persons with disabilities. These individuals will receive a specialized Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) featuring a distinctive wheelchair logo, signifying their status. The same symbol will also be included on the identification cards of disabled children, regardless of whether they hold a formal or temporary card. This development is designed to facilitate easier identification and accessibility. Moreover, the

amendments extend to citizens who have voluntarily registered as organ donors with recognized authorities. These individuals will also be issued lifetime identification cards displaying both the wheelchair logo and an organ donor symbol. To qualify, individuals must first register with the relevant donor registration organizations. The new cards will serve as a crucial tool in ensuring the inclusion of both groups in various social services and healthcare initiatives. The dual-status card for individuals who are both disa-

bled and organ donors will feature both the wheelchair and organ donor symbols, offering them enhanced recognition across public and private sectors. These changes have been made under Section 44 of the NADRA Ordinance, 2000, and will be implemented following the official notification in the upcoming Gazette of Pakistan. The updates also introduce new schedules to specify the design and form of the updated identity cards and certificates, ensuring clarity in their use and distribution. Aimed at streamlining documentation and

catering to the specific needs of these vulnerable segments of the population, these amendments are expected to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities while also promoting the cause of organ donation in the country. The new CNICs for disabled adults—whether resident or non-resident—will be issued by NADRA in collaboration with federal and provincial authorities, while special children will receive a Child Registration Certificate or Juvenile Card, valid for the duration outlined in the rules.

## Serena Chowk Interchange project to be inaugurated on Feb 4:Naqvi



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Another mega project in Islamabad nearing completion at a rapid pace, with two underpasses of the Serena Chowk Interchange Project undergoing finishing touches and asphalt work progressing

swiftly. During his visit to the project site, Interior Minister directed the authorities to expedite the finishing work and announced that the project will be inaugurated on February 4. He directed to beautify the surroundings with horticulture and installing attractive lights. He also instructed the

authorities to complete the construction of connecting roads promptly. The Serena Chowk Interchange Project consists of three underpasses, with one already completed and opened for traffic. Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the beautification work at Serena Chowk and expressed his optimism that

the project's completion will resolve Islamabad's long-standing traffic issues. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa briefed the Interior Minister on the progress of the project. Federal Secretary Interior Muhammad Khuram Agha and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion.

## Islamabad Declaration reaffirms commitment to strengthen coop

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd Annual Meeting of the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) and week-long visit of high level delegation of Rectors/Vice chancellors from OIC member countries concluded in Islamabad with the adoption of the Islamabad Declaration, reaffirming the commitment of OIC member states to fostering collaboration in science, technology, higher education, and health sectors. A high-level delegation of 28 members from 17 leading universities and institutions of OIC countries undertook a week-long visit to Pakistan, engaging in discussions and partnership-building activities. The delegation included representatives from Palestine, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Oman, Jordan, Russian Federation, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritania, Indonesia, and Iran. During the visit, the delegation participated in the 2nd Annual Meeting of CCoE and the 5th Rectors Conference, alongside rectors and vice-chancellors of Pakistani institutions. During this productive visit, over 30 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed, paving the way for enhanced collaboration in education, research, and industry. The delegates visited top Pakistani universities and leading industrial groups in Faisalabad and Lahore, including Government College University Faisalabad, The University of Faisalabad, the University of the Punjab, and Gourmet Foods, to explore avenues for joint initiatives. It was agreed to enhance cooperation in science, technology, higher education, and health sectors through joint projects, training, workshops, and seminars, exchange of faculty, experts, and formation of mechanisms aimed at learning from one another's experiences, expertise, and knowledge. The delegation lauded COMSTech's initiatives for Palestine, particularly the provision of 5,000 scholarships and research fellowships for Palestinian students and researchers. They assured their full support for the rehabilitation and restructuring of Palestine's education and health sectors. To further strengthen academic and research ties, the delegation extended an invitation to Pakistani vice-chancellors from CCoE member institutions for future collaborative engagements. The meeting concluded with a unanimous commitment to advancing the goals of the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence through practical and result-oriented partnerships. The Islamabad Declaration symbolizes the collective resolve of OIC member states to harness science, technology, and education as key drivers for sustainable development. The partnerships formed during this visit are expected to pave the way for innovation, knowledge exchange, and long-term progress across the OIC region.—DNA

## 'Turkish varsity fair 2025' opens doors for students, strengthening ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-Turk MAARIF International Schools and Colleges, in partnership with the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) and the Turkish Embassy in Pakistan, is hosting the Turkish University Fair 2025, here on Wednesday. The event started from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and offers students a platform to explore higher education opportunities in Türkiye. Its third edition, the fair connects Pakistani students with top universities in Türkiye, expanding educational collaboration between the two countries. It aims to provide direct access to academic programs, scholarships, and career pathways. Ten universities from Türkiye, including Bilkent University, Bogazici University, and METU

Northern Cyprus Campus, are showcasing their programs. representatives are available to guide students on academic choices, research prospects, scholarships, and exchange programs. The event offers a chance to interact with universities, explore financial aid options, and gain insights into global academic pathways. With a turnout expected to reach 5,000 students from schools and universities, the fair serves as a meeting point for those seeking education in Türkiye. The event is attended by Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu, emphasized the role of education in deepening bilateral ties. "Educational initiatives like the Turkish University Fair 2025 go beyond academics. They strengthen the partnership between Pakistan

and Türkiye and open new opportunities for young students," Ambassador said. He also suggested expanding collaboration by organizing a similar fair in Türkiye featuring Pakistani universities, promoting a two-way academic exchange. With 340,000 international students from 198 countries, Türkiye has become a preferred destination for higher education. More than 5,000 Pakistani students are currently studying in Türkiye, benefiting from its universities, affordable education, and diverse academic environment. Türkiye ranks among the top 10 destinations for international students, with a 4.76% enrollment rate of foreign students. The Turkish Maarif Foundation continues to support Pakistani students by facilitating access to quality education in fields like en-

gineering, medicine, business, and the arts. The foundation's initiatives, including this fair, help students explore study options while strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and Türkiye. The Turkish Maarif Foundation operates in 53 countries, promoting education and international academic collaboration. Through initiatives like the Turkish University Fair, it connects students with global opportunities. Pak-Turk Maarif International, part of the foundation, runs schools and colleges across Pakistan, providing a pathway for students to pursue higher education in Türkiye. The institution follows the motto "Two Nations - One Future," highlighting the shared vision of academic growth and collaboration between Pakistan and Türkiye.

## Police arrest 13 criminals

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police during operations against drug dealers, liquor suppliers and illegal arms owners on Wednesday arrested about 13 criminals from across the district. According to a police spokesman, the Ratta Amral Police netted accused Yasir with 1.52 kilograms charas, while the Taxila Police recovered 650 grams of the contraband item from accused Omar Tayyab. Similarly, the Race Course Police nabbed accused Yasir with 25 litres of liquor, while the Gujjar Khan and Ganjmandi Police recovered 10 litres and 5 litres of liquor from accused Kamran Mahmood and Nadeem respectively. Meanwhile, eight accused were held for having illegal weapons and ammunition. The City, Naseerabad Race Course and Taxila Police arrested accused Muhammad Babar, Haziq Javed, Aryan and Rashid respectively on the recovery of a 30 bore pistols from all of them. Similarly, the Ganjmandi Police recovered a 30 bore pistol each from accused Tanveer Ahmed and Adnan, while the Gujjar Khan Police netted accused Shahidur Rehman with a 44 bore rifle and Wajid Rehman with a 223 bore rifle.—APP

## Introduction of electric buses significant step

ISLAMABAD: Civil society organizations and environmental activists have welcomed the government's decision to introduce electric buses in Islamabad, terming it a "significant step" towards reducing air pollution and promoting sustainable transportation. These electric buses have been operated on 13 routes including Faizabad to Nust Metro Station, Faizabad to Allama Iqbal Open University, Pak Secretariat to Kachhari Metro Station, National Library to Pims Metro Station. Similarly, other routes include Pims to Bari Imam, D12 from Nust Metro Station, Pims to Nust Metro Station, Pims to Golra Sharif, Abpara to Tiramari, Khana Pul to Nellore, Faizabad to Peer Wadhai Mor, Golra Mor to Wah Cantt and routes from Golra Mor to I-16 are included. Environmental expert Muneer Ahmed said the electric buses will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment. "We have been advocating for eco-friendly transportation solutions for years, and it's heartening to see the government taking concrete steps in this direction," he stated.—APP

## Parliamentarians laud Bank Road's pedestrian street

RAWALPINDI Cantonment Board (RCB) organized a community walk in connection with 'clean environment' to highlight citizens' responsibilities of maintaining cleanliness and environment protection. The participants highly appreciated the landmark achievement of RCB to convert Sadder's famous Bank Road in a traffic free pedestrian street. The walk, organized in collaboration with the Military Lands and Cantonments (ML&C), was attended by senior PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi MNA, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhary, Malik Ibrar MNA, Station Commander Brig Ahmad, IG Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, CEO RCB Ali Irfan Rizvi, Add'l CEO Haider Shuja, traders, students and citizens. In his talk with media representatives, Hanif Abbasi lauded the efforts of RCB in providing a peaceful shopping environment for the residents. He said that the splendor of the pedestrian street increased at night. "Earlier, electricity poles and wires were hanging here, but now it reflects an attractive market environment which has created convenience for the women and families", he said and added that the allocation of four parking areas would further address the parking issues. Appreciating the performance shown by CEO RCB and his team, Hanif Abbasi congratulated the entire team for the successful completion of the project. "Encroachment was removed from here after two years of hard work. This environment relates to those of the developed countries", he said. He went on saying that the pedestrian street would further enhance business activities in Sadder. Highlighting the contribution of traders and businessmen, Hanif Abbasi said all stakeholders were taken onboard by RCB during planning and execution of Bank Road project, in which the traders community played their important role to complete the project in two years. He said that in maintaining cleanliness, 'we are ahead of London and Paris'. Talking about improving the national economy, Abbasi highlighted that all economic indicators are showing positive tendencies, foreign investors are inclining towards Pakistan and inflation also dropped to a single digit. "PML N government always brought prosperity in Rawalpindi in the shapes of motorways, Rawalpindi Institute Cardiology, Rawalpindi Institute of Urology and also in education sectors", he said. Abbasi said that politics should be based on performance, such that one province should compete with another province based on performance. Barrister Danyal Chaudhary while appreciating the pedestrian street project said that it was the first project of the country in which the electricity cables were shifted underground.—DNA

# CARNIVAL FOR A CAUSE

Dear All,

We're thrilled to invite you to our Carnival for a Cause!  
It's going to be a day filled with fun, laughter, and great activities.

Bake sale

Petting Zoo

Food stalls by kids

Jumping Castle

Build-a-Pet

Popcorn & Cotton Candy

**Event Time: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM**  
**Date & Venue: 25th January 2025**  
(Saturday) at Main Orchard Road Farm, 21 Orchard Scheme.

**CHARGES FOR ENTRY**

Adults: Rs.300  
2-13 years old: Rs. 150  
Below 2 years: Free

**All proceeds will go to charity**  
**Let's make a difference together**



## Briefs

## Pakistan's maritime sector set for major boost

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh revealed on Wednesday that top global companies are vying for access to Pakistan's ports, with the government taking bold steps to revolutionize the maritime sector through comprehensive digitalization, poised to transform Pakistan into a thriving hub of international trade. In a recent conversation with PTV news channel, the Minister unveiled an ambitious plan to transform Pakistan's ports, revealing that global companies have expressed interest in investing multi-billion dollars due to the huge potential of Pakistan's ports. This development is poised to catapult Pakistan's maritime sector to new heights, making it a key player in regional trade, he expressed confidence. With Pakistan's strategic location and vast coastline, its ports have long been recognized as a vital artery for international trade, he said, adding, the investment is expected to bring in cutting-edge technology, modern infrastructure, and expertise further solidifying Pakistan's position as a major maritime hub. The Minister praised Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and his team for their efforts in attracting international investment, stating that today's success is a direct result of their hard work. He noted that global companies are now expressing confidence in Pakistan's maritime sector and are eager to invest. Furthermore, the government is taking proactive steps to digitalize the sector, paving the way for increased efficiency and growth, he added. Minister further stated that the Pakistani government's primary focus is on boosting direct foreign investment and export-led growth. —APP

## PICA Act to protect genuine journalism: Danyal

RAWALPINDI: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhary, MNA on Wednesday reaffirmed that the government was committed to the freedom of speech and protection of the rights of the journalist community. He said that PICA Act would protect genuine journalists and promote authentic news culture in the country. "There is no harm in PICA laws for the journalists, rather it will protect the journalists, media owners and media industry", he said while talking to the media at the conclusion of a community walk, which was organized by Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, here at Bank Road Sadar. Barrister Danyal underlined the need for rejecting fake news being spread by the so called social media activists, who pretend to be the journalists. "Those who propagate wrong information and give fake news will be questioned through PICA laws", he said. The Parliamentary Secretary said that the culture of defamation of opponents was being promoted on social media which, he said was not journalism and needed to be stopped. Danyal further highlighted that people use social media platforms and act as media men to mislead the people.—APP

## Gandhara cultural festival promotes sustainable tourism

The festival featured a vibrant array of stalls and exhibits, showcasing ancient artifacts, stone carvings, books, hand-embroidered dresses, handmade jewelry, truck art, stupas, and organic foods

FAISAL SHEIKH/DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Gandhara Cultural Festival, held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Wednesday, brought Pakistan's rich cultural heritage to life, celebrating the ancient Gandhara civilization and promoting eco-tourism. The event, followed by the grand launch of the project "Promoting Gandhara's Civilization and Heritage for Eco-Tourism," marked a significant step in preserving Pakistan's historical treasures and boosting tourism. The festival featured a vibrant array of stalls and exhibits, showcasing ancient artifacts, stone carvings, books, hand-embroidered dresses, handmade jewelry, truck art, stupas, and organic foods. One of the main attractions was a Hindu community corner, where visitors were captivated by devotional bhajans performed with traditional musical instruments, symbolizing interfaith harmony. The event was organized by Kurrum Welfare Houses and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), in collaboration with the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), and PNCA. Parliamentary Secretary, Farah Naz Akbar inaugurated the festival, commending the initiative for its role in promoting



cultural tourism and unity among diverse communities. "It is heartening to see that stalls from seven different cultural communities are part of this festival, showcasing Pakistan's rich and diverse heritage," she remarked. She also highlighted the government's "Uraan Pakistan" initiative under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which aims to drive national progress through cultural and economic growth. CEO

of PPAF, Nadir Gul, emphasized the organization's commitment to poverty alleviation across 150 districts, providing livelihood opportunities to people of all backgrounds. He highlighted PPAF's initiatives in Chitral and Balochistan, focusing on education, health, and cultural preservation. MD PTDC, Rana Aftab, underlined the global significance of Gandhara heritage, spanning Peshawar, Swat, and Taxila Val-

ley. He noted that over 500 million Buddhists worldwide consider this region sacred, making it a prime destination for religious tourism. "We see Gandhara civilization as a key tourism product. PTDC is actively promoting Buddhist heritage through major projects that aim to preserve history while generating livelihood opportunities for local communities," he stated. Tourism, he added, contributes 5.3% to Paki-

stan's GDP, with religious tourism from Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh pilgrims playing a significant role in economic revival. Advisor for Culture and Heritage at PNCA, Kashif Irshad announced comprehensive national initiatives under "Uraan Pakistan" to boost cultural tourism. "Pakistan has immense potential in cultural tourism. Under this initiative, we aim to generate \$18 billion in foreign exchange annually by 2030," he revealed. He also announced plans to host three major cultural festivals—Mehergarh Cultural Festival, Indus Valley Festival, and Gandhara Cultural Festival—to showcase Pakistan's historical richness to the world. The festival featured a grand exhibition of Gandhara artifacts, including sculptures, coins, pottery, paintings, and photography exhibits. Visitors had the opportunity to explore the artistic and historical significance of Gandhara's legacy. MPA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Malik Tariq Awan, also attended the event while a number of visitors also reached the venue for having a glimpse of rich cultural legacy. The festival concluded with a guided tour of the PNCA Art Gallery, where visitors admired a stunning display of ancient stone carvings, stupas, and paintings that reflect Gandhara's artistic and spiritual heritage.

## Pakistani startups to go global: Chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: HEC Chairman Mukhtar Ahmed announced on Wednesday that the commission is set to host the Investor Connect Event (ICE25) on February 4, 2025, a flagship initiative aimed at providing a vital bridge between Pakistani startups and international investors, thereby opening up a plethora of global opportunities for the country's burgeoning young entrepreneurs. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Mukhtar Ahmed unveiled plans for the Investor Connect Event (ICE) on February 4, 2025. This initiative will provide a platform for Pakistani startups to access global markets, connecting them with international investors and fostering innovation, he added. The chairman expressed optimism about

the potential of local startups to make a significant impact globally, highlighting the HEC's commitment to supporting their growth and development. HEC Chairman credits Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif for prioritizing entrepreneurship and scholarship programs for students, recognizing his efforts to empower the country's youth. The Prime Minister has launched several initiatives, including the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agricultural Loan Scheme, which provides subsidized loans to promote self-employment opportunities, he added. Additionally, he has introduced scholarship programs for top-ranked international universities, he said, adding, these initiatives demonstrate the Prime Minister's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and education among Pakistani youth. Responding to a

query, he further stated that coming 'Investor Connect Event' is a fantastic opportunity for Pakistani startups to connect with global investors. By inviting international investors, this event aims to bridge the gap between innovative startups and potential funders, ultimately driving growth and expansion for these businesses, he mentioned. This event is part of a broader initiative to empower Pakistani startups and provide them with a platform to showcase their ideas and products, he said, adding, the event will likely feature pitching sessions, networking opportunities, and panel discussions all designed to facilitate meaningful connections between startups and investors. By attending the 'Investor Connect Event', Pakistani startups can gain valuable exposure, secure funding, and tap into the expertise of global investors, he added. This event

has the potential to be a game-changer for the Pakistani startup ecosystem and it will be exciting to see the outcomes and success stories that emerge from it, he highlighted. Responding to a query, he said the present government is taking a proactive approach to empower its youth by offering top-notch scholarship programs that surpass those of other countries. Instead of merely seeking employment opportunities, the focus has shifted to creating job opportunities, thereby fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, he highlighted. This initiative is expected to have a profound impact on the country's economic growth and development. Notably, various organizations, such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), are playing a vital role in promoting scholarships and research opportunities for Pakistani students, he concluded.

## President Zardari extends greetings Chinese New Year

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday extended the greeting of Chinese New Year and Spring Festival to Chinese President Xi Jinping, reaffirming the commitment to strengthening the "iron-clad friendship" between Pakistan and China. The president, in a letter of greetings to his Chinese counterpart, said that he looked forward to discussing ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation and friendship with him in Beijing, according to a President House press release. He reiterated Pakistan's ongoing support for the One China Policy, calling it a vital component of Pakistan's foreign policy. President Zardari said that both Pakistan and China enjoyed timeless and strategic cooperative partnership. This unique and exemplary bilateral relationship was nurtured and strengthened by the unwavering efforts of leaderships of both countries, he added. He also thanked President Xi Jinping for his visionary leadership in advancing Pakistan-China relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), besides acknowledging China's remarkable progress in various sectors during last year. He also wished President Xi Jinping good health and expressed hope for the continued development and prosperity of the Chinese people. Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival, starting January 29 this year, is a festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar which marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring.—DNA

## Below-average rainfall may impact local crops

ISLAMABAD: Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz Wednesday predicts a dry spell ahead, with temperatures remaining dry and below-average rainfall expected this year, which may have a detrimental impact on local crops. Talking to a private news channel, Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz predicted a dry spell ahead, warning that below-average rainfall and higher-than-normal temperatures may have a detrimental impact on local crops, particularly wheat and cotton. He forecast that mainly cold and dry weather will prevail in most plain areas of the country over the next 24 hours. According to Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz, the seasonal forecast indicates that Pakistan will receive below-average rainfall this year. The country is expected to experience a significant deficit in rainfall, with a predicted decrease of up to 20-30% compared to normal levels, which may have severe implications for agriculture and water resources. Responding to a query, he said daytime temperatures in Karachi are expected to rise, with highs ranging from 12 to 14 degrees Celsius. —APP

## Robinson term CAYA Summit 2025 success

ISLAMABAD: Head of Delegation Commonwealth Secretariat Layne Robinson on Wednesday praised Pakistan's role in the Commonwealth's youth initiatives, calling the CAYA Youth Summit 2025 a significant step in regional collaboration. Talking to media, he said Pakistan is not only hosting the Commonwealth Asia Regional Secretariat but also bringing together ministers to advance youth mentorship. Discussing Pakistan's National Youth Council (NYC), he highlighted its role in engaging young people from across the country. He commended Pakistan for this initiative, noting that many countries still do not have a National Youth Council of any form and young people remain outside of the policy making. Robinson acknowledged the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, for integrating youth into policy-making.—APP

## HEC updates commerce curricula

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), through its National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC), has updated the Commerce degree curricula to align with modern academic and industry demands. The two-day NCRC meeting, chaired by Prof. Syed Muhammad Amir Shah from Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, took place at Government College University Faisalabad. The committee designed comprehensive curricular standards for the Associate Degree, Bachelor of Studies, and Master of Studies in Commerce, reinforcing HEC's commitment to academic excellence and

aligning the discipline with contemporary business challenges. Dr. Amjad Hussain, Director General, Academics Division at HEC, highlighted HEC's commitment to enhancing curriculum development, elevating academic standards, and fostering a more structured, industry-aligned education system. Mr. Muhammad Ali Baig, Deputy Director, Academics Division at HEC and Secretary of the NCRC, provided a comprehensive overview of HEC's curriculum development approach. He emphasized the need for a structured Commerce degree that equips students with industry-relevant skills, setting it apart from the existing degree of Bachelor of Business Administration. He

highlighted the importance of strengthening courses in accounting, finance, economics, and trade policy in the undergraduate degree in Commerce to make it more relevant to the subject and the required practice in field. Moreover, recognizing the growing influence of AI and digital transformation in commerce, he stressed the integration of courses on computing, digital skills, business technology, and enterprise resource planning to modernize the curriculum of commerce degrees and to enhance graduates' technological competency. The NCRC had representation from leading higher education institutions across Pakistan, including Air University, Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Thailand, High Commissioner of Malaysia Dato Azhar Mazlan and others cutting cake to celebrate the Thai Armed Forces Day.



**General Practice HOSPITAL**








*Providing top-tier medical care.*

We are proud to announce the opening of General Practice Hospital which has evolved from a healthcare centre into a newly expanded, 20-bed, full-service, multidisciplinary hospital in the heart of Islamabad. We now provide comprehensive, holistic, and personalized 24 hour services to meet your healthcare needs.

We aim to establish long-term, trusting relationships with our patients and their families, ensuring easy accessibility and continuity of care.









































**For Appointments & Information**

+9235 47 47 01 | +92 51 8900 682

Pakland Tower-2, New Blue Area, Islamabad

/generalpracticeislamabad

www.generalpractice.com.pk



Scan here to add us to your contacts



## North Korea in Trump 2.0

**C**OULD North Korean leader Kim Jong-un capitalise on another chance during a Trump 2.0 era? Having leveraged Russian President Vladimir Putin's struggles in Ukraine to his benefit, Kim could again find a way to win US President Donald Trump over. When Trump called Kim his "friend", North Korea seemed quick to adjust its strategies to take advantage of the dynamic. At the same time, Nato, China and South Korea would likely need to brace themselves, as Trump continues to claim these nations have been profiting at America's expense – a situation he seems intent on changing. The alarm bells ringing worldwide over Trump's "America first" policy echo the repercussions of a US retreat from the global security stage, disrupting balances of power and amplifying a sense of crisis, particularly among its allies. In the context of alliance realignment, South Korea attracts significant attention. Trump's call for a sharp increase in South Korea's defence contributions to US\$10 billion – nearly nine times the current amount – and his depiction of South Korea as a "money machine" highlight potential shifts in the alliance. If this trajectory continues, coupled with discussions of drastic measures such as the withdrawal of US forces and the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons, South Korea may be forced to pursue greater self-reliance in national defence. This is because, whenever previous US administrations considered reducing troop presence in South Korea, the country significantly enhanced its self-reliant defence capabilities under the slogan of localising defence. The stakes are different for North Korea. Trump's return offers Pyongyang an opportunity to revisit its unfinished objectives. In a speech following Trump's election, Kim had referred to his past negotiations with Trump and framed them as indicative of the United States' "aggressive and hostile" policy towards North Korea. Yet, some experts believe his remarks could be a calculated strategy to capture Trump's attention. On January 6, just two weeks before Trump's inauguration, North Korea launched a suspected hypersonic missile. This was followed by the launch of short-range ballistic missiles on January 14, further escalating tensions. With Russia as a key ally, North Korea likely believes that such actions could enhance its leverage in negotiations. On his first day in office, Trump referred to Kim as someone he got along with and expressed hope for North Korea's return to the international stage, which can be interpreted as a positive signal for a potential Trump-Kim deal. Furthermore, both Trump and his defence secretary's references to North Korea as a nuclear-armed state could be seen as an encouraging message for Kim. While it is still too early to predict the resumption of US-North Korea negotiations, if successful, any deal would likely be small in scope. Such a deal might be based on a freeze of intercontinental ballistic missile development in exchange for partial sanctions relief. If that happens, North Korea's status as a nuclear-weapon state could become a fait accompli, effectively nullifying UN sanctions. Thus, under the diplomatic and security framework of a second Trump administration, the Korean peninsula faces a heightened risk of conflict.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

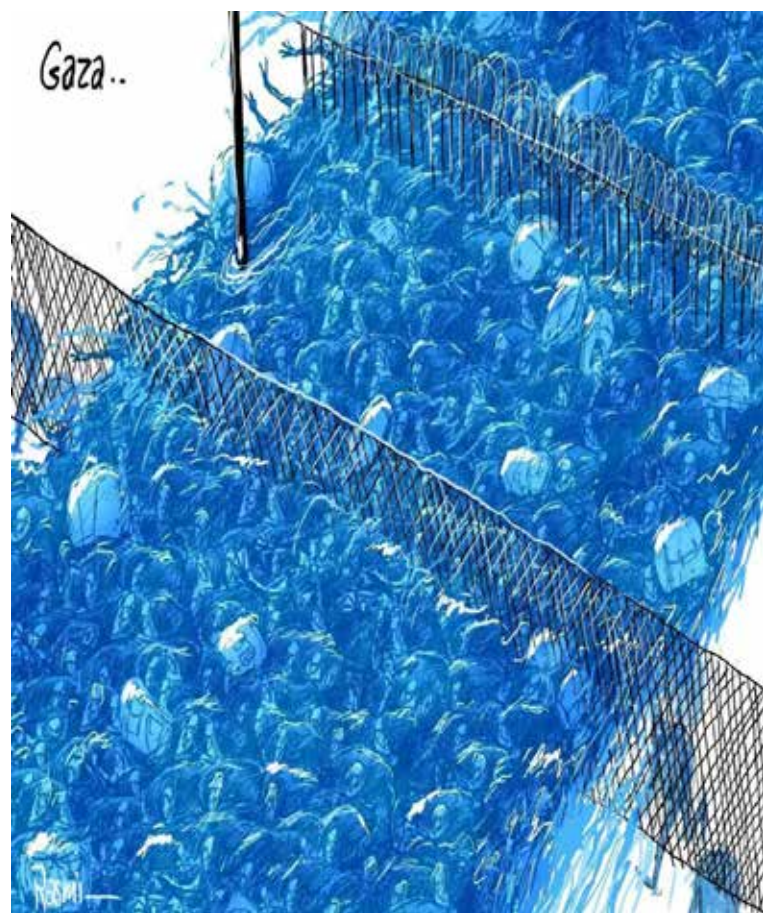
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 242

Email: [dailyisbpost@gmail.com](mailto:dailyisbpost@gmail.com)

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## Ongoing crimes against humanity

**I**N November 2024, acclaimed surgeon Nizam Mamode testified to the British parliament's International Development Committee's ongoing inquiry into Gaza's "humanitarian situation". A veteran medical professional on the frontlines of the Zionist entity's genocide of Palestinians, primarily women and children, he repeatedly burst into tears throughout. Describing scenes he and his team personally witnessed as they tended to countless mutilated and disfigured victims, he sketched a "particularly disturbing" picture of "Israel's" inexorable, indiscriminate maiming and murder of civilians in the wake of October 7, 2023. Mamode's most intense grief was exhibited while elucidating Tel Aviv's systematic, industrial-scale use of quadcopter drones to "regularly" shoot incapacitated Palestinians - in particular, children injured or trapped by rubble, following Israeli occupation force airstrikes. Of all the horrors he and his team spectated, Mamode considered "the deliberate and persistent...targeting of civilians, day after day" in the most perverse manner. Time after time, US-supplied IOF bombs would drop "on a crowded, tented area," then: "The drones would come down and pick off civilians - children [as young as seven] ... This is not an occasional thing. This was day after day of operating on children, who would say, 'I was lying on the ground after a bomb had dropped, and this quadcopter came down and hovered over me and shot me.' That is clearly a deliberate and persistent act; there was persistent targeting of civilians, day after day. We had one or two mass casualty incidents every day." Mamode, who has "worked in a number of conflict zones in different parts of the world" - including Rwanda during the 1994 genocide - said he'd "never seen anything" on the scale of the barbarity in Gaza, "ever". This perspective was shared by "all the experienced colleagues" with whom he worked. A surgeon on Mamode's team who'd been to Ukraine on five occasions declared the situation in Gaza to be "10 times worse." Benjamin Netanyahu has at last seemingly accepted a ceasefire deal, identical to multiple prior proposals he repeatedly rejected while the Gaza genocide was at its monstrous peak. Yet, in the days leading up to the settlement's January 19 commencement, "Israel" significantly intensified its attacks on Palestinians, liberally deploying quadcopters in the process. Over the prior month too, this technology was consistently employed to not only injure and slay surviving victims of IOF bombing attacks but target victims into the bargain. It appears at some point that the Zionist entity realized quadcopters could be converted into killing machines. As Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor noted back in February 2024, Elbit drones have been "repurposed... for the deliberate and direct execution of unlawful targets." The original intelligence gathering function of these drones, the organization added, means they "have very precise eavesdropping instruments and high-quality cameras, and can carry out additional military duties like shooting and carrying bombs, as well as be modified to become suicide drones."

# Will Trump succeed in obliterating the deep state?

Qamar Bashir



President Donald Trump has not solely focused on civil bureaucracy, but he has implemented significant reforms in the U.S. armed forces to better align them with his administration's policies and strengthen civilian oversight. On January 27, 2025, he signed an executive order to prohibit the use of race- or sex-based preferences in recruitment and advancement, aiming to refocus the military on traditional merit-based criteria

**D**ONALD TRUMP, even before his potential inauguration in 2025, has opened multiple contentious fronts both domestically and internationally. Each of these fronts is serious, radical, and aggressive, carrying significant risks and consequences if not handled with extreme care. However, the most perilous and far-reaching of these battles is his direct confrontation with the so-called "deep state." His perception of the deep state arises from the significant resistance he faced from federal agencies during his first term, as well as his belief that the Biden administration has used government machinery as a political tool to intimidate and suppress him, his associates, and his party. Trump's anti-deep state policy is based on the premise that the "deep state" is a network of entrenched bureaucrats and intelligence officials working to undermine the elected authority. He has vowed to "obliterate" this institutional opposition by purging government agencies, dismantling bureaucratic strongholds, reducing administrative power, and imposing stricter political loyalty tests within federal institutions with the objective to shift decision-making power away from unelected officials back to the duly elected representatives of the people. He rightly understood that the federal bureaucracy has accumulated substantial leverage over elected officials through the crafting and enforcement of complex regulations and by maintaining an outsized role in governance and limiting executive flexibility. Trump rightly realized that without dismantling this influence, no president can effectively execute their agenda. To achieve this, Trump introduced "Agenda 47," a sweeping initiative to re-establish a new "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE). This department is tasked with setting performance benchmarks, streamlining governmental functions, and ensuring that agencies operate with heightened efficiency and accountability. By defining clear objectives and reassessing resource allocation, this initiative seeks to eliminate inefficiencies and curtail the unchecked power of unelected officials. Soon after his inauguration, Trump issued an executive order to enforce a federal hiring moratorium, intending to drive deep structural reforms within the government by reducing bureaucratic expansion and recalibrating agency operations. He issued Executive Order 13957 (Schedule F) to reclassify certain federal positions. The purpose was to make it easier to remove employees deemed obstructive to the administration's objectives, laid the groundwork for sweeping restructuring, particularly within national security and intelligence agencies, and fundamentally reforming the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts. Additionally, Trump has proposed the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to declassify and disclose

documents related to alleged deep state activities, including unauthorized surveillance, censorship, and political interference. He has vowed to identify and prosecute individuals who leak sensitive government information to the media, arguing that such leaks contribute to misinformation and internal manipulation. To ensure continued oversight, Trump has set up an independent auditing system to continuously monitor intelligence agencies, preventing them from engaging in unauthorized activities against American citizens, and to dismantle the entrenched power structures that have historically constrained presidential authority. Additionally, the Heritage Foundation's "Project 2025" aligns with these objectives and has launched a comprehensive plan to reshape federal agencies and implement policies consistent with the administration's goals. On January 24, 2025, the administration terminated at least 17 inspectors general across various federal agencies, while tens of thousands of federal civil service roles are reclassified as political appointments, aiming to replace existing personnel with individuals loyal to the administration. A program has been offered to buy-outs equivalent to seven months' salary, encouraging federal employees to resign voluntarily by February 6, 2025. Estimations suggest that between 5% to 10% of federal employees may accept the buyout offer, potentially affecting up to 200,000 workers, given the federal civilian workforce of approximately 2 million. President Donald Trump has not solely focused on civil bureaucracy, but he has implemented significant reforms in the U.S. armed forces to better align them with his administration's policies and strengthen civilian oversight. On January 27, 2025, he signed an executive order to prohibit the use of race- or sex-based preferences in recruitment and advancement, aiming to refocus the military on traditional merit-based criteria. He has signed another executive order prohibiting transgender individuals from serving in the U.S. military. He has appointed individuals aligned with his vision for the military to key defense positions. Trump has demonstrated to leaders worldwide how to free elected representatives and their constituents from the control of entrenched bureaucrats who, through sheer force and administrative manipulation, usurp the powers of elected officials. Under the guise of regulations, laws, and procedural rules, these unelected entities assert dominance, making entire nations subservient to their authority. He has shown that decision-making power can and must be returned to the duly elected representatives of the people, ensuring that governance reflects the will of the electorate rather than the dictates of an unaccountable bureaucracy. His actions resonate with millions, particularly in nations

where fragile democratic institutions allow deep state elements to operate unchecked. In these countries, the deep state is often far more oppressive, using military power to suppress fundamental human rights. Despite being funded by taxpayer money, these entities dominate national institutions, including the judiciary, parliament, and executive branches, ensuring an unyielding grip on power. In such regimes, deep state actors exploit their positions for illicit activities such as smuggling, blackmail, and seizing national assets through sheer force. They impose tyranny and fascism on their own citizens, silencing opposition by means of extrajudicial killings, destruction of businesses, and illegal detentions. Political dissidents are often abducted without judicial oversight, imprisoned under fabricated charges, or forced into exile. This unchecked power structure devastates economies, stifles free speech, gags and defaces the media, imposes curbs on the internet and social media, and undermines the democratic aspirations of the people. The deep state in these countries has established a parallel government structure that exerts control over nearly every aspect of governance, from the lowest levels to the highest. This shadow system overrides decisions made by the civilian government, imposing its own policies and directives. Additionally, a parallel industrial network has been created, operated by serving military officials who use illicit funds, tax revenues, and illegally diverted national resources to sustain and shield their operations from taxation or legal scrutiny. Any business entity posing a challenge to their financial interests is swiftly eliminated through coercion, intimidation, or outright force. Business leaders and industrialists are frequently blackmailed, while legislators are pressured into passing laws that further consolidate deep state influence, and the judiciary is given written orders to issue. These tactics ensure that the deep state remains beyond accountability, leveraging illegal and unethical methods to maintain and expand its power. By challenging these entrenched power structures, Trump has positioning himself as a force against global deep state influences and a role model for other democratically elected leaders around the world. His actions have the potential to inspire movements in other nations to resist undemocratic rule and reclaim their sovereignty. If successful, these reforms could mark a significant shift in the governance of not only the United States but also serve as a beacon of hope for oppressed populations around the world.

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

## Trump's return and Abraham accord

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



This rapprochement could weaken the momentum of the Abraham Accords by encouraging Arab nations to reassess their alliances based on evolving regional priorities. China's growing influence in the Middle East adds another layer of complexity

**T**HE Abraham Accords, signed during Donald Trump's presidency, represent a significant milestone in the history of Middle Eastern diplomacy. These agreements sought to normalize relations between Israel and four Arab nations: the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco. Hailed as a breakthrough for regional stability, the accords have sparked considerable debate regarding their long-term implications, particularly under shifting U.S. administrations. As Trump reenters the political spotlight, questions surrounding the future of the Abraham Accords have gained renewed attention. This analysis examines the accords' potential trajectory under a Trump presidency or another administration, while exploring their broader geopolitical implications. The Abraham Accords emerged as a cornerstone of Trump's foreign policy, emphasizing peace, economic collaboration and security cooperation in a region

often characterized by longstanding animosities. By facilitating normalizing agreements between Israel and key Arab states, Trump sought to reshape the strategic landscape of the Middle East. These accords represented a shift from decades of conventional Arab-Israeli diplomacy, which had historically hinged on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, the Abraham Accords bypassed this stalemate, focusing on fostering bilateral ties and advancing pragmatic interests. Central to the accords was the goal of economic integration. Israel and the UAE, for instance, quickly engaged in multi-billion-dollar trade and investment initiatives spanning sectors such as technology, energy and tourism. These economic incentives demonstrated the tangible benefits of normalization and provided a template for other nations to follow. In parallel, the accords aimed to strengthen regional security cooperation, creating a coalition to counter threats such as Iranian influence and extremism. If Trump were to return to the presidency, he would likely prioritize the expansion of the Abraham Accords as part of his foreign policy agenda. His transactional approach, which often emphasized economic deals and security guarantees, could play a pivotal role in persuading additional nations to join. Saudi Arabia and Oman, both of which have shown cautious interest in normalization, are frequently mentioned as potential candidates. Saudi Arabia's involvement would be particularly significant, given its status as a regional heavyweight and its historical leadership of the Arab and Islamic worlds. However, Riyadh's decision to join the accords would depend on various factors, including domestic political considerations, public opinion and the kingdom's evolving relationship with the U.S. and Israel. Oman, known for its neutral foreign policy, might also be enticed by economic incentives and security guarantees, aligning its strategic interests with the goals of the Abraham Accords. The Biden administration's approach to the Abraham Accords has been supportive but less proactive. While the administration has acknowledged the significance of these agreements, it has prioritized rebuilding traditional alliances in Europe and Asia over expanding Middle Eastern initiatives. This shift reflects broader changes in U.S. foreign policy, which has pivoted away from direct involvement in Middle Eastern conflicts toward addressing challenges posed by great-power competition with China and Russia. Under Biden, the Abraham Accords have not witnessed significant expansion, with the administration focusing instead on maintaining the agreements' existing framework. This more subdued engagement raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the accords, particularly as regional dynamics evolve. One of the most contentious aspects of the Abraham Accords is their exclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Critics argue that the accords sideline Palestinian aspirations for statehood, undermining

the broader prospects for peace in the region. The absence of meaningful progress on resolving this issue could strain relations between Israel and the Arab nations involved in the accords, particularly if domestic pressures in these countries intensify. For instance, public opinion in several Arab states remains deeply sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. If Arab governments perceive normalization with Israel as compromising their support for Palestinian rights, they may face internal backlash. This dynamic underscores the importance of addressing the Palestinian question as part of any comprehensive strategy to sustain and expand the Abraham Accords. The Middle East's geopolitical landscape is undergoing significant transformations, influenced by shifting alliances and the growing involvement of external powers such as China and Russia. One of the most notable developments is the warming ties between Iran and Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, mediated by China. This rapprochement could weaken the momentum of the Abraham Accords by encouraging Arab nations to reassess their alliances based on evolving regional priorities. China's growing influence in the Middle East adds another layer of complexity. As Beijing deepens its economic and diplomatic ties with the region, it may seek to position itself as a mediator in Middle Eastern affairs, potentially challenging the U.S.'s traditional role. Russia, too, has sought to expand its presence in the region, leveraging its military and energy partnerships to bolster its influence. These developments highlight the need for the U.S. to remain actively engaged in the Middle East to ensure the Abraham Accords' continued relevance. Despite the challenges, the Abraham Accords have already yielded substantial economic benefits, which could serve as a foundation for their expansion. Trade and investment between Israel and the UAE, for example, have flourished since the agreements were signed, with bilateral deals spanning critical sectors. These economic opportunities have demonstrated the potential for normalization to deliver tangible gains, creating incentives for other nations to join. Additionally, the accords have fostered people-to-people exchanges, promoting cultural understanding and cooperation. Initiatives such as direct flights, joint tourism ventures and academic partnerships have strengthened ties between Israel and its Arab counterparts, further solidifying the agreements' foundation. In a region marked by persistent security challenges, the Abraham Accords offer a framework for strategic alliances. The agreements have facilitated closer coordination between Israel and its Arab partners on issues such as counterterrorism, cybersecurity and defense. This collaboration has the potential to serve as a counterbalance to Iran's regional ambitions, providing a platform for collective security. Under a Trump presidency or similar leadership, security guarantees could be a key tool for expanding the accords. By

offering defense partnerships and military support, the U.S. could encourage additional nations to join, strengthening the coalition against shared threats. Public opinion in the Arab world has traditionally been skeptical of normalization with Israel, driven by historical grievances and solidarity with the Palestinian cause. However, recent surveys suggest a gradual shift in attitudes, particularly among younger generations. Economic pragmatism, combined with changing social dynamics, has contributed to growing acceptance of normalization in some Arab countries. This evolving mindset could help sustain and grow the Abraham Accords, provided that governments address public concerns and demonstrate the tangible benefits of these agreements. Efforts to build trust and foster understanding between peoples will be critical to ensuring the accords' long-term success.

The future of the Abraham Accords hinges on several key factors:

1. U.S. Leadership: The extent to which the U.S. remains actively involved as a mediator and guarantor of the agreements will be crucial. A disengaged U.S. risks diminishing the accords' momentum and leaving a vacuum for other powers to fill.
  2. Palestinian Issue: Addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains essential for ensuring the accords' sustainability. Neglecting this issue could undermine the agreements' credibility and alienate Arab publics.
  3. Regional Dynamics: The evolving geopolitical landscape, including Iran's influence and the role of external powers, will shape the accords' trajectory. Adapting to these changes will require flexibility and strategic foresight.
  4. Economic Incentives: Expanding economic cooperation will be vital for attracting new members to the accords. Demonstrating the tangible benefits of normalization can create a compelling case for participation.
  5. Public Engagement: Building support among Arab populations will be essential for sustaining the accords. Efforts to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding can help overcome historical divisions.
- The Abraham Accords represent a transformative development in Middle Eastern diplomacy, offering a pathway toward greater stability, economic integration and security cooperation. While challenges remain, the agreements have demonstrated their potential to reshape the region's strategic landscape. Whether under a Trump presidency or another administration, the future of the Abraham Accords will depend on the U.S.'s ability to navigate shifting regional dynamics, address unresolved issues such as the Palestinian question and sustain its leadership role. As the Middle East continues to evolve, the Abraham Accords stand as a testament to the possibilities of pragmatic diplomacy and the enduring pursuit of peace.



## Briefs

US weapons  
in Afghanistan  
a threat: FO

FROM PAGE 01  
January 20 inauguration have heightened uncertainty regarding his administration's stance on the crisis-hit South Asian nation. "They [Biden administration] gave billions of billions of dollars to the Taliban. They gave our military equipment, a big chunk of it, to the enemy," Trump said. He referred to the tumultuous and hasty withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in August 2021, ordered by President Joe Biden. "If we're going to pay billions of dollars a year, tell them we're not going to give them the money unless they give back our military equipment. ... So, we will give them a couple of bucks; we want the military equipment back," Trump stated without elaborating.

Grenell 'may  
have been  
misled'...

FROM PAGE 01  
dozens of tweets he did in support of Imran, but two tweets remain on his timeline. Beach, during an interview in Islamabad, said: "Richard Grenell is one of the finest Americans that I have ever met. He gets more done in a week than most people do in a year. He is absolutely effective, incredibly smart and humble. I am in awe of ambassador Grenell. I would say I do believe he may have been misled around some of these issues by certain individuals." Beach claimed that there is a lobby in the US that spends \$2 to 3 million per month "related to Imran Khan". "I am not an expert on these things but I do believe that Grenell has a better understanding of the true evidence today than before. He has a better understanding now."

Parliamentary  
instead  
of judicial...

FROM PAGE 01  
provide a list of missing persons. However, the NA speaker or committee members have decided not to make the government's response public at this stage. If the PTI returns to the negotiation table, the response will be presented in the committee for further discussion. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been briefed on the situation, sources revealed. Meanwhile, there appears to be a difference of opinion between the government and the Speaker's Office regarding the future of the negotiation committee. While the speaker aims to maintain the committee, the government is inclined to dissolve it after January 31. The government's response did not outright reject the formation of a judicial commission but emphasized the challenges and legal complexities involved. It also outlined specific circumstances under which a commission could be formed, while reiterating its preference for a parliamentary committee to address the issues at hand.

Govt uninterested  
in talks,...

FROM PAGE 01  
"They did not want talks to take place or lead to a resolution," he claimed. He further alleged that the authorities deliberately delayed engagement, stating, "We presented our demands, but the government took no serious steps. If they were sincere, they would have provided a timely response." According to him, officials had promised an answer by 28 January in a committee room meeting, but PTI was not informed of any decision in advance. Gohar emphasized that his party initiated the dialogue process despite facing intense political pressure. "Our leader, Imran Khan, remains our chairman today and will continue to be in the future," he asserted. He also clarified that PTI's only point of contact had been the Army Chief and denied meeting anyone else in negotiations. Commenting on legal matters, Gohar mentioned that their case was presented before Acting Judge Zeba Chaudhry, who scheduled the next hearing.

Steve Smith joins greats  
with 10,000 Test runs

Smith is also the fifth fastest batter to score 10,000 Test runs

## SPORTS DESK

GALLE: Australia's stand-in skipper Steve Smith etched his name in cricket history on Wednesday by becoming the fifth fastest batter to reach 10,000 runs in Test cricket during the ongoing first Test against Sri Lanka. Smith's remarkable achievement makes him the 15th player ever to surpass the coveted 10,000-run milestone in the longest format of the game, according to the ICC's official website. After missing the chance to reach the landmark in his hometown of Sydney during the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, the top order batter achieved the feat, playing his signature

flick toward mid-on before sprinting for a single. Raising his bat in acknowledgement of the crowd's applause, Smith was met with an ovation from the Australian camp. The 35-year-old accumulated his runs at an average of over 55, with only Kumar Sangakkara having a better return among players with over 10,000 Test runs (57.40). The right-handed batter now ranks as the fifth fastest batter to reach the 10,000 Test runs milestone by innings, behind Brian Lara, Sachin Tendulkar, Kumar Sangakkara and Ricky Ponting. **Fastest to 10,000 Test Runs:**  
• Brian Lara (West Indies) - 195 innings  
• Sachin Tendulkar (India)



- 195 innings  
• Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka) - 195 innings  
• Ricky Ponting (Australia) - 196 innings  
• Steve Smith (Australia) - 205 innings  
• Rahul Dravid (India) - 206 innings  
He also joins Australian greats Allan Border, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting as the fourth Australian to achieve this milestone. Most Runs for Australia in Tests:  
• Ricky Ponting - 13,378 runs in 287 innings  
• Allan Border - 11,174 runs in 265 innings  
• Waugh - 10,927 runs in 260 innings  
• Steve Smith - 10,050\* runs in 205 innings  
Earlier in the day, Smith

won the toss and elected to bat first. The Baggy Greens also named wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis for his debut in Test cricket, as the team went with three spinners and one seamer for this match. Australia (Playing XI): Usman Khawaja, Travis Head, Marcus Labuschagne, Steve Smith (c), Josh Inglis, Beau Webster, Alex Carey (wk), Mitchell Starc, Matthew Kuhnemann, Nathan Lyon, Todd Murphy. Sri Lanka (Playing XI): Dimuth Karunaratne, Oshada Fernando, Dinesh Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Kamindu Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva (c), Kusal Mendis (wk), Prabath Jayasuriya, Nishan Peiris, Jeffrey Vandersay, Asitha Fernando.

## How Mbappe &amp; Bellingham sparked Madrid's resurgence

## WEB DESK

MADRID: And back as the stadium-filling rock legends that we know them to be, as opposed to the enthusiastic, discordant high school band they have looked like for so much of the season. Carlo Ancelotti's men go into Wednesday's Champions League league-phase finale against Brest having already confirmed at least a place in the play-offs - and with an outside chance of sneaking into the top eight. Since being destroyed 5-2 by Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup, Real have won their past four matches, scoring 17 goals, and are top of La Liga by four points. An indifferent start to the campaign, including some inconsistent form and questions around the dynamic of the side with new superstar signing Kylian Mbappe, saw plenty of criticism directed towards boss Ancelotti. "Ancelotti is leaving the club in the summer", "Mbappe can't settle", "Vinicius Jr is unsettled" - people were asking what was going on at Real. But the demise of the European giants has been exaggerated. Ancelotti has nev-

er been unduly bothered by the opinions of people outside of the club, although this time he sensed there were elements emanating from within. When one Spanish radio announced Ancelotti had told the club this season would be his last, they jumped the gun and he wasted no time in issuing a swift denial. But Ancelotti will be the



one to decide when he leaves the club, despite the year and a half left in his contract. After four years and 11 trophies - including two Champions League successes - he has earned the right to. It also explains his slight smugness when informing the media that, after stating they were no good at all, their current

league performances suggest the critics were wrong. What is certain is that no one is better placed than him to know when the time is right to walk away - and that will be when he believes he can no longer find the necessary solutions to ensure the continual arrival of trophies at the club. At that point he will allow Florentino Perez to prepare the

Champions League and La Liga winning campaign. It's worth noting that they still haven't beaten any of the top sides this season, including defeats by AC Milan and Liverpool in the Champions League and having nine thumped past them in their two encounters against Barcelona. Injuries, particularly in defence to the likes of Eder Militao and Dani Carvajal, did not help matters at the start. But Ancelotti's main problems lay in the lack of a midfield to control games and the unwillingness of any of the stellar front three to put in a shift tracking back. And Jude Bellingham did not know where to run to cover so much ground. The renewed vigour being displayed by Dani Ceballos in midfield has helped, but it is their displays in attack that have really made the difference to Real's fortunes. Where to begin with Vinicius Jr, who seems to be the focus of everyone's attention whether playing or not. The Brazil attacker has been in and out of the line-up recently, either through injury or suspension, and is currently the subject of a colossal offer from Saudi Arabia.

Rohit Sharma files  
complaint with BCCI  
against Gavaskar

The complaint follows recent critical remarks made by Gavaskar regarding Sharma's performance

NEW DELHI: Indian cricket team captain Rohit Sharma has reportedly lodged a formal complaint with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) against legendary cricketer and commentator Sunil Gavaskar. The complaint follows recent critical remarks made by Gavaskar regarding Sharma's performance during India's Test series against Australia. According to reports, the opening batter expressed dissatisfaction with Gavaskar's commentary, which he perceived as excessively negative. The 36-year-old, who has struggled for form in recent months, managed just 31 runs in three Test matches against Australia. His poor showing was further exacerbated by his decision to drop himself from the final Test match in Sydney, a move that sparked additional scrutiny from critics. In his column for the Sydney Morning Herald, Gavaskar speculated that Rohit might be considering stepping down from his role as captain if his form didn't improve. He suggested that the selectors might not need to make that decision, hinting at a possible self-imposed exit. This harsh assessment, according to insiders close to Rohit, was seen as unnecessary external pressure that could undermine the captain's confidence. "Rohit felt that it wasn't necessary for Gavaskar to criticize him in such a manner. The captain has been under pressure for some time, and this external criticism, especially from someone as respected as Gavaskar, only adds to the burden," a source revealed. While the former legend has long been a revered figure in Indian cricket and a respected commentator, his remarks about Rohit's future in red-ball cricket and leadership have stirred controversy. The former cricketer's blunt criticism raised questions about Rohit's captaincy, particularly after India's disappointing 1-3 loss to Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Under Sharma's leadership, India also failed to qualify for the World Test Championship final. - Agencies

PM dismisses  
FIA chief  
amid human  
trafficking...

FROM PAGE 01  
by criminal networks, have led to multiple tragic boat accidents, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea, as people attempt to cross from North Africa to Europe. Just weeks ago, reports emerged of a migrant boat capsizing off the coast of Africa, where dozens of Pakistani nationals were feared dead. This incident, among several others, has placed immense pressure on the Pakistani government to tighten its grip on human smuggling networks and hold responsible authorities accountable. The FIA, which is Pakistan's premier agency responsible for tackling transnational crimes, including human trafficking, has been under scrutiny for its alleged failure to dismantle these networks. In recent crackdowns:  
• The government dismissed 35 FIA officials suspected of aiding human smugglers.  
• The FIA arrested 185 individuals involved in human trafficking, including 38 most-wanted traffickers.  
• A special investigation team has been dispatched to Morocco to probe a recent boat capsizing incident.

PM assures  
conducive  
environment

FROM PAGE 01  
environment, streamlined processes, and robust institutional support. The prime minister, in a meeting with an international investors delegation, led by leading US investor Gentry Beach, underscored the country's unique appeal as a global investment destination, highlighting its strategic geographical location, skilled and youthful workforce, and rapidly expanding consumer market, according to a PM Office press release. Discussing Pakistan's dynamic investment landscape and promising economic potential, he expressed gratitude for the delegation's keen interest in exploring business opportunities in Pakistan.

President  
signs PECA  
bill amid...

FROM PAGE 01  
Bill 2025, which seeks to strengthen the commission's role in advocating for women's rights and empowerment. The signing of the PECA amendment bill comes after political discussions, with Maulana Fazlur Rehman raising concerns over the legislation. Reports had suggested that President Zardari had delayed signing the bill until consultations with journalists and relevant stakeholders took place. The amended PECA Act was approved by the National Assembly and the Senate before being sent to the President's office for final approval, which has now been granted.

PTI  
announces  
rally at...

FROM PAGE 01  
the Minare-Pakistan ground, also known as Iqbal Park, next month. The application stated that PTI leader and Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan Bachar and Ali Jaz Buttari will lead the forthcoming power show. PTI leader Aliya Hamza, addressing the media outside the DC office, stated that her party sought permission to observe "Youm-e-Siyah [Black Day]" on February 8 - the day when the public mandate was stolen [one year ago]. She was referring to the results of last year's general elections. PTI candidates, testing as independents, won the highest number of seats but were unable to form a government in the Centre. She warned that her party would use all legal options if the authorities denied permission to the PTI. Aliya added that a "Black Day" would be observed across the country if the opposition party was not allowed to hold its event in Lahore.

Haider Ali lights  
up BPL with four  
consecutive sixes

Haider bags the Player of the Match award for his blistering knock

## DNA

MIRPUR: Pakistan's emerging batter Haider Ali showcased his brilliance in the ongoing 11th edition of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with a swashbuckling knock, which included four sixes on the trot. Haider, representing Chittagong Kings in the ongoing franchise league, scored a quickfire 48 not out from just 18 deliveries to guide his side to an important five-wicket victory over second-placed Rangpur Riders in the recently-concluded 37th match, played here at the Shere Bangla National Stadium. His match-winning knock featured one four and six gigantic sixes with runs coming at an astounding strike rate of 266.66. The Pakistan international walked out to bat when his side was reeling at 63/3 in 10 overs and needed 81 runs in the remaining overs. He batted cautiously in the early phase of his innings before switching gears after 17 overs. The equation had come down to 24 required off 18 deliveries but Haider Ali, facing compatriot Akif Javed in the 18th over, did not hold back and smashed the left-arm pacer for four consecutive sixes to steer his side over the line with 14 balls to spare.

KRL and SBP clinch 4th-round  
victories in President's Trophy

Defending champions suffer third defeat in the first-class tournament

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) won their respective fourth-round matches of the President's Trophy Grade-I here on Wednesday. At the KCCA Stadium, SBP clinched a narrow one-wicket victory over the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), while KRL outclassed defending champions Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) by four wickets. Set to chase a modest 145-run target on the final day, the SBP had to make hard yards as they lost nine wickets in the process. Number nine batter Kashif Bhatti was the standout performer for them with the bat as he top-scored with a 47-ball 42, hitting four fours and two sixes. Naqeebullah led the bowling charge for WAPDA with four wickets for 67 runs in 17.2 overs and ended up taking seven wickets in the match, while right-arm pacer Ali Raza took three wickets. The one-wicket victory lifted SBP to the top of the President's Trophy Grade-I standings with 84 points in four matches, while WAPDA



remained at the bottom with 28 points. At the State Bank Stadium, KRL handed the defending champions their third defeat in the tournament as they chased down the 207-run target in 53 overs at the cost of six wickets. Resuming the pursuit from an overnight score of 81/3, KRL had soon slipped to 93/4 but Muhammad Awas Zafar, who came out to bat at number six, kept his side in the hunt with a crucial half-century. Awas top-scored for KRL in the run chase with an unbeaten 71 off 77 with the help of seven fours and three sixes. For SNGPL, Test pacer Rahat Ali and Saad Khan bagged two wickets each, while Haris Ruff and Qasim Akram chipped in with one dismissal apiece. The four-wicket victory marked KRL's first in the tournament and it lifted them to the fifth position in the standings, closely followed by SNGPL in sixth spot.

## Noman, Sajid move up Babar, Shaheen fall in rankings

Noman Ali and Sajid Khan took 16 and 15 wickets respectively in the West Indies Tests

## DNA

DUBAI: The ICC Test rankings have seen significant movement this week, as Pakistan's spinners Noman Ali and Sajid Khan earned notable advancements following their outstanding performances in the recent Test series against the West Indies. Meanwhile, several prominent Pakistani players saw a dip in their rankings due to underwhelming performances. Noman's remarkable 16 wickets in the two-match series against the West Indies propelled him to a career-best fifth position in the ICC Test bowler rankings. He gained 806 rating points, marking a stellar achievement for the left-arm spinner. Sajid Khan, who took 15 wickets during the same series, climbed two spots to 21st with 644 points. In a further boost for Pakistan, mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed also moved up two places to 50th, improving his position from 52nd in the previous rankings. However, the ranking update was less favorable for some other Pakistani bowlers. Pakistan's star left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi fell one spot to 22nd, now sitting on 641 points. Mohammad Abbas, who was omitted from the West Indies series, dropped to 27th place with 607 points.

Naseem Shah also slipped four places to 40th, while Khuram Shahzad saw a fall to 65th. Aamer Jamal now occupies the 73rd spot, with Mir Hamza placed 91st. On the global scale, India's Jasprit Bumrah continues to dominate as the number one Test bowler, followed by Australia's Pat Cummins and South Africa's Kagiso Rabada in second and third positions, respectively. In the ICC Test batter rankings, Pakistan's red-ball vice-captain Saud Shakeel experienced a slight dip, falling one position to ninth with 739 points. Mohammad Rizwan,



who showed resilience with the bat, moved up two places to 15th. However, captain Babar Azam's struggles in the West Indies series saw him drop three spots to 19th. Agha Salman also saw a significant fall, dropping five places to 32nd with 592 points. Shan Masood and Imam-ul-Haq also experienced drops, falling seven and two places to 49th and 51st, respectively. England's Joe Root remains the top-ranked Test batter, followed by Harry Brook and New Zealand's Kane Williamson. Meanwhile, in the ICC T20I rankings, Babar

Azam holds onto his position as the fifth-ranked batter with 712 points. Pakistan's white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan has risen one place to eighth with 704 points. Saim Ayub, after a stellar 2024, retains his 57th spot with 483 points, while Fakhar Zaman, who has been sidelined from international action, moves up one place to 67th. Iftikhar Ahmed, however, drops to 78th. Australia's Travis Head remains the number one T20I batter, with India's Tilak Varma climbing to second place following an outstanding performance in the ongoing series against England. Phil Salt rounds out the top three. In the T20I bowler rankings, Shaheen Afridi dropped to 22nd with 599 points, while Haris Ruff slid one place to 30th. However, Abbas Afridi made notable progress, moving up two spots to 42nd with 526 points. Mohammad Wasim Jr. also gained three places to 76th, while Naseem Shah moved up two positions to 79th. England's Adil Rashid overtook West Indies' Akeal Hosein to become the number one T20I bowler after an impressive spell against India. Rashid is followed by Hosein and Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga in the top three. India's Varun Chakravarthy surged 25 places to fifth, bolstered by his flier in the third T20I against England. Jofra Archer also made a significant leap, jumping 13 spots to sixth.



## Briefs

## SBP injects over Rs 523b in market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Wednesday, injected Rs523.7 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO). The SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on January 29, 2025 for 2-day tenor and as per results issued, accepted an amount of Rs224.7 billion offered through 9 bids. The central bank received 9 bids for 2-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs224.7 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.05 to 12.16 percent. SBP accepted the entire amount offered through all the 9 quotes for 2-day tenor at 12.05% rate of return. Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 2-day tenor and injected Rs299 billion into the market. The central bank received 3 bids for 2-day tenor quoting an amount of Rs299 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.05 to 12.14%. The SBP accepted all the 3 quotes for 2-day tenor with the entire offered amount at 12.05% rate of return.—APP

## Gold prices up by Rs2,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.2,300 and was sold at Rs 288,700 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 286,400 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,972 to Rs.247,513 from Rs. 245,541 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs.226,895 from Rs. 225,087. The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.28 to Rs3,391 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs24 to Rs.2,907. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$22 to \$2,763 from \$2,741, the Association reported.—APP

## LCCI for innovative strategies to boost trade with Switzerland

LAHORE: An innovative strategy is a must to boost trade with Switzerland which is not up to the mark. Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry stated this while talking to the Ambassador of Pakistan to Switzerland Marghoob Saleem Butt here at LCCI on Tuesday. Executive Committee Members Aamna Randhawa, Karamat Ali Awan and Standing Committee Convener Imran Asghar were also present. Pakistani cuisine recipes Engineer Khalid Usman said that there are strong diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Switzerland which date back to 1949. He underlined Switzerland's prominent role in Europe, citing its stable economy, advanced banking, financial systems and cutting-edge manufacturing technologies. He said that Switzerland has global standing as a premier tourist destination, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and distinct cultural heritage. He said, "Despite our strong diplomatic relations, the current trade volume does not reflect the potential of our economic partnership." Khalid Usman said, "In 2023-24, bilateral trade stood at USD \$192 million, with Pakistan exporting US \$189 million worth of goods to Switzerland, while imports totaled just US \$3.3 million. The trade balance is in Pakistan's favor, but we need to raise this volume to at least US \$ one billion to contribute significantly to reducing the country's overall trade deficit." Engineer Khalid Usman called for out-of-the-box solutions to increase bilateral trade and foster economic cooperation.—APP

## Nasir stresses real estate sector's importance

The ICCI President also praised the proactive efforts of Top City-1, recognizing the initiative as a step in the right direction for addressing the sector's challenges.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has announced a collaborative effort with Top City-1 to host the Top City-1 Expo 2025, set to take place from February 21 to 23. This announcement was made by Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, the President of ICCI, during a pre-launch event held at the S.M. Muneer Auditorium at the Chamber House, which was attended by a wide range of business leaders, stakeholders, and prominent figures from across the country.

President Qureshi, in his address, underscored the immense significance of the real estate sector to Pakistan's overall economic development. He declared 2025 to be the "Year of Real Estate," noting that the sector, valued at over \$2 trillion, is one of the largest contributors to employment and business opportunities in the country. He explained that revitalizing this vital industry would not only benefit private enterprises but also provide a substantial boost to government revenues, which are essential for the country's fiscal health. The ICCI President also praised the proactive efforts of Top City-1, recognizing the initiative as



a step in the right direction for addressing the sector's challenges. He reiterated ICCI's full commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment and supporting initiatives that drive sustainable economic growth. According to Qureshi, the revival of the real estate sector will create a ripple effect, benefitting both the private and public sectors by providing new avenues for investment, job creation, and revenue generation. Tariq Sadiq, Chairman of the Founder Group ICCI, shared an optimistic outlook, acknowledging the government's recognition of the negative impact of irrational taxation on the real estate market. He expressed confidence that the sector's revival

is crucial for Pakistan's broader economic recovery, noting that it would serve as a catalyst for economic development across multiple industries. Sardar Tahir Mehmood, a member of the Prime Minister's Task Force for the Development of Housing, highlighted positive changes that are on the horizon. He quoted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent statement, which confirmed the government's intention to introduce favorable policies for the real estate sector, including the removal of the Federal Excise Duty on property transactions. This policy change, Mehmood believes, will ease the financial burden on real estate transactions and help stimulate growth

in the sector. Brigadier Sikandar Khan, Chief Operating Officer of Topcity-1, expressed gratitude for the unwavering support from ICCI and emphasized the collective determination of the business community to overcome challenges and contribute to the nation's development. He called for greater unity among business leaders to tackle the current difficulties and ensure the real estate sector's growth. A significant moment during the event was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ICCI and Topcity-1. The MoU, formalizing their collaboration for the Top City-1 Expo 2025, was signed by ICCI Secretary-General Ghulam Murtaza Siddiqui and Brigadier

Sikandar Khan on behalf of Topcity-1. The partnership aims to bring together industry leaders, investors, and stakeholders to discuss key trends, investment opportunities, and the future of real estate in Pakistan. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui concluded the event by reaffirming ICCI's commitment to removing barriers to doing business in Pakistan and supporting initiatives that facilitate the ease of doing business. He stressed that the chamber remains steadfast in its mission to create a conducive environment for business growth and economic prosperity. The event also featured a presentation by Waqas Khan Swati, an ICCI member and CEO of Waqas International, who elaborated on the potential and vision for the upcoming Top City-1 Expo 2025. His insights highlighted the vast opportunities that exist within Pakistan's real estate sector and the ways in which the industry can thrive with the right policies and investments. The pre-launch event was attended by several notable figures, including ICCI Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, former ICCI Presidents Zubair Ahmed Malik and Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, executive members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Shumaila Siddiqui, Ishaq Sial, Irfan Chaudhry, and ICCI President's Advisor Naeem Siddiqui, as well as Topcity-1 executive Ghulam Yasin and other leading members of the business community.

## Plan to export nursing workforce from Pakistan to US make progress

NEW YORK: Progress was reported on the move to export skilled nursing professionals from Pakistan to the U.S. at a discussion in an online meeting between representatives from Pakistani embassy in Washington and the New York Consulate General, the New York State Assembly as well as the American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC), officials said. The US has a shortage of nurses and other healthcare workers and Pakistani professionals are to be brought here to fill that gap. Tuesday's meeting was attended by Pakistani Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh; Consul General Aamer Ahmed Atozai and Community Welfare Attaché at the NY Consulate. From the New York State Assembly, Deputy Speaker Phil Ramos and Chief of Staff Cristian Macario participated, along with Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, Chairman APPAC, and Dr. Pervez Iqbal, President APPAC. Deputy Speaker Ramos acknowledged the importance of recent opening of NCLEX examination centers in Pakistan. (NCLEX is a computer-based test that determines if a nursing student is ready to practice). The Deputy Speaker highlighted the growing demand for qualified healthcare professionals in the U.S. and expressed interest in collaborating with Pakistan to meet this need. Ambassador Sheikh termed the development as a significant milestone that eliminates the need for Pakistani nursing professionals to travel abroad for such exam. He emphasized that this step reduces financial burdens and encourages greater participation. The Ambassador also stressed the need for developing a demand-supply link aligned with local requirements while streamlining the recruitment and immigration process for applicants who clear the exam. APPAC leaders highlighted their pivotal role in initiating this collaboration by facilitating the Deputy Speaker's visit to Pakistan. They underscored the shortfall of healthcare professionals in the U.S., particularly in the nursing sector, presented a valuable opportunity for Pakistani professionals. It was agreed that representatives from each party would regularly hold follow-up meetings to ensure smooth progress of this initiative. Dr. Ijaz Ahmad commended the collective efforts of the APPAC team, highlighting this achievement as a milestone in Pakistan-U.S. relations. Dr. Pervez Iqbal, APPAC's new President, emphasized the growing demand for healthcare professionals in North America. He underscored that this initiative presents a significant opportunity for Pakistan to train and export its medical workforce, benefiting both the U.S. healthcare system and the lives of Pakistani families.—DNA

## CDC share registrar launches industry-first WhatsApp e-voting solution

KARACHI: CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited, proudly announces the launch of its latest innovation: E-Voting through WhatsApp. This revolutionary feature is set to redefine the electronic voting process, making it more accessible, efficient, and user-friendly for shareholders/members. By seamlessly integrating WhatsApp with the E-voting platform, CDCSR aims to enhance participation while maintaining the highest standards of security and transparency. Since its inception, CDCSR has been a pioneer in introducing various technology-based services, including the launch of its web-based system in 2017. This platform, which allows shareholders/members to register and vote electronically was widely appreciated across the industry. Over the years, CDCSR has continuously enhanced the system with value-added features to meet the evolving needs of its corporate clients. The WhatsApp E-Voting feature has already demonstrated success in recent polls conducted for esteemed clients and is gradually widespread recognition. This innovation reinforces CDCSR's position as Pakistan's leading Share Registrar, consistently setting benchmarks in the Capital Market through its commitment to innovation.—APP

## Israel has no right to shutter Palestinians aid agency: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS: With only two days before Israel bans operations of UNRWA, the U.N. aid agency for Palestinian refugees, Pakistan has warned that the move would cripple humanitarian work in war-shattered Gaza and undermine the ceasefire in the enclave. "For over seven decades, UNRWA has been a beacon of hope for millions of Palestinian refugees across the region," Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told 15-member Council's meeting convened on Tuesday to address the difficult situation that the agency is facing. With its extensive network of schools, healthcare facilities, and humanitarian services, he said UNRWA remains indispensable in its capacity to provide life-saving assistance, the resumption of education for children and provision of healthcare for the suffering Palestinian, pointing out that it would also be critical for Gaza's reconstruction. UNRWA's viability and survival was being threatened by the implementation of last October's Israeli legislation banning the agency activities, he Pakistani envoy said, adding that the move violates the UN Charter, international law, and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).—Agencies

## At least 14 killed in Syria in attacks by Turkish-backed forces

CAIRO/ANKARA: At least 14 civilians were killed and 29 wounded in attacks by Turkish-backed forces in northern Syria on Monday and Tuesday, the US-backed Kurdish militia group said. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said Turkish-backed forces targeted a market in the city of Sarrin with drones on Tuesday, killing eight civilians and injuring 20 others. Some of the wounded were in critical condition, they said. Shelling by Turkish-backed forces on another area in northern Syria killed three civilians and injured nine on Tuesday, according to the SDF. They said Turkish forces also shelled a village near the town of Ain Issa in northern Syria on Monday, killing three civilians, including two children. Turkey's defense ministry said in statements on Tuesday and Wednesday that Turkish forces had killed a total of 27 Kurdish militants in northern Syria, without mentioning civilian deaths. A Turkish defense ministry official said on Wednesday the SDF's statement was disinformation and denied the claims. Turkey says it does not target civilians in its cross-border operations and takes measures to avoid harming any civilians, religious sites and residential areas.—APP

## Lankan's first Muslim woman ambassador begins mission in Qatar

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's first Muslim woman ambassador officially started her duties this week as she presented her credentials in Qatar. A career diplomat, Roshan Sithara Khan Azard joined Sri Lanka's foreign service in 1998 and has served in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the most recent post being additional secretary for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to her assumption of duties in Qatar, she served at Sri Lanka's missions in London, Chennai and Ottawa, where she was the deputy high commissioner and acting high commissioner. She has also served in Qatar before as deputy head of the mission. "We are happy we have sent a seasoned diplomat, Sithara Khan, as Sri Lankan ambassador to the state of Qatar," Niluka Kadirgamuwa, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Arab News.

## Pak-China collaboration Easypaisa becomes Pakistan's first digital bank

ISLAMABAD: With the unwavering support of Pakistan's telecommunication company Telenor and China's leading platform for payments and digital services, Alipay (Ant Financial), as shareholders, Easypaisa, Pakistan's leading mobile wallet company, is all set to spearhead the fintech revolution and digital transformation in Pakistan. On January 28, 2025, Easypaisa became Pakistan's first digital retail bank to receive commercial approval for digital banking operations from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The official licensing ceremony took place at SBP. In a recent announcement, Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO of Telenor, expressed his pride in this historic milestone for Pakistan's financial sector. "Easypaisa has evolved into Pakistan's first digital retail bank! According to the Gwadar Pro, the transformation from a pioneering fintech to a full-fledged digital bank marks a new chapter in our journey of financial inclusion," he said. Starting as a vision, Easypaisa has grown into a profitable institution, handling 9% of Pakistan's GDP. With 50 million registered users and one in four adult Pakistanis holding an Easypaisa account, the company has established one of the largest financial networks across the country. Wahab added. He thanked the State Bank of Pakistan and stakeholders for their visionary guidance. "To our dedicated teams who processed PKR 9.5 trillion worth of transactions in 2024 alone—your commitment to excellence made this possible. This milestone underscores our commitment to Pakistan's digital future. Stay tuned as we introduce innovative financial solutions worthy of our customers' trust.—DNA

## Ahsan highlights Pak-UK deep-rooted economic ties

LONDON: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday held a meeting with British Parliamentarians at the Portcullis House Westminster and highlighted Pakistan's deep-rooted economic and cultural ties with the United Kingdom. Addressing the gathering, he mentioned Pakistan's historical role as a development leader in the 1960s, inspiring other nations with its economic model, a news release said. He emphasized the government's current focus on Balochistan's development, ensuring the upliftment of local communities through key infrastructure and investment projects. The government, he said, has completed several transformative projects in Gwadar, including establishment of a modern hospital, a university, a technical and vocational center, water plants and an extensive road network; besides solarization of residential units, provision of scholarships for students and operationalization of Gwadar Airport. Significant investments in Balochistan's mining sector are expected to be a game-changer, unlocking economic potential and improving livelihoods across the province. Highlighting key economic indicators under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the minister shared that inflation has been reduced from 38% to 4%, the policy rate from 23% to 13%, while Pakistan's stock market witnessed unprecedented growth. Additionally, exports and remittances have both increased by 30%, whereas IT exports surged by 34%, he added. Reflecting on past progress, Ahsan Iqbal recalled that during the PML-N government's tenure after 2013, Pakistan achieved a 6% growth rate under Vision 2025, despite facing challenges such as terrorism. He lamented that the economic momentum was disrupted in 2018, causing setbacks to the country's long-term development plans. He briefed the Parliamentarians on URAAN PAKISTAN, a national development initiative aimed at the holistic upliftment of 240 million Pakistanis. The minister emphasized that the initiative was not tied to any specific government but was designed to foster economic and social progress. Key features of the plan include specialized programs for the Pakistani diaspora, such as internships for youth and the "Champions of Reform" initiative, which encourages British-Pakistani high achievers to collaborate with the government in various sectors. The URAAN PAKISTAN initiative strikes a balance between economic growth and social development, ensuring that Pakistan's progress is inclusive and sustainable. Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to strengthening global partnerships, the minister underscored the importance of strategic ties with the United Kingdom, United States, China, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union. He stressed Pakistan's focus on enhancing trade and economic cooperation with these key partners to achieve shared prosperity. Ahsan Iqbal also acknowledged the significant contributions of British Pakistanis in fortifying the bond between the two nations and encouraged deeper engagement in Pakistan's development efforts. Earlier, British MP Mohammad Yasin welcomed Ahsan Iqbal to the British Parliament and commended his dedication to development projects in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The minister congratulated Mohammad Yasin on his appointment as UK Trade Envoy for Pakistan and expressed confidence that his expertise would further boost economic collaboration between the two countries. Ahsan Iqbal was accompanied by Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr Mohammad Faisal.—DNA

## Pakistan should highlight cross-border terrorism issue at SCO summit

bating terrorism and supported a regional approach. He welcomed Amb Nurgaliyev's proposal to address terrorism at the upcoming SCO summit this summer. Additionally, Amb Saleem recognized

the strong bilateral ties between Kazakhstan and Pakistan in economic, political, security, and

cultural areas. In response to a question, Amb Nurgaliyev stated that while Kazakhstan does not share a border with Afghanistan and faces no immediate threat like Pakistan, the risk of Central Asian militants joining IS and the potential spillover is concerning. Recognizing Pakistan's sacrifices in the war on terrorism, Amb Nurgaliyev remarked that the country continues to suffer due to terrorist infiltration, which he believes could be mitigated through effective coordination with the Taliban government. He expressed optimism that the Taliban has learned from past mistakes and is striving for better engagement with regional and international communities, contingent on fulfilling the Doha agreement. The event drew a substantial audience, including former diplomats, government officials, journalists, students, and representatives from Central Asian countries.

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Bolat Nurgaliyev, former Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization from Kazakhstan, suggested that the upcoming SCO Summit should prioritize the pressing issue of terrorism originating from Afghanistan, as it significantly threatens regional stability and security. Speaking at a conference hosted by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Amb Nurgaliyev highlighted the shared concerns of Kazakhstan and Pakistan regarding cross-border terrorism and the security situation in Afghanistan. He noted that the presence of various terrorist groups in Afghanistan was alarming, particularly the Islamic State of Khorasan, the ISK. Amb Jauhar Saleem, President of the IRS, stressed the need for stakeholder involvement in com-





## Briefs

**'China's success story a beacon of inspiration'**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday extended greetings to the Chinese people and President Xi Jinping on the Chinese New Year and said that China's success story served as a beacon of inspiration and confidence for Pakistan. "China's awe-inspiring renaissance stands as one of the defining themes of the 21st century..For us, China's success story serves as a beacon of inspiration and confidence," the prime minister said in a televised message on the occasion of Chinese New Year and Spring Festival starting on January 29 to mark the end of winter and the beginning of spring. He said that over the last remarkable journey of progress and development was a testament to the wisdom and foresight of its visionary leadership, particularly President Xi Jinping. The prime minister said that Pakistan and China shared an enduring bond of friendship – a relationship that has been nurtured from generation to generation.

**Speaker NA, PTI leaders meet in Parliament House**

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker Ayaz Sadiq met the PTI leaders in Parliament House's cafeteria on Wednesday including newly elected Chairman Public Accounts Committee Junaid Akbar and Atif Khan. People's Party's MNA Nafeesa Shah was also present during the meeting. A reporter asked Ayaz Sadiq about likely revival of the dialogue process between the PTI and government. "Only the government, its allies and the opposition could reply over it, I am unconcerned," Ayaz Sadiq said. "As Speaker it is my responsibility to have good relations with each member," he added.

**Justice Shah calls for adopting arbitration**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court, urged the litigants to adopt the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) system instead of moving courts frequently. Addressing a seminar in IBA Karachi on Wednesday, he said that 86pc cases are pending in the district courts in Pakistan. "As many as 2.4 million cases are pending in the lower courts. We should try to resolve the matter through arbitration instead of moving the courts frequently," said the top jurist.

# Yousaf Gilani calls for cementing Pak-Ireland parliamentary ties

*Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani invited an Irish parliamentary delegation to visit Pakistan, reaffirming commitment to continued engagement and democratic reforms*

NEWS DESK

DUBLIN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani met with the newly-elected Speaker of the Irish Parliament Verona Murphy during his official visit to Ireland. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality and emphasized the importance of strengthening parliamentary ties between Pakistan and Ireland. The Chairman also emphasized that Ireland's business delegations must visit and explore investment opportunities in Pakistan. He highlighted Pakistan's investor-friendly climate and the Special Investment Facilitation Council, a one-window operation designed to streamline and facilitate foreign investment across key sectors. Both sides explored avenues for collaboration, including technical exchanges, workshops, and virtual forums on budgetary and fiscal policies. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani invited an Irish parliamentary delegation to visit Pak-



stan, reaffirming commitment to continued engagement and democratic reforms. The event was attended by prominent figures, including Neale Richmond, the Foreign Minister of Ireland, and Aisha Farooqi, the Pakistani Ambassador to Ireland. It is pertinent to mention that Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani is leading a high level delegation to Ireland and Austria.

## 12 additional SHC judges take oath

The total number of judges in the SHC now are 40

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The newly-appointed 12 additional judges of the Sindh High Court took oath on Wednesday. Chief Justice Sindh Court, Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, administered the oath to the new judges, including Justice Miran Muhammad Shah, Justice Tasneem Sultana, Justice Hassan Akbar, and Justice Abdul Hameed Bhurgari. Others sworn in are Justice Jan Ali Junejo, Justice Ali Haider, Justice Muhammad Jafar Raza, Justice Khalid Hussain Shahani, Justice Riazat Ali Sehr, Justice Faizul Hassan Shah, Justice Nisar Ahmed, and Justice Nisar Ahmed, and Justice Muhammad Usman Ali Hadi. With the appointment of these 12 additional judges, the total number of judges in the Sindh High Court has now reached 40.

## Imran, Bushra appeal; IHC raises objections

The Islamabad High Court (IHC)'s registrar office on Wednesday raised objections on appeals of PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi against their convictions in 190 million pounds reference, and returned the same for rectification. The registrar office instructed the petitioners to file the appeals again after rectifying it. The IHC's registrar office had objected that the petitioners had not attached the certificates with the cases for assuring that the matter is not under proceeding at any other court.

## SC seeks records of trials in military courts except May 9

Justice Rizvi says May 9 cases don't appear to fall under state security concerns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail on Wednesday said that the jurists conducting military trials operate under the relevant authorities. The remarks came during the hearing of an intra-court plea regarding the trial of civilians in military courts. A seven-member bench constitutional bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan and comprising Justice Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, was holding the proceedings. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Hilali asked whether an investigation took place before the framing of charges. Justice Mazhar responded that investigations were conducted first, followed by formal charges. Defence ministry's counsel Khawaja Haris added that the law clearly distinguishes between a trial and a fair trial. Justice Azhar inquired whether an accused in a military trial is provided a state-appointed lawyer if they cannot afford one, to which Haris confirmed that state-funded legal representation was available. Justice Mandokhail remarked that courts generally considered the accused as the "favourite child" of justice, questioning whether the same applies in military trials. At this, Haris replied that under the Army Act rules, the accused is given full protection. Justice Mandokhail

then said that an accused is considered the "favourite child" of the court, questioning whether the same applies in military courts. The defence ministry's counsel assured that under the Army Act's rules, complete protection is provided to the accused. Justice Afghan, meanwhile, said that as chief justice of Balochistan, he had heard appeals against military court verdicts and that decisions were not issued on blank papers merely declaring an accused guilty or innocent. He added that when cases were challenged in high courts, the General Headquarters provided complete judicial records, including evidence and procedural details. Justice Rizvi then questioned whether the families of civilian defendants or the media had access to military court proceedings. At this, Haris informed the court that while the law mentions access for families and media, security concerns often restrict it. The judge further asked whether military court judges have prior experience or are appointed without any. He also questioned if a defence officer presiding over a case has prior legal experience and whether a judge advocate present in court could conduct a court-martial. The lawyer confirmed that a judge advocate always sits alongside military judges. Meanwhile, Justice Hilali raised concerns about the impact of such verdicts on civilians, stating that society is already facing lawlessness. Justice Mandokhail noted that session judges are appointed after decades of legal experience, while some recent cases show that even decisions by benches of eight judges are challenged by two judges. He then asked whether Article 175 of the Constitution provides for military courts. Haris responded that revisiting past military court rulings would be necessary if such a provision were established.

## Pak-US discuss strengthening trade and investment relations

Us Charge D'affaires Natalie A. Baker calls on commerce minister

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: US Charge d'Affaires, Ms. Natalie A. Baker, called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties and explore future avenues for cooperation between the two nations. During the meeting, the Commerce Minister congratulated Ms. Baker on the US government on the smooth transition of power in the United States and expressed optimism about further enhancing bilateral relations in the coming years. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening mutual trade and fostering collaboration in key economic sectors. The discussions centered on expanding cooperation in agriculture, focusing on value-added textiles and agricultural products, as well as exploring growth opportunities in the cotton industry. They also identified potential investment areas, including minerals, marine industries, textiles, and renewable energy.

## Imran raises concerns over corruption in KP

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The inside story of a crucial meeting between PTI founder Imran Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur surfaced that shed light on discussions regarding governance and corruption in the province. According to sources, Imran Khan raised concerns over reported complaints of alleged misgovernance and corruption in the province. Responding to these concerns, Chief Minister Gandapur distanced himself from the issue, stating that he had no role in postings and transfers. "It is the provincial assembly members who recommend and facilitate these transfers, yet the complaints are directed at me," he told Imran Khan. Imran Khan explained that he had relieved Gandapur of his party assignment to reduce his workload, allowing him to focus entirely on governance. "You are the chief executive of the province; governance must be improved," he emphasised. The PTI founder assured Gandapur of his full support and authority, urging him to address the grievances regarding alleged corruption and inefficiency in the province.

## Missing Persons Commission head passes away

Justice (R) Faqir was appointed as head of Missing Persons Commission last week, replacing Justice (R) Javed Iqbal

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Former Supreme Court judge and Chairman of the Missing Persons Commission, Justice (R) Faqir Muhammad Khokhar, has passed away. His family has confirmed the news of his death, stating that his funeral prayers will be offered today, January 29, after the Asr prayer. It is worth noting that just last week, the government had informed the public that Justice (R) Faqir Muhammad had been appointed as the new chairman of the Missing Persons Commission, replacing Justice (R) Javed Iqbal, who had been leading the commission since 2011. On January 22, during a hearing on missing persons cases, the Additional Attorney General informed the Supreme Court that the government had appointed Justice (R) Fakir Muhammad as the new head of the commission, succeeding Justice (R) Javed Iqbal. Media reports indicate that at the time of his appointment, Justice (R) Fakir Muhammad was receiving treatment at a hospital in Lahore.

## Federation wants services of IGP Dr Usman

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government approached the Punjab administration to obtain the services of Inspector General of Police (IG) Punjab, Dr Usman Anwar. According to sources, the Punjab government declined the request, saying that unwarranted transfers of officers are unacceptable. This marks the third time the federal government has sought Dr Anwar's services, but Punjab reiterated its stance, informing Islamabad of its refusal. Officials stated that Dr Usman Anwar has been performing exceptionally well, and there is no need for a change at this time. "It is true that we have declined to relieve Dr Usman Anwar," Punjab authorities conveyed to the federal government.

## More than 376,000 return to north Gaza

NEW YORK: More than 376,000 Palestinians displaced by the war between Israel and Hamas have returned to northern Gaza, the UN's humanitarian body OCHA said Tuesday. "Over 376,000 people are estimated to have returned to their places of origin in northern Gaza, following the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the two main roads along the Netzarim corridor" that leads into the north, OCHA said in a humanitarian update. - Agencies

## Israel has no right to shutter UNRWA: Pak

Pakistani envoy said UNRWA and its "heroic" personnel have continued to operate within Gaza in face of directed attacks against them in which 270 of them perished

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: With only two days before Israel bans operations of UNRWA, the U.N. aid agency for Palestinian refugees, Pakistan has warned that the move would cripple humanitarian work in war-shattered Gaza and undermine the ceasefire in the enclave. "For over seven decades, UNRWA has been a beacon of hope for millions of Palestinian refugees across the region," Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told 15-member Council's meeting convened on Tuesday to address the difficult situation that the agency is facing. With its extensive network of schools, healthcare facilities, and humanitarian services, he said UNRWA remains indispensable in its capacity to provide life-saving assistance, the resumption of education for children and provision of healthcare for the suffering Palestinian, pointing out that it would also be critical for Gaza's reconstruction. UNRWA's viability and survival was being threatened by the implementation

of last October's Israeli legislation banning the agency activities, he Pakistani envoy said, adding that the move violates the UN Charter, international law, and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). "Israel has no right as the occupying power to close down any UN facility in particular UNRWA office in East Jerusalem or any other UN international facility established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under the mandate of the United Nations," Ambassador Akram said, while expressing "unwavering support" to the agency. "Israel allegations against UNRWA have not been established," he said, referring to the report by former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, who was commissioned by the UN Secretary-General to look into the matter. Meanwhile, the Pakistani envoy said UNRWA and its "heroic" personnel have continued to operate within Gaza in face of directed attacks against them in which 270 of them perished. By targeting UNRWA, he said, Israel seeks to dismantle the structures that are critical to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

**JAN/FEB 2025**

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk  
www.dnanews.com.pl  
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

**Islamabad POST**

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

