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Slovenia cannot allow annexation of the West Bank

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Keys stuns Swiatek to reach final

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Hints joint opp. movement

Imran Khan 'calls off' talks with govt

PTI founder says government did not form judicial commission, forcing him to end negotiations

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has called off negotiations with the government due to its failure to establish a judicial commission within the seven-day period, according to PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan. Speaking to the media outside Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, Barrister Gohar said that the party's legal team, including himself, met Khan earlier in the day, who has been behind bars for more than a year. During the meeting, Khan expressed his frustration over the delay, saying that the government's failure to act for formation of judicial commission leaves no reason to continue the talks. "The founder of PTI has categorically announced that no further rounds of negotiations will take place," Gohar said. "The government made announcements but has yet to follow through, which is why Imran Khan decided to end the negotiations."

The development comes as negotiations between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government and PTI began in late December in an effort to ease political tensions. However, weeks of talks — with three sessions taking place so far — have made little progress on key matters. The Khan-founded party, in its written charter of demands presented to the government during the third session on January 16, had demanded the formation of two judicial commissions — mutually nominated by the PTI and the government within seven days — and the release of "political prisoners". The former ruling party's demands of two judicial commissions pertained to an inquiry into the May 9, 2023 riots as well as the events from November 24 to November 27, 2024, in relation to its protest in Islamabad. Elaborating on the party's stance, Barrister Gohar said that the judicial commissions, if the government forms them, should consist of three senior judges from either the Supreme Court or the high courts. "We will continue our struggle in accordance with the Constitution and the law," remarked the PTI chairman, adding that efforts would be made against an independent judiciary and the 26th Amendment. "We will initiate a movement in collaboration with all political parties,"

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Govt urges PTI not to abandon dialogue process

Siddiqui asks Imran's party to submit reasons for quitting talks in writing

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Terming the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) decision to end the ongoing negotiations with the government "unfortunate", the government has urged the former ruling party to "reconsider it as the deadline of seven working days ends on January 28". "When they [PTI] had knocked on our door and handed over a questionnaire, they should have listened to our answers," PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui — spokesperson for the government's negotiation committee — said while speaking to journalists outside the Parliament House on Thursday. Briefing the media today, Siddiqui said that the former ruling party took 42 days to table its "charter of demands" and now they "want us to constitute a judicial commission in seven days." "We reckon the seven working days will be completed on January 28," he said, wondering why PTI threatened to pull out of talks. "It is hard to ascertain as to what went wrong in the last seven days that led the party to give up on talks?" "They [PTI] were quick in starting it and are now making a hasty retreat. They are quitting with the same impatience they started it. We are asking them to stay put and let the weather improve," he added. The PML-N Senator further said that

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan Minister of Defence Industry Mr Vugar Mustafayev called on President Asif Ali Zardari. — DNA

Friendship solidified

Pak, Azerbaijan for enhancing trade and cultural relations

The President called for finding ways and means to strengthen cultural linkages and further boost people-to-people exchanges

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan have reiterated their commitment to enhancing collaboration in the areas of trade, energy, air connectivity, and people-to-people contacts. This was discussed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the visiting Minister of Defence Industry of Azerbaijan, Mr Vugar Mustafayev, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Welcoming the visiting Minister, the President highlighted the historic and deep-rooted relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He urged the need to increase people-to-people contacts, tourism links, and trade and business relations to promote regional economic cooperation. The President called for finding ways and means to strengthen cultural linkages and further boost people-to-people exchanges. He welcomed the operationalization of direct flights between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, expressing the hope that it would further boost people-to-people ties. Over 72,000 Pakistanis have visited Azerbaijan in 2024 for

Continued on Page 06

Pak-Azerbaijan Joint Commission begins

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 8th session of the Joint Commission (JC) between Pakistan and Azerbaijan commenced here on Thursday, with a commitment to advancing collaboration across wide areas of mutual interest. The inaugural session was attended by representatives from both sides, according to a press release issued by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD). The first day of the JC commenced with technical-level discussions across various key sectors, including energy, transport, trade and economic cooperation, defence industry, ICT and digital governance, banking, agriculture and food security, tourism, sports, youth, culture, education and science, health, hydrometeorology, climate change, public service

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Briefs

Security forces kill six terrorists

Terrorists are trying to infiltrate through Pak-Afghan border

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The security forces killed six terrorists who were trying to infiltrate through Afghan border, ISPR said on Thursday. "On night 22/23 January, movement of a group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Sambaza, Zhob District," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. "Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, six Khwarij were sent to hell. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition & explosives was also recovered," it added.

MBS holds phone call with Trump

The two leaders discussed ways to promote peace, security and stability in ME

AGENCIES

RIYADH: Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, held a phone call this evening with President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America. During the call, Saudi the Crown Prince conveyed the congratulations of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his own congratulations to the President on the occasion of his inauguration as President of the United States, and wished the friendly American people more progress and prosperity under the President's leadership.

Slams unilateral decisions Bilawal warns against authoritarian governance

Government policies may prove prudent if they consult with allied parties, says PPP chairman

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has called out the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government for making "unilateral decisions", saying that his party doesn't want to become a hurdle in its way. "The government is making decisions as if it has a two-thirds majority...policies may prove prudent if they consult with allies," he said while addressing a ceremony in Islamabad on Thursday. Bilawal — whose party is an ally of the PML-N in the Centre — has time and again called out the incumbent government over breaking promises, avoiding consultations, and refusing to coordinate. Last month, the PPP chairman expressed dissatisfaction over the failure of the PML-N to meet the promises made to his party, saying the government does not have the mandate to make unilateral decisions. Addressing the ceremony today, Bilawal pointed out that the 18th Constitutional Amendment was carried out with consultation and

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12 additional judges to SHC appointed

Jafar Raza, Hasan Akbar, Abdul Hameed, Tasneem Sultana, Khalid Hussain, Usman Ali Hadi, others

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Thursday approved with a majority vote appointment of 12 additional judges to the Sindh High Court (SHC).

According to a notification issued by the Judicial Commission, here are the names of the nominees for the posts of additional judges:

1. Ms. Tasneem Sultana, DSJ
2. Mr. Khalid Hussain Shahani, DSJ
3. Mr. Miran Muhammad Shah, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
4. Mr. Abdul Hamid Bhurgri, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan

Continued on Page 06

'Look Africa' policy holds importance for Pakistan

Pakistan urges plan for Gaza reconstruction; Israeli raids may derail ceasefire: FO spox

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan on Thursday urged the international community to develop a concrete plan for the reconstruction of Gaza in line with the UN Security Council resolutions and take serious note of the latest Israeli raids which could undermine the ceasefire. "We urge the international community to develop a concrete plan for the reconstruction of Gaza in line with UN Security Council resolutions. We also call for accountability for the Israeli crimes committed in this brutal war, describing it as

Continued on Page 06

Shehbaz phones Turkish President

President Erdogan thanked the Prime Minister for this kind gesture

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister condoles with President of Türkiye on the tragic fire incident in northwestern Türkiye Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif spoke on telephone with H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, earlier today and conveyed his deepest condolences over the loss of precious lives in the tragic fire incident at the Grand Kartal Hotel in northwestern Türkiye. The Prime Minister said that the entire Pakistani

Continued on Page 06

'Timely intervention' PM Shehbaz Sharif hails World Bank's \$20 billion funding

PM Shehbaz says CPF a pathway to economic stability; assures commitment to implementation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday termed the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) of the World Bank as a landmark initiative forged through decade-long strategic cooperation to boost employment opportunities, IT-led initiatives and climate resilience ensuring economic stability. He was addressing the launching ceremony of the landmark US\$20 billion Country Partnership Framework (CPF) which is a transformative initiative marking the longest-ever development partnership between Pakistan and the global financial institution. The strategic collaboration aims to address Pakistan's pressing economic and developmental challenges while fostering growth, climate resilience, and technological advancement.



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NA approves amendments to contentious Peca law

Journalists, opposition parties stage walkout during lower house session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Thursday approved the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, without opposition, making changes to the existing law, drawing severe criticism from journalist bodies. Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) Secretary General Arshad Ansari told Geo News that journalists would challenge the tweaks in the court and announced staging protests as well as boycotting assembly sessions. The bill was approved within minutes after Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain presented it

Continued on Page 06

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TAS organized convention held at Cadet College Sanghar

This historic reunion was a resounding success, marking the beginning of a new chapter in strengthening the relationship between CCS and its proud alumni

DNA

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

alumni and ex-faculty members, setting the tone for the two-day event filled with nostalgia, camaraderie, and memorable activities.

The first day of the convention featured a variety of engaging activities, including sports events, a sumptuous dinner, and a lively bonfire and musical night program. Alumni relished their cherished memories while connecting with fellow Sanghrites in a joyous atmosphere. Day two commenced with morning PT followed by breakfast, after which the Alumni conference took place at the prestigious Iqbal Auditorium. The conference was attended by ex-cadets, former faculty members, and the current teaching and administrative staff. During the session, TAS President Mr. Shahjahan Ahmed Sheikh gave a welcome address and thanked college administration, current faculty, former faculty and ex-cadets for partici-

pating with their great batch strengths and CEO TAS Major Qayyum Mahar briefed the attendees on the association's bylaws and structure.

Commandant/Principal Commodore Zeeshan Ali SI (M) addressed the alumni, highlighting the significance of the convention and the need for a well-structured alumni association. He also shared insights into the remarkable progress made by Cadet College Sanghar in recent years, underscoring the institution's commitment to excellence. The convention concluded with a group photograph and a lunch at the Mehran Cadet Mess. Alumni expressed their gratitude to the college administration for their warm hospitality and pledged their unwavering support to the institution. This historic reunion was a resounding success, marking the beginning of a new chapter in strengthening the relationship between CCS and its proud alumni.



PESHAWAR: Labourer busy in packing sacks filled with traditional sweet stuff Gur at Gur Mandi.

Mega operation launched against professional beggars

Meeting on 220 KV Swabi-Nowshera transmission line held

DNA

PESHAWAR: District administration of Peshawar under the supervision of Commissioner, Riaz Khan Mehsood has launched mega operation in the provincial metropolis against professional beggars. The operation has been launched in pursuance of the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapure. The operation will be carried out by a coalition of several government departments including district administration, Social Welfare Department, Excise, Police, Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence. A total of eight teams have been constituted for carrying out operation against professional mendicants roaming in city and bothering people by seeking alms. On the first day of the operation, hundreds of panhandlers, including female and children have been nabbed by raiding teams. During operation a gang of 24 members also came into surface who use beggars and arrange accommodation besides vehicles for transporting them into different places. In a recent press conference, Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Mehsood apprised newsmen that each commercial area has separate rates and earning for beggars. He claimed beggars in main Saddar bazar earns more than Rs. 10,000 on daily basis and give share to their handlers.—APP

PESHAWAR: A meeting regarding the 220 KV transmission line from Swabi-Nowshera was held today at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irrigation Minister Aqibullah Khan. The session was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners of Swabi and Nowshera, along with other concerned officials, including the Project Director (PD) PESCO and Executive Engineer (Exen) PESCO. During the meeting, a detailed re-

view of the current status of the 220 KV transmission line was conducted, and the necessary steps required for its completion were discussed. Additionally, the electricity issues and their potential solutions in the villages of Swabi Gadoon, Chota Lahore, Panjpir, Ambar, Baja Bamkhel, Dhoiya, and Misri Banda were deliberated. The meeting was informed that approximately 80% of the work on the related ongoing projects has been completed. Minister Aqibullah Khan emphasized the importance of ensuring effective coordination between the Tech-

nical Committee and the District Administration to expedite the completion of the projects. He also issued directives for the timely repair of damaged transformers and instructed the Additional Deputy Commissioners of Swabi and Nowshera to form a special committee to address electricity-related issues. The committee is tasked with identifying problems faced by residents, particularly before Ramadan and the summer season, and taking prompt action to resolve them. Weekly meetings were also directed to monitor progress in this regard.

Reforms to transform judiciary into citizen-focused underway

ISLAMABAD: As a part of his Judicial Reforms, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Yahya Afridi, has undertaken transformative reforms to modernize the judiciary and establish it as a model institution that upholds fairness, transparency, and accessibility to meet standards for judicial excellence and ensuring that the justice system remains citizen-focused and responsive to the litigants' needs. According to a press release from the media office of the SCP issued Thursday, advanced information technology systems have been integrated to enhance judicial efficiency, including the e-Affidavit system, which streamlines filing processes, reduces delays, and ensures transparency, and a Case Management System enabling litigants and lawyers to instantly access certified case copies, eliminating traditional dispatch delays. To promote transparency and public trust, feedback mechanisms involving legal practitioners, litigants, and civil society have been introduced. Recognizing the vital role of the district judiciary, the Chief Justice has personally visited remote and underserved districts to assess grassroots challenges, enhance institutional capacity, and address resource gaps, ensuring equitable access to justice and strengthening public confidence in the judicial system. The press release added that to uphold transparency and meritocracy in appointments, the Chief Justice has constituted committees, comprising senior judges and the Attorney General for Pakistan to oversee the selection of key appointments, including the Secretaries of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan, and the Supreme Judicial Council. The committee for the selection of the Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan is chaired by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi and comprises Mrs. Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Shahid Waheed to interview the candidates nominated by the Chief Secretaries of the provinces. Similarly, the committee for selection of the Secretary of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan consists of Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, and the Attorney General for Pakistan.—APP

Kundi highlights urgency of restoring peace in KP

Governor assured the delegation that the Governor House remains open to all citizens of the province and praised the efforts of the Pakistan Peace Council in fostering peace and public welfare

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that at present, the law and order situation in our province is concerning, restoring peace is our top priority, and to achieve this, we all must work together. He said this during a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Peace Council for Human Rights and Religious Harmony at the Governor House. The delegation was led by Provincial Chairman Saleem Gul Dolatzi, with Vice Chairman Malik Noshad Khan, Zahir Khan Tanoli, Malik Muhammad Javed, and other district and tehsil officers from across the province attended the meeting. The delegation briefed the Governor about the objectives and goals of the Pakistan Peace Council, emphasizing the organization's commitment to promoting peace, eradicating hatred, and working towards the social and economic development of communities, irrespective of race and ethnicity. The delegation also highlighted the Council's efforts to address

public issues and offered full support for resolving the ongoing issue in Kurram. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi assured the delegation that the Governor House remains open to all citizens of the province and praised the efforts of the Pakistan Peace Council in fostering peace and public welfare. The Governor also expressed his appreciation for the Council's work in promoting peace and public well-being across the province. Meanwhile, a delegation of political representatives from Khyber District, including local and district officials and activists from various political parties, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. The delegation raised several issues faced by the people of Khyber District, including the security situation, the persistent electricity shortages, the need for development projects, the abolition of taxes, and compensation for victims of military operations. The delegation also highlighted other key public concerns affecting the district. The delegation, led by Hazrat Wali, included

local tribal leaders and party members from Khyber District. In a traditional gesture of respect, the tribal leaders presented the Governor with a ceremonial turban. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of the merged tribal districts and emphasized his commitment to addressing their concerns. He said, "We fully recognize the sacrifices of the people in the merged districts. For sustainable peace in these areas, it is essential to promote educational and health-focused activities." Kundi further emphasized that it is crucial to bring the merged districts on par with other districts of the province in terms of development. He assured the delegation that efforts would be made to accelerate the completion of development projects in Khyber District and all merged areas. "The youth of the tribal areas should take the lead in showcasing the positive image of their regions to the world," Governor Kundi added.—DNA

Govt decides extension in contract of School Leaders

PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai has said that the purpose of appointing school Leaders is ensure the quality education and their problems would be resolved on priority basis. Replying the queries of the members of the KP Assembly Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education here on Thursday, the provincial minister told the panel that the provincial government has decided extension in the contract of the School Leaders and except monitoring the quality of education, they are not being given any other responsibility. He said that the department has directed to present proposals for their better future. The meeting of the standing committee was held with Chairman Taj Mohammad Tarand in the chair. Besides, the provincial minister, members including Abdul Salam Afridi, Mian Sharafat Ali, Arif Ahmadzai, Adnan Khan and Sobia Shahid, the Special Secretary Qaiser Alam, Additional Secretary Maqbook Khan, Director E&SE Samina Altaf, Director DPD Mohammad Mazar and other higher authorities also attended the meeting. Questions, problems raised in the previous meeting and steps taken by the department were highlighted and the officials of the education department gave sequential answers to the questions asked by the committee members. The committee was told that the main objective of appointing regarding the transfer of ministerial staff, the committee was informed that a period of one and a half years has been fixed. Employees who have been at a station for one and a half years will be transferred immediately. Initially, these transfers will take place in three districts and soon the ministerial staff of all districts will be transferred. In response to a question, the Minister said that a scholarship programme has been started for the improvement of education in districts where the literacy rate is low, especially in the merged districts, so as to attract more students. Regarding the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), the provincial minister said that this initiative is being extended to other districts of the province and a strategy is also prepared to bring these students into the mainstream and conduct their exams. Chairman Standing Committee Taj Mohammad Khan Tarand said that the ALP is the best programme and called for the removal of all shortcomings and problems in it before the extension. Taj Muhammad Khan Tarand directed the education authorities to get approval of the posts from the finance department immediately for the schools which are nearing completion. So that the work is not delayed. MPAs Arif Ahmadzai and Mian Sharaf Ali apprised the committee about the delay in construction of schools and other issues in Charsadda and Swat. For which Special Secretary Education Qaiser Alam was entrusted with the responsibility. Faisal Khan Tarakai told the committee that beside other problems, the construction of schools takes a long time due to which the present provincial government has started the Rented Building School Programme.—DNA

Skyrocketing prices in Parachinar leave citizens empty-handed

Local residents lament the skyrocketing prices, with many saying they can no longer afford basic necessities. "Inflation has reached unbearable levels," said a local resident

DNA

PESHAWAR: Parachinar, the capital of Kurram District, is grappling with unprecedented price hikes of daily use commodities as all major roads to the district remain blocked. The ongoing crisis in the area has caused severe shortages of essential food items, driving prices to record highs.

In Parachinar, peas are being sold at Rs. 600 per kg, onions at Rs. 500 per kg, and tomatoes at Rs. 400 per kg. The closure of the main Thall-Parachinar highway, the Afghan border, and other key routes for the past four months has exacerbated the situation. To mitigate the crisis, 61 trucks loaded with essential goods, including vegetables, fruits, flour, sugar, and cooking oil, were recent-

ly dispatched to Parachinar. However, according to Haji Imdad, president of the local trade union, the supply is far from sufficient to meet the growing needs of the population. He urged authorities to ensure a continuous supply of goods to stabilize the market. Local residents lament the skyrocketing prices, with many saying they can no longer afford basic necessities. "Inflation has reached

unbearable levels," said a local resident. "Cauliflower and peas are both being sold at Rs. 600 per kg, onions at Rs. 500, and tomatoes at Rs. 400. Even basic groceries have become out of reach for most people." The crisis has also rendered fruits a luxury for many. Oranges are being sold at an exorbitant Rs. 750 per dozen, leaving them beyond the reach of the average consumer. Thousands

of people from nearby villages, who travel to Parachinar to buy essentials, are often forced to return empty-handed due to the exorbitant prices.

Residents are calling on the provincial government to take immediate action to reopen the blocked routes and stabilize prices, as the current situation is unsustainable for the majority of the population.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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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

Pak home to most diverse wildlife, says British HC

National History Museum Wildlife Photographer of the Year images come to Karachi and Lahore

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A highlights exhibition of the world-renowned Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, now in its sixtieth year and on loan from the Natural History Museum in London, will be on display at the British Council libraries in Karachi in Lahore. This version will feature the 18 winning images across categories including underwater, photojournalism, mammal behaviour and urban wildlife, plus the resulting Grand Title winners. Using photography's unique emotive power to engage and inspire audiences, the images shine a light on stories and species around the world and encourage a future of advocating for the planet. Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the most prestigious wildlife photography competition of its kind, providing a global platform that showcases some of the best photography talent from around



the world. Launching in 1965, today the competition receives entries from 117 countries and territories all over the world, highlighting its enduring appeal. This year's award-winning image are on an international tour through a partnership between the Museum, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and other partners that will allow them to be seen by over a million people. With Pakistan facing significant climate challenges, the British High Commission is hosting the exhibition to encourage dialogue on protecting the environment and inspire individuals and communities to take action. Chair of the judging panel, Kathy Moran said: "In this selection you see species diversity, a range of behaviour and conservation issues. These images represent the evolution of the competition through the years, from pure natural history to photography that fully embraces representation of

the natural world - the beauty and the challenges. It is a powerful selection with which to kickstart a milestone anniversary." Dr Doug Gurr, Director of the Museum said: "As we celebrate sixty years of Wildlife Photographer of the Year, we also celebrate the generations of visitors who have been inspired by the beauty and majesty of its images, and the millions of connections made with nature." Jane Marriott CMG OBE, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, said: "These photographs serve as a powerful reminder of the beauty of our natural world and the responsibility we all share to protect it. Pakistan is home to some of the most diverse wildlife on the planet, and we are truly lucky to have this extraordinary set of images here. I hope this exhibition will inspire Pakistani photographers to take part in future competitions and make their industry experts.

ZafaR, Kyrgyzstan envoy discuss promotion of trade and cultural ties

The ambassador detailed Kyrgyzstan's government policies, including projects to enhance relations with other countries, such as extending a railway line through Iran and Russia to China, which would make Kyrgyzstan a key transit hub in Central Asia

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Avazbek Atakhanov, invited Pakistani traders, businessmen, and industrialists to invest in Kyrgyzstan and promote bilateral trade, emphasizing the need for joint initiatives to strengthen economic relations between the two countries. He expressed these views during a meeting with Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (FPCCI), at the Kyrgyz Embassy. Member of the UBG Central Core Committee, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and FPCCI Executive Member Waqar Bakhtawari were also present. During the meeting, an in-depth discussion was held on enhancing trade, cultural, and mutual relations between the two nations. Ambassador Atakhanov highlighted his ability to speak over 30 languages and shared that he came to Pakistan voluntarily. He previously served as Kyrgyzstan's ambassador to Iran. Shedding light on Kyrgyzstan's progress, he stated that Kyrgyzstan is a rapidly developing country with a GDP growth rate of 9%. Currently, Kyrgyzstan hosts the largest number of international students globally, which strengthens its educational growth and international relations. The ambassador detailed Kyrgyzstan's government policies, including projects to enhance relations with other countries, such as extending a railway line through Iran and Russia to China, which would make Kyrgyzstan a key transit hub in Central Asia. He also revealed that Kyrgyzstan is working on a 2,000 MW hydropower project, which will not only increase energy self-sufficiency but also provide surplus energy resources to the region. During the meeting, Zafar Bakhtawari expressed strong support for the ambassador's remarks, stating that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan share longstanding friendly relations, with Kyrgyzstan being an important ally of Pakistan. He highlighted the deep historical connection between the two countries, noting that Mughal Emperor Zahiruddin Babur hailed from Kyrgyzstan and that Babur's mother was also from Kyrgyzstan, further cementing cultural ties. Bakhtawari stressed the importance of enhancing air connectivity between the two nations, stating that improved links would boost both trade and cultural relations. Ahsan Bakhtawari underscored the need to create joint platforms and opportunities to strengthen business relations between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, welcoming the invitation from Kyrgyzstan as a step towards elevating bilateral trade to new heights. Waqar Bakhtawari emphasized the importance of deepening cultural ties, noting that the rich cultural connections between the two nations could serve as a foundation for strengthening trade relations. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to expanding economic ties, fostering trade cooperation, and promoting cultural exchanges between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, with the hope that mutual collaboration will continue to grow.—DNA

Illustrators workshop concludes at NBF

ISLAMABAD: The four-day illustrators workshop concluded successfully at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium of the National Book Foundation (NBF) on Thursday. Around twenty illustrators from twin cities participated in this international workshop with a special focus on children's education. NBF, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, organised this workshop. The moderators included Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi Manager Publications Fareeha Nasim, NBF Publication Incharge Nazia Rehman, Sri Lankan Writer and Director Mahesh Pathirathna, and resource person Maria Riaz from Muzaffarabad, Kashmir. The aim of the workshop was to produce children's literature in order to promote reading culture in Pakistan from an early age. The speakers stressed the importance of producing literature that connects with real life and prepares children for the future. Manager Publications of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi Fareeha Nasim expressed a commitment to expanding such workshops to different regions of Pakistan. "Such initiatives will nurture local talent, providing platforms for writers and illustrators to gain valuable guidance and opportunities. Renowned Sri Lankan trainer and director Mahesh Pathirathna provided practical principles and suggestions to enhance the participants' skills, while Maria Riaz focused on developing picture books and fostering an appreciation for art and science among children. They guided participants on writing for children, generating ideas, and creating engaging stories using illustrations. Managing Director of the National Book Foundation, Murad Ali Mohmand, shared, "NBF is actively promoting book culture and storytelling events across Pakistan in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education." He expressed gratitude to Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi and Room to Read for their support in executing this significant initiative. The workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants.—



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Romania Dan Stoenescu met with DG Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Ayub & Sara Malik, Director for Europe II, to talk about enhancing our Romania, Pakistan bilateral relations through new agreements, high level visits, consultations, parliamentary & cultural diplomacy.—DNA

Islamabad Marathon 2025 to kick off on Jan 26

ISLAMABAD: The scenic capital of Pakistan is all set to host the Islamabad Marathon 2025, the largest running event in the country, on January 26. Organized by Islamabad Run with Us (IRU), a community-led initiative founded by Qasim and Hashim Naz in 2016, the event promises to be a milestone in Pakistan's sporting history. This year's marathon marks the fifth full marathon in the IRU series and has already garnered attention from runners across the globe. Over 3,000 participants from Pakistan and abroad are expected to hit the streets of Islamabad, with international runners from Europe and the United States joining the event. A strong contingent from the diplomatic community in Islamabad will also be participating, adding a global flair to the occasion. The marathon features a variety of race categories, including a 5km fun run, a 10km race, a half marathon, and the full 42.2km marathon, making it accessible to runners of all skill levels. A special kids' race has also been planned to promote active lifestyles among children under 12. "The Islamabad Marathon has grown into more than just a running event—it's a celebration of health, community, and culture," Qasim Naz, co-founder of IRU told APP. "We are thrilled to bring together people from all walks of life, uniting them in their shared love for fitness and sport," he said. The event promises to be more than just a race. Families and spectators can look forward to an array of food stalls, interactive games, and engaging activities to ensure a lively atmosphere. Friends and families of participants will cheer on runners as they take on the challenge, adding an extra layer of encouragement and excitement.—DNA

AIOU announces MS Commerce Programme

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) encouraged the students to get admission MS Commerce program and prepare for a successful future in commerce, finance, and business. According to the AIOU, this two-year program (4 semesters) offers online classes, modern curriculum, and specialization in areas like Corporate Financial Reporting, Advanced Research Methodology, and Applied Econometrics. As per eligibility criteria, 16 years of education is required in Commerce/Business or equivalent (ACMA/CA/ACCA) However, Fee is only Rs. 9,090 per course. The Career Opportunities are Lecturer, Financial Analyst, Accountant, Auditor, Consultant, and more. The students are encouraged to apply now at: <https://aiou.edu.pk/oas-fresh-admission>.—APP

Pakistan's earns \$1.530b from IT services' export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$1.530 billion by exporting different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first five months of the current fiscal year 2024-25. This shows a growth of 32.74 percent as compared with the US \$ 1.152 billion earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2023-24, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the computer services grew by 39.38 percent as it surged from US \$935.835 million last year to US \$1.304 billion during July-November 2024. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 34.81 percent, from US \$331.314 million to US \$446.643 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services however witnessed a nominal decline of 1.17 percent, from US \$2.507 million to US \$2.477 million. The export and imports of computer software services increased by 1.64 percent, from \$249.703 million to \$253.799 million whereas the export of repair and maintenance services dipped by 0.73 percent from US \$0.879 million to US \$0.872 million.—APP

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Briefs

OGDCL enhances oil production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Thursday announced a significant enhancement in oil production from its Kunnar Oil Field in the Hyderabad district of Sindh. The company's optimization efforts have increased oil output from two key wells, Kunnar-12 and Kunnar-6, contributing an additional 1,160 barrels per day (BPD).

At the Kunnar-12 well, after a reassessment of the well's potential through production optimization, OGDCL deployed a rig to replace the conventional Jet Pump with an Electrical Submersible Pump (ESP). These measures have increased production at the well from 1,060 BPD to 1,820 BPD, an increase of 760 BPD. The well is part of OGDCL's Kunnar Oil Field, with a 100% working interest in Kunnar Mining Lease Area.

Kunnar-6 well, previously shut-in due to high water production and low oil recovery, has been successfully revived following a comprehensive plan. A series of rigless interventions in the Lower Goru Upper Sand, combined with re-completion using an artificial lift system (ESP), have optimized its performance. Kunnar-6 is now producing at a rate of 400 barrels per day (BPD) of oil.—APP

Podiatrist advocates for quarterly medicated pedicure

ISLAMABAD: Medicated pedicure is a procedure performed in a clinic to treat various foot problems, including nail fungus, ingrown toenails, corns and calluses. Talking to media on Thursday, Podiatrist Salma Roshan said that medicated pedicure is recommended every three months to prevent foot-related issues. She explained that performing the pedicure helps in preventing the spread of fungus from its initial stage to advanced stages. Explaining the procedure, Salma said that medical-grade cutters are used to trim hard nails, while spatulas are used to gently remove dead skin. She said that surgical blades are carefully used to remove calluses and corns. "Nail grinding, drilling and filing machines are also utilized to correct nail deformities," she added. She said that the procedure begins with cleaning the feet with antiseptic to prevent the spread of germs. She said that the nails are then cut using sterilized tools. Following the cutting, nail filing is performed to manage discoloration, remove dust, and trim cuticles, she maintained. Salma highlighted the importance of exercising extra caution when treating diabetic patients, particularly those taking blood thinners. "Diabetic patients with ingrown toenails, corns, or calluses should avoid attempting to cut their own nails to prevent wounds that may lead to serious complications," she warned. She noted that nail buffing and grinding are performed for patients experiencing extra nail growth, thick nails or fungal infections. The podiatrist explained that hard skin and fissures can develop due to wearing ill-fitting shoes and walking on uneven surfaces. "To address persistent issues, custom orthotics or shoe inserts are used, which help in dealing with abnormal arches, hammertoes and bunions," she said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Broadcasters' Association calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Shaping future of female education in Pakistan

The Principal shared that ICG has also adopted Smart Classrooms, integrating e-learning platforms introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. These interactive tools enhance learning experiences and prepare students for a technology-driven future

SHUMAILA NOREEN

ISLAMABAD: Public sector institutions have witnessed a remarkable influx of students from leading private schools last year which is a testament to the transformative initiatives taken by the government to raise standards and bridge the gap between public and private education.

This was shared by Principal of Islamabad College for Girls (ICG), F-6/2, Professor Sabah Faisal during an exclusive interview with media on Thursday. Sabah Faisal's passion for the institution was palpable as she recounted its journey from a modest junior school in 1968, with only 64 students, to its current status as a premier educational establishment catering to nearly 6,000 girls. "This institution is more than just a school; it's a sanctuary for our students. Parents feel secure sending their daughters here, knowing they are in a safe, supportive environment," she added. Professor Faisal attributes this growth to the government's commitment to fostering female education. "When the government focuses on providing girls with quality education in secure environments, institutions like ours flourish. We strive to uphold that trust and provide opportunities that help our students thrive." The principal emphasized the importance of preparing students for a rapidly evolving world. "Our students should graduate with skills that make them financially independent. The government's reforms are ensuring that our youth, especially girls, are equipped with the tools they need to succeed." Among the initiatives at ICG, the Software Technology Park (e-Rozgar Center) stands out. Developed in collaboration with the Pakistan Software Export Board, this facility empowers students to explore

entrepreneurship, run small businesses, and connect with clients—all within a safe, solar-powered space equipped with free high-speed internet. Another transformative project, she mentioned, is the Google Center of Excellence, launched in partnership with Tech Valley and Google. "This lab enables students to learn and collaborate using Chromebooks, which are budget-friendly and cyber-safe," she explained. "It's about giving them the tools to learn in real-time and stay ahead in a digital world." The Principal shared that ICG has also adopted Smart Classrooms, integrating e-learning platforms introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. These interactive tools enhance learning experiences and prepare students for a technology-driven future. The STEM and Robotics Labs are further examples of ICG's forward-thinking approach. By introducing coding, artificial intelligence,

and robotics into the curriculum, the school is encouraging students to consider careers in emerging fields. For Professor Faisal, education goes beyond academics. "We aim to build confident, well-rounded individuals," she said. The school prioritizes extracurricular activities, from public speaking programs to cultural education, ensuring students are prepared for life on a global stage. Physical health is also a key focus. "A healthy mind needs a healthy body," she emphasized. Facilities like gyms, sports fields, martial arts classes, and free meal programs ensure students' overall well-being. As an alumna of ICG, Professor Faisal's connection to the institution runs deep. "This school shaped my life," she shared with pride. "If I could achieve so much with the limited resources available in my time, today's girls, with access to far greater opportunities, can achieve

even more." Her leadership and the government's dedication to female education have placed ICG at the forefront of public institutions in Pakistan. "The recent International Girls' Conference hosted in Pakistan, with delegates from 43 countries, highlighted our commitment to advancing girls' education. We are determined to bring even the most marginalized regions forward," she observed. Professor Faisal spoke of her vision for ICG. "We are not just educating students; we are empowering them. Pakistan has the potential to lead the world in girls' education, and ICG is proud to contribute to that journey." Under her leadership, ICG is more than a school; it's a testament to what public education can achieve with vision and dedication. It stands as a beacon of hope for countless young girls, lighting the way to a brighter, more empowered future.

more empowered future.

COMSATS University, ICCI explore collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Hamid Umer, Head International Office at COMSATS University Islamabad, met with Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to discuss the crucial need for promoting the knowledge economy in Pakistan. During their meeting, Professor Dr. Umer emphasized the importance of moving beyond conventional methods of promoting industry and businesses and focusing on fostering entrepreneurship, particularly through stronger linkages between universities and the business community. Dr. Umer stressed that Pakistan's future economic prosperity lies in nurturing a new generation of entrepreneurs who not only seek jobs but create them. He highlighted the vital role that universi-

ties, particularly COMSATS, can play in this transformation. He pointed out that the university has over 1,100 PhD-qualified professionals engaged in advanced research, much of which holds immense potential for driving industry growth. However, he noted that this research must be effectively channelled into practical, market-driven applications, which requires close collaboration with the business sector. For this vision to become a reality, Dr. Umer called on the business community, represented by the ICCI, to prioritize investment in research and development to create products that meet the current demands of the market. He further mentioned that COMSATS University is eager to collaborate with the ICCI to ensure that the research produced is aligned with the needs of industries fostering innovation and economic growth.

President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi welcomed Dr. Umer's vision, expressing the ICCI's commitment to strengthening the partnership between the academia and business sectors. He pointed out that the Chamber has already signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with numerous universities in the region to promote Industry-Academia linkages. Qureshi emphasized that such collaborations are essential for bridging the gap between academic research and practical business applications, a move that will drive economic development. In support of Dr. Umer's proposal, Qureshi outlined ICCI's upcoming initiatives, including a competition among university graduates to showcase their entrepreneurial skills. The winners of this competition will receive cash awards as part of the Chamber's efforts to encourage innovation and creativity among the youth.

NGOs planning to organize programs to honor forest officers

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: According to reports, several national and international NGOs are planning to organize programs to honor forest officers with exemplary performance. These initiatives aim to reward their hard work and skills through various forms of recognition, such as certificates of appreciation, performance awards, cash incentives, and even trips to foreign countries. Meetings are currently underway to finalize the details of these programs. Certificates of ap-

preciation and performance awards serve as tangible symbols of recognition, acknowledging the dedication and achievements of forest officers. Cash incentives provide financial support and can help alleviate some of the economic challenges faced by these individuals, particularly those working in regions with limited resources. Offering trips to foreign countries as part of the reward package adds an element of prestige and provides opportunities for professional development. Such experiences enable for-

est officers to learn from global best practices, exchange knowledge with international counterparts, and broaden their perspectives on forest management. The proposed recognition programs are expected to have a profound impact on the enthusiasm and dedication of forest officers. By rewarding good performance, these initiatives create a culture of excellence, motivating forest officers to strive for higher standards in their work. This positive reinforcement not only benefits the individual forest officers but also

enhances the overall effectiveness of forest conservation efforts. The efforts of NGOs to recognize forest officers are likely to garner appreciation at both public and social levels. Public acknowledgment of the contributions of forest officers helps raise awareness about the importance of forest conservation and the challenges involved in protecting these vital ecosystems. This increased awareness can lead to greater support for conservation initiatives, both in terms of funding and community participation.

'Car lifter' killed in encounter with police

WAH CANTT: An alleged inter-district car lifter was killed in an encounter with the Taxila police, the police have said. According to a police spokesman, the car lifters opened fire on a police party near Nehar stop area in the jurisdiction of Taxila police station. In the ensuing exchange of fire, the accused, identified as Musa Khan, who was involved in dozens of car theft cases in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore was shot dead while his accomplice managed to flee from the scene, leaving behind a stolen car. The spokesman said that when the police party signaled a car to stop during a snap check, the accused opened fire on the police and tried to escape. The car stolen from the same area one day ago was recovered during the operation, he added.—APP

Export up by 7.65% to Rs 4.627t in 1st half

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 7.65 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July-December (FY2024-25) were recorded at Rs. 4,627,660 million as against Rs. 4,298,761 million during the corresponding period of last year, according to provisional figures released by PBS. On year-on-year (YoY) basis, the exports from the country increased by 1.53 percent During December 2024 as compared to the corresponding month of last year. The exports in December 2024 were recorded at Rs. 811,765 million against the export of Rs. 799,545 million recorded during last December. On month-on-month (MoM) basis the exports in December 2024 went up by 3.15 percent when compared to exports of Rs. 786,953 million in November, 2024. The main commodities of exports during December, 2024 were knitwear (Rs. 108,941 million), readymade garments (Rs. 99,330 million), rice other than basmati (Rs. 86,797 million), bed wear (Rs. 71,252 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 41,388 million), sugar (Rs. 40,565 million), towels (Rs. 24,549 million), pharmaceutical products (Rs. 17,634 million), cotton yarn (Rs. 17,456 million).—APP

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Europe's military spending target

BEFORE officially taking office, US President Donald Trump publicly said NATO countries should spend at least five percent of their GDP on defense, more than double the current two percent. With Trump's inauguration on Monday, this sword of Damocles hanging over US-Europe relations is making Europe increasingly nervous. Security is not only the core pillar of US-Europe relations, but also the source of many contradictions. The root cause lies in the deep strategic differences between the two sides. First, there is a difference in threat perception. Before the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US had been at the forefront of taking a hard stance against Russia, while Europe viewed Russia as an unavoidable neighbor, leading to a longstanding gap in their respective policies toward Russia. Second, the US and Europe handle the relationship between security and development differently. The US views military power and external military influence as key to safeguarding its interests. Meanwhile, Europe has enjoyed the peace dividend for a long time and is more inclined to invest resources into development and welfare, which has led to a lack of public support for increased military spending. Third, the US seeks to strengthen its influence over Europe on security issues, leveraging NATO to influence European foreign and security policies. Some political factions within the EU have recently been pushing for "strategic autonomy," with defense autonomy as a core principle, resulting in an increasingly apparent struggle between the US' desire for control and Europe's desire for strategic autonomy. Lastly, the US wants Europe to shoulder more responsibility for its own security without altering NATO's leadership structure, thus alleviating the US' strategic burden. However, the external pressures from the Russia-Ukraine conflict have reinforced Europe's perception of NATO's dominant role in European security, forcing Europe to deepen its reliance on US security and hope for more American support to ensure its own safety. Thus, the ongoing disagreements between the US and Europe over the military spending target are essentially a microcosm of deeper security divisions, exposing underlying conflicts over values and interests between the two sides. Faced with Trump's threats, Europe is in a dilemma. On the one hand, achieving the five percent military spending target is difficult for Europe. Forcing the countries to meet the target could seriously strain Europe's already fragile economy, worsening the ongoing economic and social difficulties. Moreover, much of the increased defense spending will flow into US defense contractors' pockets, rather than promoting the development of Europe's own defense industry, generating limited economic and social benefits within Europe. As a result, paying more "protection fees" to the US may not help promote European defense integration but could exacerbate the unequal relationship between Europe and the US. On the other hand, Europe cannot afford the consequences of the US' withdrawal from NATO. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has made Europe more acutely aware of its limitations in security affairs. For the foreseeable future, Europe will not be able to bear the fear of being detached from the US military umbrella.



War is over, but suffering continues

AFTER 471 days of Israeli war of genocide and brutal killing, the Gaza war has come to an end, and the residents breathe a sigh of relief. However, the scenes of massive destruction in residential neighborhoods are shocking, but determination will overcome this dark reality. Citizens have pledged to rebuild it more beautifully and vibrantly, as they see the Gaza Strip as a heart and soul that they inhabit but does not inhabit them. Israel has destroyed all manifestations of human life: mosques, schools, homes, roads, and infrastructure, turning it into an unlivable city, mistakenly believing it would break the Gazans' will and determination, but it has failed. Residents are shocked by the extent of the destruction, the horror of the devastation, and the brutality of the widespread death. Yet, hope rises within them, as what has happened is nothing in comparison to the most sacred cause in the world. They may wonder when the pain will end, when the suffering will cease, when the tents will be uprooted, and when reconstruction will begin. These are significant questions that indicate the war is over, but suffering is not yet. Citizens have decided to stay and defy the odds, continuing life. Citizen Muath Abu Mustafa Abu Bakr states that the occupation destroyed his home in the Al-Amal neighborhood of Khan Yunis, and he now lives in a tent across from it. He adds that the war has certainly ended, and death and killing have passed, but suffering continues, emphasizing that they have decided to live and confront it. He affirmed that those who have lived through the horrors of genocide will challenge suffering and pain, awaiting a new dawn that has begun to rise. In the same neighborhood, citizens started preparing what is known as arches for prayers, after the occupation destroyed the Hassan al-Banna Mosque, one of thousands of mosques that have been demolished. Young man Fahd Wadi, one of those responsible for the mosque, states that the occupation destroyed the mosques "to sever our connection to them, but it has failed and will continue to fail, as the entire land is filled with mosques." As for citizen Abir Al-Bayram, she confirmed that the end of the war for her does not mean the end of her suffering, as her sister Nahla is still among the war's missing, whose number exceeds 11,000. She says her suffering will end when the fate of her missing sister is revealed. The genocide that lasted 15 months during which Israel did what no one could imagine has left immense pain and suffering. However, renewed hope and strong will stand like a flood that extinguishes the fire of anguish.

Trump's Strategy to Contain China (Part-III)

Qamar Bashir



The meeting pledged to prioritize measures to ensure the dollar remains the dominant reserve currency by bringing fiscal stability, maintaining a low deficit, improving the economy, and nurturing financial leadership as the ultimate defenses against China's attempts to undermine the dollar. The senators on both sides of the aisle unanimously proposed a five-prong comprehensive strategy to strengthen the U.S. dollar as the global reserve currency and expand U.S. dollar transactions in global trade, particularly in energy and technology sectors, to counter China's push for yuan internationalization

THE US Senate's confirmation hearing for Mr. Bessent last week as Treasury Secretary was remarkable, as much of the discussion revolved around China's rapid economic growth and increasing dominance in global finance, economy, manufacturing, and infrastructure. It was unusual for a single foreign country to consume so much time in such a crucial hearing, reflecting both an acknowledgment of China's deep penetration into almost every sector of geopolitical significance and the deep-rooted concerns of U.S. senators over the pace and extent of America's loss of influence to China. A major point of discussion was the growing challenge posed by China's yuan to the global dominance of the U.S. dollar. For the first time in modern history, the yuan is emerging as a serious competitor to what was once the unquestioned status of the dollar as the world's primary reserve currency. Several senators expressed concerns over China's strategic initiatives to internationalize the yuan, warning that its increasing use in global trade and financial systems could erode U.S. economic power, weaken financial influence, and pose risks to national security. The meeting highlighted China's active expansion of yuan-based trade agreements, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and bilateral currency swap agreements with nations seeking alternatives to the dollar, and China's recent agreements with Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Russia to conduct energy and trade transactions in yuan rather than U.S. dollars as a clear sign that allegedly Beijing is systematically working to erode the dollar's dominance in international markets. Additionally, concerns were raised about China's push for a central bank digital currency (CBDC), known as the digital yuan, which could facilitate international transactions outside the SWIFT system. This development would reduce reliance on U.S. financial institutions and weaken the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions. Lawmakers also expressed apprehension about China's involvement in U.S. financial markets and the risk that Chinese investments could influence American economic policy. Senator Cornyn questioned Bessent about the proposal to clear U.S. Treasury futures through the London Clearing House, which is overseen by the Bank of England and includes Chinese financial interests. He warned that allowing foreign entities—especially those linked to China—to play a role in U.S. debt markets could compromise national financial security. Furthermore, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse raised

concerns, albeit without substantiating that China's banking system facilitates illicit transactions, including money laundering, cyber theft, and the financing of adversarial regimes and economic manipulation, and emphasized that the U.S. should strengthen financial sanctions against Chinese firms engaged in illicit activities. The senators took a serious view of Chinese influence in U.S. financial markets, its expanding role in global finance, and the use of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the U.S. as front companies to acquire U.S. firms in strategic sectors, including technology, agriculture, and finance. The meeting pledged to prioritize measures to ensure the dollar remains the dominant reserve currency by bringing fiscal stability, maintaining a low deficit, improving the economy, and nurturing financial leadership as the ultimate defenses against China's attempts to undermine the dollar. The senators on both sides of the aisle unanimously proposed a five-prong comprehensive strategy to strengthen the U.S. dollar as the global reserve currency and expand U.S. dollar transactions in global trade, particularly in energy and technology sectors, to counter China's push for yuan internationalization. The first pillar of the strategy was strengthening U.S. energy dominance to expand oil and gas production, reinforcing the dollar's position in global energy markets. Since oil is traditionally priced in dollars, senators emphasized the need to implement policies that promote domestic energy independence, ensuring that major oil-producing nations continue settling oil transactions in dollars, thereby reducing the appeal of the yuan. The second pillar focused on restricting China's financial influence. Bessent supported tightening restrictions on U.S. investment in Chinese financial markets and limiting American institutional participation in Yuan-based financial instruments. This strategy aimed to ensure that global investors remain heavily tied to dollar-denominated assets, preventing China from gaining a stronger foothold in international finance. The third pillar involved enhancing Treasury-backed digital payment infrastructure. Concerns over China's digital yuan prompted discussions on developing a more robust digital payments system linked to the Federal Reserve. The goal was to maintain U.S. digital financial instruments as superior and more widely accepted than China's central bank digital currency (CBDC), preventing Beijing from leveraging technology to expand its financial influence.

The fourth pillar emphasized strengthening global trade alliances. Senator Todd Young suggested that the U.S. should deepen trade partnerships with Indo-Pacific nations and Latin American economies to ensure that international commerce remains dollar-centric. He also proposed expanding currency swap agreements with allied countries as a countermeasure to China's aggressive financial diplomacy, which seeks to promote the yuan in global transactions. The final pillar addressed tighter sanctions enforcement. Given China's efforts to develop alternative financial systems, including the China-led Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) as an alternative to SWIFT, senators stressed the need for stricter oversight of international financial transactions. This measure aimed to prevent U.S. adversaries from circumventing sanctions by conducting transactions in yuan, thereby maintaining the dollar's dominance in global finance. His testimony reinforced the Trump administration's commitment to defending the supremacy of the U.S. dollar through energy policies, financial regulations, and trade alliances, aiming to prevent the yuan from becoming a viable alternative in global markets. However, whether the Trump administration will succeed in slowing the internationalization of the yuan remains an ongoing challenge for U.S. policymakers. The real strength of the yuan lies in China's rapid economic growth and development, the sheer scale of its economy, its expanding military capabilities, its advancements in space exploration, and its strategic alliances with both major global economies and developing nations. China has been aggressively investing in global infrastructure projects, research and development, innovation, and digitalization, all of which contribute to its increasing economic influence. Additionally, China's dominance in global supply chains gives it unparalleled leverage in international trade. In some capacity, nearly every economy in the world relies on Chinese manufacturing infrastructure, secure supply chains, and exports. If China's economic expansion continues at its current pace, the Yuan will likely gain prominence as a global reserve currency at a much faster rate than both the U.S. dollar and the euro. This shift could significantly reshape the global financial landscape, challenging the long-standing dominance of Western currencies. (Continues)

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

US-Asia and changing global order

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



A protracted economic slowdown in China, fueled by retaliatory measures and overreliance on state-directed investments, could have far-reaching consequences for regional stability. Despite these challenges, mutual nuclear deterrence reduces the likelihood of direct military conflict between the United States and China. Instead, regional states are likely...

THE prospect of Donald Trump returning to the presidency evokes mixed reactions across different regions. In Europe, this possibility is often perceived as a significant disruption, with fears of strained alliances and economic instability. Adversaries of the United States, such as China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, view such a development as an opportunity to advance their agendas. However, in much of Asia, the reaction is notably more measured. Countries in this region, ranging from Japan and South Korea in the north to the Indian subcontinent in the south, exhibit less concern regarding Trump's autocratic tendencies or his disdain for liberal internationalism. For Asian states, the return of Trump signifies not a radical shift but rather an acceleration of preexisting U.S. foreign policy trends. Since the Vietnam era, the United States has consistently demonstrated a tendency to recalibrate its global commitments, favoring strategic pragmatism over expansive international engagements. The Nixon Doctrine, introduced in 1969 during the Vietnam War, encapsulates this philosophy. It underscored the United States' intent to avoid ground-level entanglements, instead favoring stability through an offshore balancing strategy. This approach involved maintaining a military presence through air and naval bases while delegating primary security responsibilities to regional actors. This doctrine established a framework that continues to shape U.S. policy in Asia. Even during deviations such as the post-9/11 "war on terror" and the subsequent protracted conflict in Afghanistan, Asia recognized the United States as a cautious power, deliberate in its international commitments. In the 21st century, this cautious approach has expanded to other

regions. The withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 under President Joe Biden exemplifies this trajectory. Biden's foreign policy—marked by consultative, albeit transactional, engagement—has largely reinforced the groundwork laid during Trump's first administration. Initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and the AUKUS defense pact have solidified U.S. alliances in Asia. However, Biden's policy also refrains from offering unconditional security guarantees, aligning closely with Trump's preference for mutually beneficial arrangements. For many Asian states, Trump's "America First" ethos resonates with longstanding U.S. strategies in the region. His transactionalism, while less consultative and more unpredictable than Biden's, remains within the parameters of an offshore balancing framework. Asian leaders, accustomed to the United States prioritizing its own interests, are prepared to navigate these dynamics. Although Trump's return may raise concerns regarding specific issues such as tariffs and Taiwan, the region's experience with his earlier administration provides valuable lessons for adapting to shifts in U.S. foreign policy. Comparatively, the Obama administration's approach to Asia was characterized by rhetorical commitments that were not always matched by decisive actions. Trump's emphasis on deterrence and transactional diplomacy aligns with the region's preference for managing disputes through strength and pragmatism. However, specific challenges, including the Taiwan issue, loom large. Biden's explicit support for Taiwan has heightened tensions, reinforcing a sense of entitlement in Taipei and complicating regional dynamics. Trump's potential approach, centered on leveraging trade and security concerns, risks exacerbating these tensions. The implications for Taiwan's strategic positioning and U.S.-China relations demand careful scrutiny.

Economic factors further complicate the landscape. Trump's proclivity for tariffs could reignite trade tensions, particularly with China, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. China's economic vulnerabilities, exacerbated by a collapsing real estate sector and mounting local government debt, compound the risks. A protracted economic slowdown in China, fueled by retaliatory measures and overreliance on state-directed investments, could have far-reaching consequences for regional stability. Despite these challenges, mutual nuclear deterrence reduces the likelihood of direct military conflict between the United States and China. Instead, regional states are likely to pursue greater intra-Asian cooperation to mitigate uncertainties. However, the absence of strong regional leadership complicates this endeavor. While Japan's late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe provided decisive leadership during Trump's first term, current leaders in key states such as Australia, Japan and South Korea lack comparable influence. The region thus faces a leadership vacuum at a critical juncture. Historically, U.S. foreign policy has oscillated between periods of intervention and retrenchment. Trump's reluctance to engage in long-term foreign commitments reflects an enduring strand of American strategic thought, one that prioritizes national interests over ideological alliances. This perspective aligns with George Washington's admonition against entangling alliances and resonates with the Nixon Doctrine's principles. For U.S. allies and partners, Trump's potential second term should be viewed not as an anomaly but as a continuation of America's strategic recalibration. Emulating Asia's pragmatic approach, Western states must adapt to a United States that prioritizes selective engagement over expansive commitments. In doing so, they can better align their strategies with the evolving contours of U.S. foreign policy.

Briefs

Imran Khan
'calls off'
talks with...

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he added. Barrister Gohar further conveyed the remarks of Khan, saying: "As of today, the commission was supposed to be announced, but it has not been." He further quoted the PTI founder as saying: "We are not waiting for assistance from any foreign country." PTI's announcement of ending the dialogue process follows NA Opposition Leader Omar Ayub's statement on Tuesday where he termed the negotiations "useless" sans the formation of the judicial commission.

Govt urges
PTI not to
abandon...

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the government committee took the PTI's demands seriously and formed a sub-committee, which includes seven allied parties, to chalk out a written response. "We had almost formed an opinion on the PTI's demands," he said, asking the Imran-founded party to reconsider its decision if they can form an opinion "apart from their founder's opinion". The spokesperson also said that the government had exhibited restraint at many points during the talks and ignored many actions by the PTI, including posts by Imran on his official X handle. Furthermore, he said, the government did not raise objections to Imran's ongoing civil disobedience call since it wanted to make progress in talks in the "spirit of democracy and give and take".

PM Shehbaz
Sharif hails
World...

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The prime minister underscored that the World Bank had supported Pakistan through various pivotal projects, ranging from hydropower and water management to transformative economic reforms. He expressed gratitude to the World Bank team for their leadership in shaping the framework, describing it as a timely intervention to overcome Pakistan's immense challenges. The prime minister highlighted the progress in digitizing the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), introducing a pilot project at Karachi Port to reduce collusion between importers and customs officials. The initiative, which features faceless interactions, aims to increase inland revenue while curbing corruption, he added. "These funds will be channeled into social protection projects for Pakistan's most vulnerable populations," he explained.

NA approves
amendments
to...

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as the opposition parties had already staged a walkout. The draft titled "Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025" includes new definitions, the establishment of regulatory and investigative bodies, and stricter penalties for disseminating "false" information. The government aims to lower the punishment for spreading "fake information" online to three years, according to a draft of the document, while they may also face a fine of up to Rs2 million.

Bilawal
warns...

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"therefore it cannot be tampered with even today". "We believe in the politics of issues, not of hatred and division." "When unilateral decisions are made, it becomes difficult to implement them," he said, stressing the need for consensus among political stakeholders. He said that the PPP does not want to become a hurdle in the path of Pakistan's development, adding that they were making efforts for the country's progress. Referring to the country's economic situation, he noted that the salaries of government employees should be increased based on the inflation rate.

COSA & COSALA shooting competition held



ISLAMABAD: 25 Meter Steel Plate Shooting Category
DA Thailand Col Thanai Permpul Secured First position where as DA Indonesia Colonel Henru Hidayat Susantowas Runner up and Air Attache US Chris Ivarone was 2nd Runner Up
25 Meter Target shooting Category
DA Turkey Brg. Hmut Onol Secured First position where as DA Bangladesh Brg. Gen Sahabud Deen Bangladesh was Runner up and DA India Ravi Shankar was 2nd Runner Up
10 Meter COSALA Category
Benjee from Thailand secured First Position where as Arzu Onol from Turkey was runner up and Ann Tuzhikova from Russia was 2nd Runner Up. - DNA

Australia win women's
Ashes with dramatic victory

Australia secure an unassailable 10-0 lead in the multi-format series

LONDON: England remain winless in the Women's Ashes as Australia won a dramatic rain-affected encounter by six runs in the second T20 to complete an outright series victory. Set a challenging 186 to win in Canberra, England needed 18 from the last five balls with Heather Knight unbeaten on 43 before heavy rain fell and no further play was possible. England finished on 168-4, an agonising six runs short of the required score set by the DLS method. The result sees Australia take a 12-0 lead in the points-based multi-format series, which ends England's hopes of a draw. Rain had also disrupted the tourists' chase after 8.4 overs, with England two runs ahead of DLS at 69-1, but it eased enough for play to resume with no overs lost. Knight's brilliant partnership of 65 in 6.5 overs with Nat Sciver-Brunt kept England in contention throughout before the final

result was taken out of their hands and the captain walked off visibly upset. Opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge's 52 from 40 balls at the top of the order kick-started England's brave effort, supported by Sophia Dunkley's 32, but ultimately they were left to rue a sloppy final three overs of their bowling innings which conceded 48 runs. They were in the game when the hosts stuttered to 137-5 after 17 overs, only for Tahira McGrath and Grace Harris to bludgeon their way to 185-5. McGrath, standing in for captain Alyssa Healy because of a foot injury, smashed an unbeaten 48 from 35 balls and Harris launched three sixes in her 17-ball 35. Off-spinner Charlie Dean was the pick of the bowlers with 2-28 but she dropped McGrath on 42 on another poor night for England's catching statistics, with Lauren Bell and Freya Kemp also putting down chances off Georgia Voll

China to host
BJK Cup Finals
for next 3 years

"The announcement demonstrates our commitment to bringing the passion and excitement of nation v nation team tennis to markets around the world," Billie King said

WEB DESK

BEIJING: The Billie Jean King Cup Finals will be held in Shenzhen, China for the next three years. China, reigning champions Italy and six qualifiers will contest the week-long Finals in 2025, with a date yet to be confirmed. Three venues in Shenzhen are being considered - including the 12,000 capacity Shenzhen Bay Sports Arena, which staged the WTA Finals in 2019. Prague, Glasgow, Seville and Malaga were chosen as hosts for the first four editions, but organisers say a global event of this nature cannot stay in Europe for too long. "The announcement demonstrates our commitment to bringing the passion and excitement of nation v nation team tennis to markets around the world," Billie Jean King said. The tournament, formerly called the Fed Cup, sees 18 teams split into six groups of three in qualifying, with the group winners progressing to the Finals. The draw for April's qualifying competition will take place later on Thursday. Great Britain are one of the seeded nations but have not been selected to host one of the groups and already know they will be heading to either Japan or the Netherlands in April. The Billie Jean King Cup Finals have traditionally taken place in November, but could be brought forward to September or October, when a run of tournaments are taking place in Asia. This would shorten the season and avoid players having to travel back to China in November, but it also means the Finals taking place in the same week as established WTA Tour events.

City sign Frankfurt
forward Marmoush

LONDON: Manchester City have signed Egypt forward Omar Marmoush from Eintracht Frankfurt for 70m euros (£59m). The 25-year-old has agreed a contract until June 2029, with add-ons rising to £4m. Marmoush has scored 15 goals in 17 Bundesliga games this season, second only to England captain Harry Kane's 16 for Bayern Munich. "Manchester City is one of the biggest clubs in the world over the past 10 years, so it was not a question," Marmoush said. "It's a pleasure and an honour for me and my family to be representing Manchester City. It makes them happy; it makes me happy that my dreams are becoming a reality. "The last two seasons have been great, but it is just the beginning for me." City have also signed 19-year-old Brazilian defender Vitor Reis from Palmeiras for £30m and Uzbekistan defender AbdulkodirKhusanov from Lens for £34m in the January transfer window. Marmoush, who has played as a striker, a number 10 and a winger, said: "On the pitch I am fast, good on the ball, I try to see where the spaces are and exploit the spaces - and I'm dangerous. "My main strength I would say is that I always want to win - that is from a character point of view." City director of football TxikiBegiristain said Marmoush has "outstanding pace and awareness" and that his versatility is a "really valuable asset". Marmoush began his career with WadiDegla in the Egyptian Premier League, before signing for VfL Wolfsburg in 2020. - Agencies

Champions League
set for dramatic finale

LONDON: The inaugural Champions League league phase is set for an exciting final day with 25 of the 36 teams still awaiting their fate. All 18 games will be played at the same time - at 20:00 GMT on Wednesday, 29 January, with 16 matches having something on the line. Manchester City are in major danger of elimination after Wednesday's collapse at Paris St-Germain, while Liverpool are through, Arsenal are almost there and Aston Villa and Celtic - who meet - are somewhere in between. The 'as it stands' table will be constantly updating with teams' hopes potentially relying on other results. It marks the first season of the new format, compared with the old four-team groups with two going through - where sometimes there was nothing to play for by the end. "It's been brilliant, instead of the borefest we've had for years on the last matchday," wrote ex-Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher on social media. "Next week will be sensational." First, here's a reminder of what the 36 league-phase teams are aiming for. Those finishing in the top eight automatically progress to the last 16, where they will be seeded. They will await the winners of eight two-legged knockout play-off ties featuring the clubs ranked from ninth to 24th. Those finishing between ninth and 16th will be seeded and face a team

placed 17th to 24th, with the advantage of playing the second leg at home. The clubs 25th or lower are eliminated and do not gain entry to the Europa League. The play-off ties take place mid-February, with the last-16 matches in the first two weeks of March. Top-eight guaranteed: Liverpool, Barcelona Top-24 guaranteed (at least): Arsenal, Inter Milan, Atletico Madrid, AC Milan, Atalanta, Bayer Leverkusen, Aston Villa, Monaco, Feyenoord, Lille, Brest, Borussia Dortmund, Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Juventus, Celtic Uncertain of progression: PSV, Club Brugge, Benfica, PSG, Sporting, Stuttgart, Manchester City, Dinamo Zagreb, Shakhtar Donetsk Eliminated: Bologna, Sparta Prague, Leipzig, Girona, Red Star Belgrade, Sturm Graz, Salzburg, Slovan Bratislava, Young Boys Manchester City have a very simple permutation. If they beat Club Brugge at home they will go into the play-off round. If they fail to win they will be eliminated. They cannot reach the last 16 automatically. Aston Villa are guaranteed at least a play-off place. A win at home to Celtic would give them a good chance of finishing in the top eight, though they would need one of five teams above them to slip up. But also four teams are only below Villa on goal difference so a big win for one of those sides could see them overtake Villa too. - Agencies

Keys stuns world number two Swiatekat AO

Belarusian top seed Sabalenka earned the chance to become the first woman in 26 years to win three successive Australian Open titles with a commanding 6-4 6-2 win over close friend Paula Badosa

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Madison Keys saved a match point before stunning world number two IgaSwiatek to set up an Australian Open final against two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka. Keys claimed a shock 5-7 6-1 7-6 (10-8) victory over five-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek to reach the second major final of her career. Poland's Swiatek served for the match at 6-5 in the third set and held match point but Keys saved it, broke back and then recovered from 7-5 down in a fraught tie-breaker to advance. That came after Belarusian top seed Sabalenka earned the chance to become the first woman in 26 years to win three successive Australian Open titles with a commanding 6-4 6-2 win over close friend Paula Badosa. While Keys has achieved a career-best Australian Open run, Sabalenka is aiming to emulate Martina Hingis' three straight titles between 1997-99. "I have goosebumps. I am so proud of myself and my team that we were able to put ourselves in such a situation," Sabalenka said. "If I put my name in history it will mean the world for me. I couldn't even dream of it." Swiatek's loss also means Sabalenka will retain the world number one ranking after the tournament.



Swiatek had been in imperious form in Melbourne, losing just 14 games across her five matches before the semi-finals. For context, only three players in history have dropped fewer games in making the last four at the Australian Open in a 128-player draw during the Open era. However, the four-time French Open winner was undone by an inspired Keys, determined to win an Australian Open semi-final at the third attempt. A messy start featuring five breaks of serve in the opening six games set the tone for an awkward night under Rod Laver Arena roof for Swiatek, who broke for a fourth time to take the first set before capitulating in the second. Keys took just 27 minutes to overwhelm Swiatek reeling off five straight games to force a deciding set. Both players saved numerous break points as the tension ramped up during an enthralling, high-quality deciding set. Swiatek eventually took her eighth opportunity to break for a 6-5 lead but, after failing to take her first match point, conceded serve with a double fault. A winner-takes-all tie-break was what Keys and the match deserved but Swiatek looked to be in control of it at 7-5 up. However, in a final impressive show of physical and mental resilience, Keys won five of the next six points to complete a sensational win after two hours and 35 minutes.

12 additional
judges
to SHC...

FROM PAGE 01
5. Mr. Ali Haider Ada, advocate
6. Mr. Jan Ali Junejo, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
7. Mr. Muhammad Hasan (Akber), Advocate General, Sindh
8. Mr. Muhammad Jaffer Raza, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
9. Mr. Muhammad Osman Ali Hadi, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
10. Mr. Nisar Ahmed Bhanbhro, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
11. Mr. Riazat Ali Sahar, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
12. Syed Fiaz ul Hassan Shah, advocate at the Supreme Court of Pakistan
The commission considered 46 candidates vying for the 12 vacant posts. The list included four female candidates - two lawyers and two district and sessions judges (DSJs). The JCP considered the overall performance of all candidates. At a recent meeting on appointment of judges to the Islamabad High Court, the commission examined the overall performance of the candidates, with a focus on their case disposal rate.

Pak,
Azerbaijan
for...

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business and tourism purposes, marking a 25% increase from the previous year's figure of 55,000 travellers. The Minister highlighted the deep-rooted ties between the two countries, saying that Azerbaijan was keen on further enhancing bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in the fields of energy, business, and culture. He said that both nations had supported each other through challenging times and expressed gratitude for Pakistan's political support to Azerbaijan which, he said, would always be remembered by the people of Azerbaijan.

Pak-
Azerbaijan..

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delivery, and social innovations. Both sides discussed mutual areas of cooperation with significant progress made in finalizing bilateral protocols, the press release added. On the occasion, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ms. Sabina Qureshi emphasized the importance of the JC in fostering stronger ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. According to the press release, the finalization of the protocols will lead to tangible outcomes and pave the way for deeper cooperation. A plenary meeting, to be co-chaired by Minister for Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Minister for Defence Industry of Azerbaijan, Vugar Valeh oglu Mustafayev is scheduled on 24 Jan 2025.

'Look Africa'
policy...

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an essential element in restoring international legitimacy," Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said at her weekly press briefing. He said that Pakistan welcomed the initiation of the Gaza ceasefire and the subsequent release of hostages and Palestinian prisoners which was achieved through the mediatory efforts of Egypt, Qatar, and the United States. He said that Pakistan continued to support the two-state solution based on the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, resolutions of the UN Security Council, and decisions of the International Court of Justice.

Shehbaz
phones...

FROM PAGE 01
nation was saddened by this news and was praying for the departed souls and for the speedy recovery of those injured. The Prime Minister assured President Erdogan that the people of Pakistan stood in full solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Turkey in their hour of grief. The Prime Minister lauded the swift response by the Turkish authorities in dealing with the unfortunate incident and offered to extend any assistance that may be needed in this regard.

Briefs

Pakistan exhibit rich heritage, tourism potential in Kish Expo

TEHRAN: The Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran participated in the Kish Expo 2025, showcasing the country's vibrant business development capabilities, rich cultural heritage, and diverse tourism opportunities. Held on Kish Island, the event provided a prominent platform for Pakistan to connect with international businesses and investors, fostering collaboration and promoting its economic growth potential, according to a press release issued on Thursday. This event aims to showcase the vast potential of the region across various commercial, investment, and industrial sectors, offering a unique platform for collaboration and partnership between Iranian and international businesses. The embassy's participation highlighted Pakistan's strong commitment to enhancing bilateral ties, strengthening economic partnerships, and promoting cultural exchange. A variety of initiatives were showcased at the event, reflecting Pakistan's dynamic tourism industry and its commitment to fostering sustainable development and investment opportunities across various sectors. This engagement aligns with the embassy's continued efforts to facilitate economic diplomacy, expand trade relations, and introduce Pakistan's cultural and tourism treasures to a global audience.—APP

Second Iraqi Medical moot begins in Dubai

DUBAI: The Second Iraqi Medical Conference, held under the patronage of Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, is set to commence tomorrow, Friday, with the participation of an elite group of doctors and researchers from Iraq and around the world. The conference serves as an ideal platform for scientific collaboration and the development of future medical technologies, reflecting the UAE's role as a global hub for science, scientists, and supporting excellence. The conference, set to take place at the Mohammed Bin Rashid library on 24-25 January 2025, will discuss the latest medical advancements in key areas, such as Medical Genomics and its role in personalised medicine and treating genetic diseases; Artificial Intelligence and its applications in diagnosis and treatment; and internet of Health and enhancing remote patient health monitoring.—APP

Egyptian, Russian presidents discuss establishment of Russian industrial zone

MOSCOW: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation on 21st January, as reported by the press service of the Egyptian leader, according to tv BRICS. The parties considered international and regional issues of mutual interest. In addition, the heads of state discussed the expansion of ties between Moscow and Cairo in the field of economy, trade, agriculture, and in the humanitarian sphere. Putin and Al-Sisi paid special attention to the implementation of major joint projects, including the construction of Egypt's first nuclear power plant El Dabaa with Russian participation and the creation of a Russian industrial zone in the Suez Canal area. The presidents also expressed interest in further strengthening Russian-Egyptian relations. The countries signed an agreement on the creation of a special zone with a facilitated tax regime for Russian resident enterprises in the east of the Egyptian city of Port Said in 2018.—APP

Trump halts refugee arrivals in crackdown

In his executive order, he said he was suspending refugee admissions as of January 27 and ordered a report on how to change the program, in part by giving "greater involvement" to states and local jurisdictions, which he said were being "inundated"

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has halted arrivals of refugees already cleared to enter the United States, according to a memo seen Wednesday, as he quickly pursues a sweeping crackdown on migration. Following an executive order signed Monday hours after Trump took office, "all previously scheduled travel of refugees to the United States is being cancelled," said a State Department email to groups working with new arrivals. The memo asked the UN International Organization for Migration not to move refugees to transit centers and said that all processing on cases has also been suspended. Refugees already resettled in the United States will continue to receive services as planned, it said. Trump in each of his presiden-

tial campaigns has run on promises to crack down on undocumented immigration. But the refugee move also targets a legal pathway for people fleeing wars, persecution or disasters. In his executive order, he said he was suspending refugee admissions as of January 27 and ordered a report on how to change the program, in part by giving "greater involvement" to states and local jurisdictions, which he said were being "inundated." It also revoked his predecessor Joe Biden's decision to consider the impact of climate change in refugee admissions. Trump said during his election campaign that immigrants were "poisoning the blood of our country" and earlier rose to prominence questioning the citizenship of Barack Obama, the first African-American

president. New Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, said Wednesday that the State Department will "no longer undertake any activities that facilitate or encourage mass migration." "Our diplomatic relations with other countries, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, will prioritize securing America's borders, stopping illegal and destabilizing migration and negotiating the repatriation of illegal immigrants," Rubio said in a statement. Biden had embraced the refugee program as a way to support people in need through legal means. In the 2024 fiscal year, more than 100,000 refugees resettled in the United States, the most in three decades. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Myanmar have

been among the top sources of refugees in recent years. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, voiced alarm at Trump's moves and said that acceptance of refugees was "a core American value." "The US Refugee Admissions Program has a long history of bipartisan support and is a life-saving tool for the most vulnerable refugees, all while making Americans safer by promoting stability around the world," she said. The State Department memo said that Afghans who worked with the United States until the collapse of the Western-backed government in 2021 could still arrive through their separate resettlement pro-

gram. But Shaheen voiced concern that Afghans were also being left in limbo with flights cancelled. The UN High Commissioner for refugees estimates that there are 37.9 million refugees in the world, among some 122.6 million displaced people. Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Global Refuge, which advocates for refugees, said that Trump's decision was "devastating" to people who had already lost so much. "Refugees go through one of the most rigorous vetting processes in the world, and it's heartbreaking to see their dreams of safety derailed just days before, or in some cases, just hours before they were set to begin their new lives here," she said.—Agencies

Germany faces long wait for new government after vote

BERLIN: German voters head to the polls in a winter election next month, but likely will not have a new government until well into the spring. Arduous coalition talks tend to drag on for weeks if not months in Germany, spelling long stretches of political paralysis before a new chancellor takes charge. In Berlin, a balking in-tray of challenges awaits the next leader, from a stagnating economy to the Ukraine war and Donald Trump's return to the White House. Current polls give the conservative CDU-CSU opposition of Friedrich Merz a strong lead over embattled Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD).—APP

UK probes Apple, Google competitiveness over mobiles

LONDON: Britain on Thursday opened investigations into the competitiveness of technology used by US giants Apple and Google in mobile devices. The Competition and Markets Authority said its "strategic market status" investigations would assess "mobile ecosystems" that include operating systems, app stores and browsers. Apple and Google said they would work alongside the CMA, insisting that they support choice in the market. The regulator's chief executive Sarah Cardell said "more competitive mobile ecosystems could foster new innovations and new opportunities across a range of services that millions of people use". The regulator added in a statement that it would reach decisions on its investigations by the end of October. The CMA noted that "virtually all mobile devices sold in the UK are pre-installed with either" Apple's iOS operating system or Google's Android. In addition, their "app stores and browsers have either exclusive or leading positions on their platforms compared to alternative products and services". "This means Apple and Google are also able to exert considerable influence over much of the content, services and technological development provided on a mobile device," it said. The CMA announcement comes after it launched last week an investigation into Google's dominant position in the search engine market and its impacts on consumers and businesses. "We will continue to engage constructively with the CMA as their work on this matter progresses." The CMA noted that 94 percent of people in Britain over 16 years old, or about 56 million consumers, have access to a smartphone on which they spend an average of three hours per day.—APP

UK teen faces sentencing over murders that sparked riots

LIVERPOOL: A UK judge is due on Thursday to sentence a teenager who murdered three young girls in a stabbing spree last year that sparked the country's worst riots in over a decade. Axel Rudakubana, 18, pleaded guilty earlier this week to the killings at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in Southport, northwest England, as well as to 10 counts of attempted murder and possessing a blade. He also admitted producing a biological toxin - ricin - and possessing an Al-Qaeda training manual. Judge Julian Goose is scheduled to sentence the teenager at Liverpool Crown Court from 11:00 am (1100 GMT), after his guilty plea on Monday halted his impending trial. Goose has warned that Rudakubana faces a long custodial sentence. Rudakubana's multiple appearances in court to date have been marked by his uncooperative behaviour, repeatedly refusing to speak and declining to stand in court on Monday, where he muttered "guilty" to each of the charges. Family members of the victims are expected in court for the sentencing. The teenager's rampage in July shocked people in the UK.—APP

NAVY takes over Command of Combined Task Force-151 for 11th time

BAHRAIN: Pakistan Navy has assumed command of Multinational Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) from Turkish Navy during a Change of Command Ceremony held at HQ US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie of Pakistan Navy took over the command from Rear Admiral Rustu Sezer of Turkish Navy. Speaking on the occasion, the Commander of Combined Task Force-151 (CTF-151), Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie, assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this challenging responsibility efficiently. He emphasized Pakistan Navy's belief in collaborative efforts to maintain security and stability, ensuring uninterrupted flow of maritime traffic through this critical region. He added that Pakistan Navy's active participation in CMF's maritime security efforts reflects this commitment. Commodore Sohail also appreciated and congratulated the outgoing Commander, Rear Admiral



Rustu Sezer, and his team for their dedicated efforts in achieving the objectives during their tenure. Pakistan Navy holds the unique distinction of commanding CTF-151 for the eleventh time. In July last year, Pakistan Navy also assumed command of

CTF-150 for the thirteenth time. These achievements reflect Pakistan Navy's dedication to maritime peace and stability in the region and the trust placed in it by partner nations. The Change of Command Ceremony was attended by the Ambassador

of Pakistan to Bahrain, Mr. Saqib Rauf; the Ambassador of Turkey to Bahrain, Mrs. Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak; the Commander of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff; Deputy Commander.—Agencies

Pakistan-China Friendship hospital holds 1st blood bank camp

ISLAMABAD: China-aided Pak-China Friendship Hospital held first ever blood donation camp to meet the demand of blood for Gwadar and rest of region through blood transfusion services. In the camp, inaugurated by Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), free blood grouping, screening facilities were provided to every blood donor. The donated blood will be issued to emergency patients as well as other needy people suffering from thalassemia and cancer. GDA Chairman Shafkat Anwar Shahwani also switched on Cryofuge Machine on the occasion. Head of PCFH Dr. Affan in his briefing to GDA said that the blood camp aimed to provide blood and blood products to patients without any discrimination, minimize the concept of replacement donation by ensuring a continuous supply of blood through voluntary blood donation in blood bank, create awareness about the significance of blood donation in various segments of society and motivate people including officials of government and students of educational institutions. In case of an emergency, he said, it is always blood that takes precedence. Such blood donation camps should be organized at regular intervals to meet the rising demand, he added. GDA official told Gwadar Pro that since every day many women die of pregnancy or childbirth-related complications, "Severe bleeding during delivery and after childbirth is a major cause of mortality, morbidity and long-term disability. The blood camp organized by PCFH is to make people understand the need of timely access to safe blood and blood products as part of a comprehensive approach to prevent maternal deaths.—APP

Govt committed to ensuring economic stability: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) for an interactive session with foreign investors and business leaders. The session focused on the government's initiatives aimed at economic stabilization and enabling a conducive business environment in Pakistan said a news release issued by OICCI. Pakistani cuisine recipes During the session Ahsan Iqbal provided an in-depth overview of the government's economic agenda, highlighting Uraan Pakistan - The 5Es National Economic Transformation Plan. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to reforms aimed at addressing investor challenges and fostering sustainable growth. Ahsan Iqbal said, "The government is committed to ensuring economic stability and fostering a predictable policy environment for investors. Through initiatives like Uraan Pakistan, we aim to unlock the country's potential and transform it into a hub for innovation and investment." He appreciated the contribution of leading foreign investors, particularly OICCI members, who have played a pivotal role in Pakistan's economic development. Over the past decade, they have re-invested \$23 billion while also leading the transfer of best practices to the country. Yousaf Hussain, President OICCI, commended the government's efforts to stabilize the economy and foster a business-friendly environment for foreign investors. "The focus on structural reforms and economic revival is a positive step forward. We remain optimistic and look forward to continued collaboration to further strengthen Pakistan's position as an investment destination," he added. Pakistani cuisine recipes. Abdul Aleem, Secretary-General OICCI, acknowledged the progress made and stressed the importance of policy continuity to maintain investor confidence.—Agencies

Slovenia cannot allow illegal annexation of West Bank: FM

NEW YORK CITY: Throughout the first year of its two-year stint as an elected member of the UN Security Council, the primary world body tasked with maintaining international peace and security, Slovenia was relentless in pressing for a permanent ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in Gaza. During the 15 months of war, Ljubljana's representatives also intensified their calls to scale up deliveries of humanitarian aid to the starving population of the territory, while at the same time engaging in serious discussions about ways in which the implementation of a two-state solution might be expedited. Slovenia itself officially recognized Palestine as a state in June last year. "I'm very proud that Slovenia was on the right side of history with the recognition of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine," the country's foreign minister, Tanja Fajon, told media. She said she is watching developments on the ceasefire front with "hope and relief," albeit with the awareness that the situation is "very fragile." All stakeholders in the region will have to commit to the agreement during all of its upcoming phases, she added, until it leads to a "permanent" cessation of hostilities and the dawn of long-awaited peace in the wider region. During a chat with Arab News on the sidelines of a high-level meeting of the Security Council this week to discuss developments in the Middle East, Fajon said atrocities committed in Gaza during the conflict could amount to genocide. On Jan. 26 last year, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's actions in Gaza could amount to genocide, and set out six provisional measures with which Israel should comply to protect Palestinians in the territory from the threat of genocide. These measures included ensuring the sufficient provision of humanitarian assistance, and enabling the delivery of basic services. Amnesty International has accused Israeli authorities of failing to take "even the bare minimum steps to comply" with the court's ruling. In November, the UN-backed International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the former defense minister, Yoav Gallant, as well as a former Hamas commander, citing allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. ICC Judges said there were reasonable grounds to believe that Netanyahu and Gallant bear criminal responsibility, as co-perpetrators, for the war crime of using starvation as a method of warfare, and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution and other inhumane acts. Several countries that are signatories to the ICC ignored its findings, with some stating they would refuse to abide by the arrest warrant. These and other instances of disregard for international law have led many around the world to lament that the international system, of which the ICJ and ICC stand as main pillars, now lies in tatters. As Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN Relief and Works Agency, the largest aid organization for Palestine refugees, told Arab News last week, the war in Gaza is a "crisis of impunity." He said: "What we have witnessed is an extraordinary 'crisis of impunity,' to the extent that international humanitarian law is almost becoming irrelevant if no mechanism is put in place to address this impunity." However, Fajon, whose country prides itself on the enshrinement of international law as the main pillar of its foreign policy, said she remains "strongly convinced that there is no alternative to the world order, the UN Charter, international law and international humanitarian law." She continued: "We need this organization (the UN.) We need multilateralism to be effective." There is a global consensus that there should be no impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. But to successfully prosecute these crimes in national courts, effective cooperation and collaboration among governments is essential.—DNA

Pakistan urges bold steps to address alarming situation in Haiti

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan Wednesday called for developing a robust plan of action with leader of Haiti that can respond to "alarming" situation in the Caribbean country, where a political transition process to restore democratic institutions continues against a backdrop of ongoing gang violence, mainly in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Haiti remains in turmoil," Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council meeting on the deteriorating situation in the country. "With every passing day, Haiti appears to be descending further into a maelstrom created by prolonged political instability, deteriorating security, and an escalating humanitarian crisis," he said, noting that all three facets

were interlinked. At the same time, the Pakistani envoy said that the Haitian political leadership bears the primary responsibility to chart a clear course for the future of their country and instill hope among its people. "A Haitian-led and Haitian-owned process is essential to establish sustainable security and address the humanitarian challenges," he added. The widespread violence in Haiti, apart from the gang violence, being perpetrated by vigilante or 'self defence' groups, mob killings, lynching of alleged gang members and people involved in minor crimes, including children is fast engulfing the entire Haitian society, Ambassador Akram said, while calling for preventing the flow of arms to the gangs and others violent groups. "The intri-

cate mix of political and security challenges in Haiti have exacerbated the humanitarian situation marked by growing food insecurity, lack of health and education facilities for the children in Haiti", he said, while pointing out the rising numbers of internally displaced people as well as deportations of Haitians from the regional countries. "We remain particularly concerned by the disproportionate impact of the current situation on women and children." Ambassador Akram commended Kenya, Jamaica, Bahamas, Belize and Guatemala for contributing their personnel to the UN Security Council-backed Multinational Security Support mission (MSS) deployed to deal with the surging Haiti

violence. "We welcome the recent deployment of 150 security personnel from Guatemala and 200 additional troops from Kenya," he said. "The regional countries, including major powers in the region, must assume the primary responsibility for extending support and providing necessary financial aid to Haiti. "Clearly, what is required is a deep analysis and development of a robust, comprehensive, and a well considered plan of action evolved with Haitian leaders that can respond to the complex challenges facing Haiti," the Pakistani envoy added. Earlier, the Special Representative and Head of the UN office in Haiti, Maria Isabel Salvador, updated the 15-member Council on the situation in the country, where

a political transition process to restore democratic institutions continues against a backdrop of ongoing gang violence, mainly in the capital, Port-au-Prince. "At this crucial time, Haiti needs your continued support more than ever," she said, speaking from the Haitian capital. "In order to organize a constitutional revision process and credible, participative and inclusive elections in this crisis context, Haitian actors must overcome their differences and work together," she added. Ms. Salvador reported on recent developments, including the appointment of a new Prime Minister in November which has led to improved collaboration between the Transitional Presidential Council and the current Government.—Agencies

Briefs

Demolition of bunkers in Kurram resumes

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The phased-wise demolition of tribal bunkers in the Kurram district will resume on today (Friday), said official sources on Thursday. As per further details, a convoy of 61 supply vehicles has reached Parachinar, while another convoy is scheduled to depart on January 24. Sources revealed that the demolition process will restart on Friday as part of ongoing efforts to ensure peace in the region. Additionally, over the next three days, a tribal assembly will be held involving peace committee members and signatories of the provincial government-led peace agreement. Under the peace agreement, arrangements are being finalized for the collection of weapons from all parties involved. The agreement stipulates that the state will take strict action against any disruptors of peace.

Zartaj Gul criticizes new bill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member of the National Assembly Zartaj Gul has expressed concerns over the new bill being passed. She says it will allow the government to imprison anyone who opposes it on social media. Speaking to the media after a session, she stated that the newly passed PECA Act Amendment Bill introduces harsh penalties for social media users who criticise the government. Under this law, people could face up to three years in prison and fines as high as Rs 30 lakh. She questioned, "Are you trying to silence everyone in Pakistan and not allow anyone to speak against the government?" She explained that under the new law, any social media influencer, activist, journalist, or even a regular mobile phone user who exposes the government's failures could be labelled an opponent and penalised. Zartaj Gul argued that this would result in the suppression of free speech, with activists being labelled as terrorists or anti-state. She added, "You want to label every activist as anti-state and silence everyone. No one could express their views or criticise the government anymore."

Imran to have call with sons

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has directed authorities to allow the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan to speak with his sons over the phone, Express News reported. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case related to Imran's requests for various facilities while in prison, including access to a personal physician, meetings with his wife, and phone calls with his children. During the hearing, the court directed that Khan's wife and political leaders should be allowed to visit him according to jail rules. Furthermore, a phone call with Imran's sons and medical treatment by his personal doctor were ordered. The court also inquired about the procedure for allowing Khan's wife to visit, considering she is now a convicted individual, and asked for clarification on the process for his sons' calls and medical treatment. The court instructed the Assistant Superintendent of Jail to obtain clarification from the Superintendent of Adiala Jail and provide a response by Monday. Imran's lawyer, Faisal Chaudhry, informed the court that despite earlier orders, some of the granted facilities had been revoked. He further requested permission for immediate meetings with Imran. The case will be revisited on January 27.

Ethiopia, Pakistan sign MoU to hold political consultation

On the occasion, Ambassador Mesganu said Ethiopia is keen to enhance its bilateral ties and cooperation with Pakistan in a range of areas

DNA

ADDIS ABABA: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Thursday to conduct a political consultation in a bid to advance the existing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. State Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the FDR Ethiopia, Ambassador Mesganu Arga and, Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan signed the MoU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On the occasion, Ambassador Mesganu said Ethiopia is keen to enhance its bilateral ties and cooperation with Pakistan in a range of areas, including agriculture, investment, trade, aviation, industry and science, and technology, among others. He also reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to the principle of South-South cooperation. Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan emphasized the importance of deepening bilateral relations in various fields. The Ambassador mentioned that the direct flight of Ethiopian Airlines to Karachi has played a key role in further strengthening the ties between the two countries.



NDMA Pakistan participates in RCC forum in Thailand

DNA

ISLAMABAD: NDMA Pakistan's delegation, headed by Chairman NDMA, participated in the 18th meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) in Bangkok, Thailand today. Two day RCC meeting from 23 - 24 January, 2025, is being co-hosted by Government of Thailand and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). Regional Consultative Committee is a regional forum to promote consultation and cooperation in reducing disaster and climate change risk in Asia and the Pacific region. The theme of this year's RCC meeting is "Sustainable Anticipatory Actions for Resilient Development Goals", which strongly resonates with NDMA Pakistan's proactive Disaster Risk management (DRM) approach to timely anticipate disasters through advance technologies and taking appropriate actions to reduce losses. Chairman NDMA Lt. Gen Inam Haider Malk HM(I) participated as a keynote speaker in the technical session on Financial Mechanisms and Investments - Climate Finance, Investment for Resilience Building, Disaster Risk Finance today.

ICC prosecutor seeks arrest warrants of Taliban leaders

ICC judges will now consider Khan's application before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant - a process that could take weeks or even months

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The International Criminal Court's (ICC) chief prosecutor on Thursday said he was seeking arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders in Afghanistan over the persecution of women, a crime against humanity. Karim Khan said in a statement that there were reasonable grounds to suspect that Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani "bear criminal responsibility for the crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds". Khan said that Afghan women and girls, as well as the LGBTQ community, were facing "An unprecedented, unconscionable and ongoing persecution by the Taliban." "Our action signals that the status quo for women and girls in Afghanistan is not acceptable," added Khan. ICC judges will now consider Khan's application before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant - a process that could take weeks or even months. The court, based in The Hague, was set up to rule on the world's worst crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity. It has no police force of its own and relies on its 125 member states to carry out its arrest warrants - with mixed results. In theory, this means that anyone subject to an ICC arrest warrant cannot travel to a member state for fear of being detained. Khan warned he would soon be seeking additional applications for other Taliban officials. The prosecutor noted other crimes against humanity were being committed as well as persecution. "Perceived resistance or opposition to the Taliban was, and is, brutally repressed through the commission of crimes including

murder, imprisonment, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance, and other inhumane acts," he said. Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that the prosecutor's actions should put the Taliban's exclusion of women and girls from public life back on the international community agenda. "Three years after the Taliban retook power, their systematic violations of women and girls' rights ... have accelerated with complete impunity," said Liz Evenson, HRW's international justice director. After sweeping back to power in August 2021, the Taliban authorities pledged a softer rule than their first stint in power from 1996-2001. But they quickly imposed restrictions on women and girls that the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid".



SC reserves verdict in judicial powers case

Current bench doesn't have authority to hear contempt of court case, says AGP Awan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its judgment in the contempt of court case against Additional Registrar Nazar Abbas in the bench powers case. A two-member bench of the Supreme Court heard the contempt of court case against the additional registrar for not scheduling the bench powers case for hearing. The issue at hand relates to the erred fixing of cases - which included a challenge to the vires of Custom Act 1969 - by Additional Registrar (Judicial) Nazar

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

of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023. Keeping in view the serious nature of lapse the committee convened on January 17 under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). The committee noted that Clause 3 of Article 191A of the Constitution read with Clause 5 of Article 191A of the Constitution expressly vests such jurisdiction in the constitutional bench and none other. The committee, therefore, withdrew these cases from the regular bench and directed that the same should be placed before the constitutional bench committee constituted under Article 191A of the Constitution for re-fixation. The issue has also led to Justice Shah, Justice Ayesha A Malik and Justice Aqeel writing a letter to CJP Yahya Afridi the head of the constitutional bench Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan about the issue regarding the formation of benches. Today's hearing: During the proceedings, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah questioned whether a judicial order could be reversed by the judges' committee. Amicus curiae Hamid Khan said that an administrative order could not override a judicial order.

Naqvi hails Trump as symbol of peace

WASHINGTON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has stated that President Donald Trump's address is certainly encouraging for global peace and conflict resolution, and that President Trump has become a beacon of hope for peace worldwide. In Washington, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held separate meetings with US Congressmen Joe Wilson and Rob Wittman. During these meetings, they discussed matters of mutual interest and the promotion of Pakistan-US relations. During the discussions, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured full cooperation at all levels for the advancement of Pakistan-US relations and extended an invitation to Congressmen Joe Wilson and Rob Wittman to visit Pakistan. Naqvi emphasized that Pakistan and the US have a longstanding relationship and that the US is an important strategic partner for Pakistan, Express News reported. - DNA

Russia ready for 'respectful dialogue' to end Ukraine war

US president Donald Trump says Russia will face "high levels of taxes, tariffs and sanctions" if President Vladimir Putin does not end the war in Ukraine

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia says it remains "ready for an equal dialogue, a mutually respectful dialogue", reacting to US President Donald Trump's threat to impose sanctions against Moscow if it did not "stop this ridiculous war" in Ukraine. "We're waiting for signals that are yet to arrive," says President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov. He adds that Russia sees nothing new in Donald Trump's threats to impose sanctions. "He likes these methods, at least he liked them during his first presidency." The response comes after a comment yesterday from Russia's deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy, who says the Kremlin would need to know what Trump wants in a deal to end the war before taking any further steps. US president Donald Trump says Russia will face "high levels of taxes, tariffs and sanctions" if President Vladimir Putin does not end the war in Ukraine. Trump begins the post, external on his Truth Social platform expressing his "love" for the Russian people and his "good relationship" with Putin, and then issues a direct warning to "STOP this ridiculous War!" He writes: "IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE. If we don't make a deal, and soon, I have no other choice but to put high levels

of Taxes, Tariffs, and Sanctions on anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other participating countries." "It's time to 'MAKE A DEAL. NO MORE LIVES SHOULD BE LOST,'" he adds. Russia is already the most sanctioned country in the world, and there are very few key entities or sectors that are not already subject to US and European restrictions. Russian banks and military-industrial enterprises have adapted, and developed workarounds to evade existing sanctions. As US President Donald Trump launched a 100-day effort to end the war in Ukraine, Kyiv's long-range weapons were devastating the heart of Russia's war effort - its oil depots, weapons storages and factories. "Trump took the oath of office on Monday, saying success would be measured 'not just by the battles that we win, but also by the wars that we end and perhaps most importantly, the wars we never get into'. That was a reference to his oft-stated belief that the administration of his predecessor, former US President Joe Biden, erred in allowing the Ukraine war to begin, and his vow to end it quickly. Trump's special envoy, retired US General Keith Kellogg, has set himself a 100-day challenge to achieve a ceasefire. Russian President Vladimir Putin held an unprecedented National Security Council meeting on Trump's inaugura-

tion day, repeating his willingness to enter negotiations. He said a solution should remove the root causes of the war - a reference to NATO's eastward expansion. Sergei Ryabkov, Russian deputy foreign minister, said on Wednesday that the Trump administration presented an opportunity for agreement. "Compared to the pessimism under the previous US president, today, there is a small chance of opportunities," he said at an academic event in Moscow. On Wednesday, Trump threatened to put "high levels of taxes, tariffs, and sanctions on anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other participating countries" should Moscow fail to agree on a "deal" to end the conflict. "Settle now, and stop this ridiculous war," he wrote on his Truth Social platform, addressing Putin. "It's only going to get worse." As these developments of high politics unfolded, Ukraine was smashing through Russian aerial defences and burning some of the enemy's ability to wage war. That campaign of strategic interdiction was visibly weakening the Russian war effort, said Ukrainian commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrskii. "Over several months now, the normal consumption of artillery ammunition by the Russian army has actually been halved," he told TSN, a Ukrainian television network. "If earlier this figure

reached 40,000 per day, now it is much lower. "These strikes reduce the ability of Russian troops to maintain a high intensity of combat operations," he added. During the past week, Ukraine scored several hits. "This oil depot provides fuel to the Russian military," they said. Geolocated footage showed the refinery burning that day. Andriy Kovalenko, head of Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation, said drones also struck the Tambov Gunpowder Plant in Kuzmino-Gat. The plant produces gunpowder and nitrocellulose for use in rocket systems, artillery shells and other systems, he said. On Saturday, Ukraine's General Staff said Kyiv's drones struck a petroleum products storage facility in Russia's Tula region, setting it alight. The facility supplied Russia's armed forces, the staff said. Ukrainian drones also struck a Rosneft oil depot in the Kaluga region that supplied the military. On the same day, saboteurs set fire to a locomotive in St Petersburg, destroying it, said Ukraine's Defense Intelligence Service (GUR). The engine was used to ferry war material, the GUR said. Ukraine has been deploying foot soldiers in its behind-enemy-lines campaign to destroy Russian equipment. On Trump's inauguration day, Kovalenko said, Ukrainian drones struck the Gorbunov Aircraft Plant in Kazan.

IHC seeks FIA response on Khan's plea

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a notice to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) regarding acquittal pleas filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the new Toshakhana case. The court has sought the FIA's response on the matter and adjourned the hearing until January 28. Justice Raja Inam Amin Minhas presided over the hearing on the acquittal requests. During the proceedings, Khan's counsel, Salman Safdar, requested the court to stay the trial proceedings. Justice Raja Inam, however, declined the request, saying: "There is no judicial precedent for staying criminal proceedings at this stage. We will issue a notice on your request and hear the other party." Safdar also requested a change of bench, suggesting that Justice Gul Hassan Aurangzeb, who had previously heard related petitions, should preside over the acquittal pleas. Justice Inam rejected the request, clarifying that those cases involved bail applications, whereas the current matter pertains to acquittal pleas. "Those were bail applications, which is a separate matter. This court will hear this case. Present your arguments on the merits of the case," he said. Safdar further argued that the trial court proceedings should be halted due to conflicting court orders. Justice Inam responded: "Charges have already been framed in the trial court, and witnesses' statements are being recorded. It would not be appropriate to halt the proceedings at this stage. We will issue a notice and won't delay the matter for very long."

Sarim case: Two more taken into custody

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Police took two into custody on Thursday in a case pertaining to the alleged rape and murder of Sarim, who was found dead in a water tank 11 days after he went missing in North Karachi. According to Karachi police officials, the two men were taken in custody from the apartment where the seven-year-old boy's body was discovered days earlier. Police will complete the investigation of the two suspect and will send their blood samples for testing later today, the official said, adding that the investigative committee will be accompanied by IT experts to cover all bases of the case. It is worth noting here that Karachi police has taken a total of nine people in custody after Sarim's body was recovered from an underground water tank. Sarim's family had filed a missing person's report, fearing abduction, after he failed to return from a nearby madrasa on January 7. The authorities had conducted an extensive search operation in the apartment complex, searching all 212 flats and checking the building's four water tanks.

Imran Khan restrains Marwat to represent him

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder has restrained Sher Afzal Marwat from representing him in court cases. The PTI's founder has also prohibited the jail administration from Marwat's visit in jail to meet him. Sher Afzal Marwat, a firebrand PTI leader, had visited Adiala Jail for meeting with the party's founder. The jail officials told Marwat that the PTI founder has directed them that Sher Afzal Marwat has not been his lawyer, he should not be allowed entry in jail. Judge Shahrukh Arjumand, who is hearing the case against the party's founder, has made his instructions as part of the case record.