

Islamabad POST

Friday, January 17, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30



UK will 'never let up' on Ukraine support: Starmer

Detailed News On Page-08

Enemy will not defeat our people and our resistance

Detailed News On Page-08



Sinner fights back to continue AO title defence

Detailed News On Page-06



Slams bid to drag judges

Govt says PTI demands carry no relevance

Rans Sana, Irfan Siddique hold presser; May 9 is a close and shut case, needs no further probe; ask PTI to provide list of missing persons of November 24 and 27

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formed a committee comprising members from all ruling parties to review demands submitted by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), said PM's aide on political affairs Rana Sanaullah on Thursday. Flanked by the government's negotiation committee head Senator Irfan Siddique, Sanaullah addressed a press conference in Islamabad to brief the media on a meeting between the PTI and the government's negotiation committees. Earlier today, the PTI finally presented its demands in writing, seeking probes into the May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024 events, as well as the release of "political prisoners". PTI's Charter of Demands, available with Geo News, also mentions that if the government fails to constitute two separate commissions on the violent events, the party will not continue the negotiations. The third meeting between the Imran Khan-founded PTI and the government was held at the Parliament House under National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's leadership, where the demands were presented. Sanaullah said the committee would review and respond to PTI's demands. Sanaullah said the committee will review and respond to PTI's demands. "For now I am presenting the initial opinion on the demands," said Sanaullah adding that the PTI demanded the release of its "political prisoners" and party founder Imran Khan. Speaking about the PTI demands to form the chief justice-led probe commission on May 9, 2023, violent protests and the November 26, 2024, crackdown on the party workers, Sanaullah said both matters had already been investigated.

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PTI demands CJP-led probe into May 9, Nov 26 events

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Thursday finally presented its demands in writing, seeking probes into the May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024 events, as well as the release of "political prisoners". PTI's Charter of Demands, says if the government fails to constitute two separate commissions on the violent events, the party will not continue the negotiations. In the three-page document, the PTI mentioned that the party and its allies have travelled through "blood and gore" and their leader Khan and thousands of our supporters have faced "unjustified imprisonment". The document mentioned that the party entered into negotiations with the "government installed in Islamabad" in order to take the fight for the people's rights onwards. "The Charter of Demands is presented as a prerequisite to wider negotiations with respect to the restoration of the constitution, the rule of law and respect for the people's

Continued on Page 06

22 terrorists killed in Khyber district

Security forces have killed these terrorists during separate operations since Dec 14

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The security forces have eliminated at least 22 terrorists in Tribal Khyber district since December 14, 2024, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. In a statement, the military's media wing mentioned that as of late, numerous terrorist incidents have occurred in the area against security forces as well as innocent civilians, resulting in several casualties. "In response to these heinous acts, security forces are conducting

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26th amend case SC bench dissolved

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah further stated that the case would now require a new bench to continue

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court bench hearing the 26th constitutional amendment case was dissolved during the proceedings. The case was being heard by a three-member bench, headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah. During the hearing, Justice Shah remarked that Justice Asad Ali Khan had previously delivered a verdict on this matter in the Sindh High Court, making it inappropriate to proceed with the case today (Thursday).

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Samar Khan scales South America's highest peak

"The climb was full of challenges, with one of the biggest being the extreme cold and harsh winds," says Khan

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistani adventurer Samar Khan successfully scaled Mount Aconcagua - the highest peak in South America, standing at 6,961 metres (22,837 feet), Khan, taking to Instagram, said she started her climb with an amazing team of nine strong women at 4:15am and reached the summit of the highest

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ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister and senior PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira meets Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, at the PM office on Thursday. - DNA

Welcomes Gaza ceasefire deal

Pakistan rubbishes Wakhan Corridor annexation reports

FO spokesperson says Islamabad recognises neighbouring country's sovereignty and territorial integrity

KHAYAM ABRARI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday categorically rejected the reports of any annexation of Wakhan Corridor, calling it a part of neighboring Afghanistan; however, it reiterated the call for the Afghan government to act against the terrorist groups enjoying sanctuaries across the border. "I have seen this endless speculation. Wakhan is part of Afghan territory. Afghanistan is a neighbouring country. We recognize its sovereignty and territorial integrity. There is no question of Pakistan having designs on one of its neighbors. I deem it speculative and totally erroneous actually," the newly appointed Foreign Office spokesperson Shafiq Ali Khan said in his maiden weekly press briefing. He said that both Pakistan and Afghanistan understood the importance of relations and wanted to nurture good ties but the key problem was the terrorists' sanctuaries on Afghan soil. He said both countries were in contact on the matter through an ongoing multilayered engagement.

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Soldier martyred as aid convoy attacked in Kurram

10 cargo trucks safely reached Alzai and remaining vehicles stopped in view of security risks, say sources

SHAMIM SHAHID

KURRAM: A soldier was martyred while six terrorists were killed after security forces retaliated to an attack on an aid convoy carrying essential goods for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's violence-marred district of Kurram, local administration said on Thursday. "A soldier is martyred and four others sustained injuries in the attack," said additional Deputy Commissioner Shaukat Ali, adding that three vehicles in the aid convoy were damaged. In response, security forces gave a befitting response to the attackers, killing six terrorists

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Briefs

ECP suspends 139 lawmakers

This happens after lawmakers failed to submit their asset declarations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has suspended the membership of 139 lawmakers from the National Assembly, provincial assemblies, and Senate for failing to submit their asset declarations. According to the ECP, Senators Abdul Qadir and Qasim were among those whose memberships have been suspended. The suspension also affected 16 members of the National Assembly and 98 members of the Punjab Assembly. Additionally, 33 members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 15 of the Sindh Assembly, and 5 of the Balochistan Assembly were suspended due to non-compliance with the requirement to file their asset declarations.

Ceasefire in Gaza marks defeat for Israel

He praised the resilience of the people of Gaza

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Hamas-led Islamic Emir, Hafiz Nasseem Rehman, stated the Gaza ceasefire agreement was a significant victory for the people of Gaza, stating that it marked not only Israel's defeat but also a setback for the United States. Commenting on the agreement, Hafiz Nasseem Rehman remarked, "Netanyahu had vowed to erase Hamas from existence, yet now Israel has been compelled to bow before Hamas and sign a truce." He added that Netanyahu initiated one of the bloodiest wars in the history of the Middle East but ultimately had to yield to Hamas.

Army denies PTI leaders claims

PTI's Gohar, Gandapur hold meeting with Army Chief

Security sources meanwhile have said that the meeting was held in the context of security situation; no political discussions took place during the meeting. The sources further said that Barrister Gohar tried to discuss politics however he was asked to take up political matters with politicians



MEHTEAR PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar said on Thursday that he had met Chief of Army Staff (CAS) General Asim Munir along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. PTI Chairman Gohar, speaking to journalists at the Adiala Jail courtroom, further confirmed that he had indeed met with the military chief after he kept on denying the meeting. Explaining what had transpired

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Verdict in £190m case against Imran, Bushra Bibi today

PTI founder's lawyers informed about announcement of judgment in high-profile case

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The much-anticipated verdict of the £190 million case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi is expected to be announced today (Friday) after being deferred thrice. The judgment - reserved on December 18, 2024 - will be announced by accountability court Judge Nasir Javed at 11:30am tomorrow at a makeshift

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Over 40 Pakistani migrants among dozens feared drowned

36 rescued from boat carrying 86 migrants including 66 Pakistanis

NEWS DESK

MADRID: As many as 50 migrants attempting to reach Spain by boat from West Africa may have drowned, migrant rights group Walking Borders said on Thursday. Moroccan authorities on Wednesday rescued 36 people from a boat that had departed from Mauritania on January 2, the group based in Madrid and Navarra said, and had carried 86 migrants, including 66 Pakistanis. The rights group said it had alerted authorities from all countries involved six days ago about the missing boat. The boat left for Spain on January 2, relatives of the drowned Pakistani migrants have said. According to them, the human traffickers had anchored the boat in the sea and were demanding more money from them. Alarm Phone, an NGO that provides an emergency phone line for migrants lost at sea, said it had alerted Spain's maritime rescue service on January 12. The service said it did not have any information about the boat. Citing the Walking Borders' post on social media platform X, the Canary Islands' regional leader Fernando Clavijo expressed his sorrow for the victims and urged Spain and Europe to act to prevent further tragedies. "The Atlantic cannot continue to be the graveyard of Africa," Clavijo said on X.

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Pakistan embassy activates crisis management unit

PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the loss of Pakistani lives in the migrant boat accident in Morocco

SAMFULLAH ANSAR

RABAT: A boat carrying 80 passengers, including several Pakistani nationals, setting off from Mauritania, has capsized near the Moroccan port of Dakkha. According to the Foreign Office, several survivors, including Pakistanis, are lodged in a camp near Dakkha. The Pakistan Embassy in Rabat is in touch with local authorities. Additionally, a team from the Embassy has been dispatched to Dakkha to facilitate the Pakistani nationals and provide necessary assistance. Besides, the Crisis Management Unit in

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China Navy to join AMAN-25 exercises: CIS paved Ashraf

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff of the Pakistan Navy, Admiral Naveed Ashraf has said that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has participated in all previous editions of AMAN exercises, and he expects that PLA Navy will participate in AMAN-25 and is looking forward to hosting PLA Navy leadership during the AMAN dialogue. In an exclusive interview with Global Times ahead of the AMAN-25 multinational exercise to be hosted by Pakistan Navy in early February in port city of Karachi, he said that the main objective of AMAN is to foster regional cooperation for the maintenance of good order at sea, improving interoperability, share experiences, understand each other, and exhibit united resolve against terrorism and organized crimes in the maritime domain. He said that the Pakistan Navy is fully prepared and geared up to conduct AMAN-25 with enhanced participation of friendly countries in a professional and helpful manner. It is worth noting that the previous edition of the exercise held in February 2023, which witnessed the participation from 50 countries across the globe. "Keeping the same spirit, we are hopeful that this edition will also mark a historic chapter in history of AMAN exercises with enhanced participation of friendly countries," Ashraf said. Ashraf revealed that the maiden AMAN Dialogue will be held in tandem with AMAN-25. The AMAN Dialogue aims to promote understanding in maritime security issues, finding ways to enhance cooperation at sea, and discussing security linked to

the blue economy." We have been honored by the regular participation of PLA Navy in all previous editions of AMAN exercises," Ashraf said, noting that this has added highlights to the exercise and is a reflection of the two countries' common resolve to come together for peace and security in the region. "Similarly, we expect that the PLA Navy will actively participate in AMAN-25 also with suitable representation. As I have mentioned earlier as well, the maiden AMAN Dialogue will also be conducted concurrently with Exercise AMAN. So, we are also looking forward to hosting PLA Navy leadership during the dialogue," he said. Official Chinese media releases previously reported that the PLA Navy's participation in the AMAN exercises further promoted the PLA Navy's maritime exchanges and cooperation with other participating navies, showing the determination to jointly safeguard maritime security, and boosted the capability in jointly dealing with maritime security threats. Aside from the AMAN series exercises hosted by the Pakistan Navy, China and Pakistan also regularly hold the Sea Guardian bilateral naval drills. The China-Pakistan Sea Guardian's maritime joint exercise was held in the waters and airspace of the northern Arabian Sea from November 11 to 17, 2023. In 2020 and 2022, the two countries held the Sea Guardian 2020 and Sea Guardian 2 joint exercises in the northern Arabian Sea waters and airspace near Shanghai respectively. The Sea Guardian joint exercises aim to enhance security cooperation between the two sides, consid-

erate all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, and boost the level of combat-oriented training of the two militaries. Speaking about the achievements the two sides have made from the Sea Guardian series drills, Ashraf said that Pakistan Navy/PLA Navy relations are a reflection of Pakistan-China strategic ties, which includes participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises. In this regard, the Sea Guardian series of exercises amply fall the objectives of fostering interoperability and sharing professional experiences to deal with contemporary traditional and non-traditional threats in the Indian Ocean region. Ashraf introduced the Sea Guardian sail exercise in detail. He said that the Pakistan Navy units along with PLA Navy frigates, submarine, and aviation units participated in the exercise. The exercise at sea included joint maneuvers, anti-aircraft, anti-air and anti-submarine drills. They "provided a useful opportunity to strengthen bilateral naval cooperation and enhance interoperability between two navies. Moreover, we expect that scope of the exercise will gradually increase in coming editions." In addition, as an important part of the China-Pakistan naval cooperation, all four Types 054A/P frigates built by China have been delivered to the Pakistan Navy. In May 2023, two Type 054A/P frigates built by China for the Pakistan Navy were delivered, marking that all four Type 054A/Ps ordered by the Pakistan Navy have been commissioned. The Type 054A/P is one of the latest multirole frigates of Chinese origin, equipped with the state-of-the-art weapons and sensors that include CM302 surface-to-air missiles and LY80 surface-to-air missiles.



ISLAMABAD-Jan16: Laborers are busy in their concern working during the construction project of Serena Interchange in Federal Capital.

Media urged to prioritize forced labour & migration reporting

FAISALABAD: Forced labour remains a significant challenge in Pakistan, with estimates suggesting that over three million people are trapped in exploitative conditions, speakers at a workshop said Thursday. This was highlighted at a two-day training workshop organized by International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the US Department of Labour (USDOL) in Faisalabad. The workshop was part of the BRIDGE Project, aimed at eradicating forced labour and promoting fair recruitment practices. The workshop brought together 30 journalists from print, electronic, radio, and digital media platforms. It was pointed out that migrant workers are particularly vulnerable, being three times more likely to experience forced labour compared to non-migrants. Over the past decade, more than 6.5 million Pakistanis have migrated abroad for employment, mainly to Gulf Cooperation Countries. —APP

Peshawar Digital Fest 2025 concludes with key opportunities for students

ISLAMABAD: The three-day Peshawar Digital Fest 2025, held from January 14 to 16 at the University of Agriculture, Peshawar, concluded on Thursday as one of the largest IT and entrepreneurial events in the country. The event featured a variety of activities, including sessions on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, IT training, digital marketing, e-commerce, and freelancing. It also included a Talent Award Show, hackathons, a job fair, startup stalls, and a food gala. Prominent IT and entrepreneurial companies like Veeva, RankingGrow, Let's Grow, and TechHub participated, providing a platform for networking and collaboration. Keynote speakers and experts from across the country delivered insightful sessions. Hisham Sarwar, CEO of Innovista, encouraged attendees to explore freelancing, sharing that one could earn up to \$500 monthly with basic skills. Hassan Nisar, founder and CEO of Metrics Pakistan, stressed the importance of cybersecurity and responsible digital engagement during his session on "Safe, Secure, and Responsible Cyberspace." Nisar shared his experience in fighting cyber threats and emphasized the need for secure online practices, having helped recover over 800 hacked accounts since 2020. The event attracted over 15,000 attendees, including students, entrepreneurs, and government officials, offering opportunities for skill development. Anamul Ali, CEO of RankingGrow, announced 50 job openings and 1,000 free digital marketing training sessions for students at the University of Agriculture, Peshawar. Similarly, Huzefa Behram, CEO of Let's Grow, offered 1,500 free e-commerce training sessions. The festival also saw the attendance of notable figures such as blogger Imad, CEO of Consulting 360 Bilal Farooq, former Senator Mushfiq Irfan from Veeva, and Ahmed Manzoor, MD of Pakistan Blockchain Institute, contributing valuable insights to the discussions.

Senate body opposes change to PPAF's numerical structure

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, chaired by Senator Sarfar Ali Hajji Muhammad Umar Gorgani, visited the BISP Headquarters and requested a comprehensive briefing on the performance of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). On this occasion, CEO PPAF, Naifur Gul Haque, informed that the PPAF was created to address the nation's multifaceted poverty challenges by engaging civil society and developing and strengthening the micro-financing sector. Primarily, he said that PPAF in collaboration with the civil society to cater the basic facilities of the community like health and education. Over the course of years, with a footprint in over 149 districts of Pakistan, PPAF has provided interest free loans to 3.2 million beneficiaries and inducted skill development in over 1.161 Million individuals. Likewise, PPAF has formed 150,000 community organizations and extended a helping hand to over 39,000 disabled persons. As far as the financial operations of the organization are concerned, the Government of Pakistan has provided One Billion Rupees as an endowment fund to sustain the organization's loan around 75.6 Billion Rupees granted by the World Bank and IFAD projects out of which 13.24 Billion has been repaid. Senator Aon Abbas raised concerns over the allegations of PPAF being included in Government rightising list.—APP

ISSI holds IHD on "Pakistan's Role as an elected member of the UNSC"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an In-House Discussion on "Pakistan's Role as an Elected Member of the UNSC" (2025-2026). Eminent practitioners and academics participated in the event. In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sabhat Mahmood highlighted the twin processes of turbulence and transformation in the global geopolitical landscape and the responsibility resting with members of the UN Security Council for rightfully fulfilling its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. He alluded to Pakistan's Security Council experience from the previous 7 terms, its core interests and priorities in the evolving global and regional environment, and its commitment to enhancing the role of Elected Members (EJM) in bridge-building amidst complex geopolitics. During the discussion, participants emphasized the importance of Pakistan constructively engaging in Council deliberations and making positive contributions — including through upholding international law and the UN Charter; supporting the right of self-determination; stressing the implementation of UNSC resolutions; advocating the peaceful settlement of disputes; increasing the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures; and strengthening the multi-dimensional peacekeeping under UN auspices. Pakistan's longstanding contributions to UN peacekeeping operations were highlighted as a source of national pride and a vital aspect of its global responsibilities. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of Pakistan's leadership in the UNSC platform to foster closer collaboration among the E-10 as well as positive outreach to P-5 to help facilitate common ground on divisive issues. Another key focus was preparing for future terms on the UNSC agenda with strategic clarity and foresight, particularly to give the rapidly evolving dynamics global and in several regions. The discussion concluded with a shared understanding that the UNSC membership offers Pakistan an excellent opportunity to help address pressing global challenges, advocate for the aspirations of developing nations, and uphold its commitment to international law and the UN Charter.

CDA chief inspects construction work on Serena Chowk, F-8 Interchanges

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Raza, along with the relevant officers, visited the F-8 and Serena Interchange projects and reviewed the ongoing construction activities at the sites. The relevant officers briefed Chairman CDA about the ongoing construction activities at the Serena Interchange project and informed him that construction work on all parts of the project is progressing rapidly. It was briefed that beautification and horticulture work around the Serena Interchange underpass is also underway, and the structural work of both underpasses at Springer Highway has entered its final stages. Chairman CDA directed that the finishing work of both underpasses at Springer Highway be completed and the underpasses be opened for traffic within this month. He also directed that modern and beautiful LED lights be installed permanently in the completed sections of the Serena Interchange project. Furthermore, he instructed that the landscaping and horticulture work around the project be completed soon. Meanwhile, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Raza also visited the F-8 Interchange project and inspected the construction activities there. The relevant officers briefed Chairman CDA on the ongoing construction activities at the site. During the briefing, Chairman CDA was informed that the grader launching work at the F-8 Interchange project is progressing rapidly, and the structural work of the flyover will be completed by the end of this month. —DNA

"Pakistan-South Africa friendship group meeting"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Pakistan-South Africa, Parliamentary Friendship Group, presided by Msa. Mishah Khar, Secretary of the Group, and chaired by Senator Syed Ali Zafar, was held at Parliament House. The meeting was attended by I.L.E. Mr. Mxolisi Phiso Radebe, Acting Commissioner of South Africa, I.L.E. Mr. Brian Wibisoni, Political Counselor of South Africa, and Senators Husna Bano, Khalida Atoeb, Jaa Muhammad, and Rubina Qaim Khani. The discussion reflected mutual respect, shared values, and a collective vision to strengthen cooperation. Senator Syed Ali Zafar in his opening remarks, warmly welcomed the South African representatives and highlighted the importance of fostering bilateral relations. Msa. Mishah Khar emphasized the need to form a strong

friendship group between the two countries and announced Pakistan's 5th Pak Trade Development event scheduled for May 2025, where South African representatives would be invited to participate. During the discussion, Senator Khalida Atoeb highlighted the strong cultural connection between the two countries, particularly through cricket, which serves as a unifying interest. She suggested that recollections of trade restrictions could lead to better outcomes for both nations and appreciated South Africa's stance on Gaza and their commitment to global human rights issues. Senator Husna Bano commended South Africa's collaboration with Pakistan in agriculture and stressed the potential for further partnership in high-quality textiles, surgical items, and technology. She highlighted the importance of supporting 200,000 Pakistani expatriates in the country who face challenges such as kidnapping for ransom and incidents of xenophobia. Senator Jaa Muhammad emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral ties and focusing on platforms such as BRICS and the G20 for mutual growth and collaboration. Senator Rubina Qaim Khani reiterated Pakistan's quest for South Africa's support in its BRICS membership and stressed the importance of the women parliamentarian ratio within South Africa. I.L.E. Mr. Mxolisi Phiso Radebe shared South Africa's commitment to diplomatic respect, strengthening bilateral relations, and fostering collaboration. He emphasized South Africa's growing global influence through BRICS and its recognition in trade and entrepreneurship. Addressing challenges like xenophobia and resource-based tensions, he underscored the need for grass-roots-level solutions and deeper engagement to address such issues effectively.

Revenue Division
Federal Board of Revenue
Government of Pakistan

REQUEST FOR BIDS

(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Procurement of VOIP (Contact Center) Solution & IP Telephony for FBR

Country: Pakistan
Project Title: Pakistan Raising Revenue Program
Loan No./Credit No./Grant No.: 6435-PK
RFB Reference No.: 2/2/2024-Add.Dir.P&F/ (PK/FBR-468943-GO-RFB
RFB Title: Procurement of VOIP (Contact Center) Solution & IP Telephony for FBR
Big Submission Date: 11th February, 2025
Big Submission Time: 11:30 AM

- The Federal Board of Revenue, Pakistan has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Pakistan Raising Revenue Program (PRRP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for VOIP (Contact Center) Solution & IP Telephony for FBR.
- The Federal Board of Revenue, Pakistan now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Procurement of VOIP (Contact Center) Solution & IP Telephony for FBR as further detailed hereto.

Sr.#	Item	Quantity
1-	Contact Center Solution	75 Concurrent Agents
2-	IP PBX	200
3-	Voice Gateways	2
4-	Physical Servers	2
5-	Call Recording	75 Agents
6-	Training on OEM ebc	2

- Bidding will be conducted through National competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IFP Borrowers" July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from address@fbr.gov.pk and inspect the bidding document during office hours **10:00 AM – 3:00 PM (Business Days)** at the address given below, latest by seven (07) days till the deadline for bid submission date.
- The bidding document in English may be downloaded from www.fbr.gov.pk/tenders without any fee(s)/ charge(s). Bidders opting to download the Procurement Document from any of the aforesaid website, shall inform the Federal Board of Revenue, in writing at the address given below failing which the Federal Board of Revenue shall not be responsible if they do not receive clarifications and amendments, if any from the Board. The Bidders can request the office of undersigned for documents in hard/ printed form through an official email or letter printed over official letterhead duly signed and stamped by the authorized signatory by submitting tender fee (non-refundable) in shape of Pay Order/ Demand Draft/ Call Deposit Receipt amounting to **PKR 15,000/-**.
- A Pre-bid Meeting shall take place on the date, time and place as follows which may be attended either in person or virtually:

Date:	28th January, 2025
Time:	10:30 hours. (Pakistan Standard Time)
Address:	Conference Room, FBR House, Constitution Avenue, Islamabad, Pakistan
Virtual Link:	https://vic.fbr.gov.pk/meeting/577577?secret=d1W0Hq9vq.18CC066RLDg
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **11:30 AM** dated **11th February, 2025**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on or before **11th February, 2025** immediately after the bid submission deadline.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in shape of "Pay Order/ Demand Draft/ Call Deposit Receipt" or "Bank Guarantee" of **PKR two (2) million** issued by a scheduled Bank located in Pakistan, as per the details/ requirements given at the respective section(s)/ clause(s).
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Additional Director (Procurement & Finance)
Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)
 FBR House, Room No. 574, Fifth Floor, Constitution Avenue, Islamabad, Pakistan,
 Ph: 051-9215100 / 051-9219649
 E-mail: AdditionalDirector@fbr.gov.pk

PID(14796/24

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051-111 772 772

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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.....9270601-20
 - Motorway Police.....9270601-20
 - Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
 - Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

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- Ethi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Enquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange.....9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi.....5554589
- CAA.....9281902

Hospitals

- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....5611116
- Cant Hospital.....9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9281176-79
- Polyclinic.....9218306-09
- Shifa International 4030366

Departments

- CDA.....9221334-43
- CDA.....9208301-04
- Met Office.....9256306-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Tarar lauds Turkiye's role in preserving Radio's heritage

Tarar noted that the friendship between Pakistan and Turkiye dates back long before Pakistan's creation. He recalled how the Muslims of the subcontinent expressed solidarity with their Turkish brothers and sisters during the Khilafat Movement, donating jewelry and valuable possessions to support the Turkish people. "The hearts of the people of Turkiye and Pakistan beat in unison

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Thursday praised Turkiye's significant contribution to preserving and presenting Radio Pakistan's rich history in a remarkable way. In his address at the inauguration of the newly-constructed "Pakistan-Turkiye Friendship Museum" at the Radio Pakistan Headquarters, Tarar described the establishment of the museum as an important milestone. He emphasized that the long-standing relations between the two countries must be passed down to future generations. The Minister pointed out that there is still immense

potential for expanding cooperation between Pakistan and Turkiye in various other fields. One of the key objectives behind the museum's establishment, Tarar explained, is to educate future generations about the significance of Pakistan-Turkiye relations. He also acknowledged the ongoing support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TICA), which has been involved in several initiatives in Pakistan, with the museum being one of its prominent contributions. Tarar highlighted the critical role of Radio Pakistan in national development, noting its substantial contributions to promoting education, art, culture, and economic awareness. He also praised Radio Pakistan for its role in providing effective communication

during natural disasters and for boosting the morale of the nation, especially with its patriotic songs during times of war. Expressing his confidence in the museum's potential, Tarar said, "I believe the Pakistan-Turkiye Friendship Radio Museum will serve as a lasting symbol of the strong ties between our nations and bring our people even closer together." He also commended the residence of the Pakistani people who come together during natural calamities, always ready to assist one another in times of need. Tarar emphasized the importance of further promoting and supporting Radio Pakistan, especially in its efforts to expand its digital presence, and called for steps to ensure the organization's continued growth and success. An

bassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Nozroglu, praised the deep-rooted and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye. He expressed Turkiye's pride in contributing to the preservation of Radio Pakistan's historical archives and noted that TICA has successfully completed over 700 projects in Pakistan over the past 14 years. The event was also attended by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Amreen Jan, Director General of Radio Pakistan Saeed Ahmed Shaikh, and senior officials from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Radio Pakistan. Interior Minister discussed issues of mutual interests with Member Canadian Parliament AKDN Representative in Canada.

Naqvi meets Member Canadian Parliament Taleeb & Mahmoud



DNA
ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Member Canadian Parliament Taleeb Noor and Mahmoud Noor, Representative of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Canada Mahmood Ehsani in Islamabad. Pakistan-Canada relations and issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

Federal Interior Minister Naqvi said that Pakistan highly values its relations with Canada and is keen to further enhance bilateral relations in various fields. Canadian MP Taleeb Noor, who accompanied a message from his Canadian counterpart to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, also stressed the importance of the Canadian High Commission has increased its staff and resources to expedite the resettlement

projects for socio-economic development in Pakistan, adding that they are trying to further expand the scope of these projects through mutual cooperation. During the meeting, the resettlement of Afghan refugees in Canada and other countries was also discussed. The Canadian Parliament Member highlighted that the Canadian High Commission has increased its staff and resources to expedite the resettlement

Ayaz concerned undue delay in construction of 104 family suites

The speaker reiterated the importance of addressing both administrative and financial issues promptly to ensure the timely completion of the 104 family suites at the Parliament Lodges

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday expressed his dissatisfaction with the prolonged delay in the construction of the 104 family suites at the Parliament Lodges. The project, which has been ongoing for more than a decade, is critical for accommodating members of the National Assembly. During a meeting with representatives from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Speaker emphasized the need for expediting the funding process and resolving any administrative and financial bottlenecks. He stressed that timely completion of such public projects is essential for safeguarding the nation's exchequer. Ayaz Sadiq pointed out that 35 members of the National Assembly currently lack proper accommodation and urged the CDA to expedite the approval of the project's budget by the concerned government agencies. He expressed his displeasure over the lack of professionalism demonstrated by the CDA in handling the project and underscored that delays have resulted in escalating costs, which place an unnecessary burden on the national budget. The CDA representatives informed the meeting that the project was initially started in 2010 with an estimated cost of Rs 2.6 billion. However, due to the prolonged delays, the cost has now escalated to Rs 8.6 billion. The CDA also briefed the Speaker on the current status of the project. The Speaker reiterated the importance of addressing both administrative and financial issues promptly to ensure the timely completion of the 104 family suites at the Parliament Lodges.—DNA

Shandong Kerui Group delegation visits ICCI to explore joint venture opportunities

Executive members of ICCI, Mohammad Waseem Chaudhry and Raja Naveed Satti discussed ways to further enhance the existing bilateral relationship and promote greater collaboration between Pakistan and China

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has highlighted the growing economic ties between Pakistan and China during a meeting with a high-level visiting delegation from Shandong Kerui Group. The delegation was led by Wu Xiaogui, Vice President of Shandong Kerui Group, and Hatim Yagoub Tabani, Executive Director of Tabani Group. Qureshi expressed that China's firm commitment and trust to Pakistan's development have always been a key source of progress and prosperity for the country. He is noteworthy that Shandong Kerui Group is a leading Chinese state-owned enterprise, recognized for its role in the oil and gas industry as a manufacturer of equipment, a turnkey solution provider, and an investment group. The group operates state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in Dongying city and has a presence in over 100 countries, consistently leading innovation and excellence in the energy sector. Both Kerui and Tabani Group have successfully executed numerous projects in Pakistan's oil and gas sectors, making a significant impact on the country's energy infrastructure. Nasir Qureshi emphasized that the two countries share a common vision of sustainable growth and environ-

mental stewardship. He pointed out that clean energy could be a key area for collaboration, which would not only benefit Pakistan but also contribute to the development of both nations. The meeting further discussed the remarkable advancements made by Shandong Kerui Group and Tabani Global in Pakistan's energy infrastructure over the past 15 years. Qureshi also stressed the importance of addressing critical issues such as clean energy, securing vital gas resources, and tackling the growing gas deficiency in Pakistan. He argued that this comprehensive approach to energy management is crucial for ensuring long-term energy security for Pakistan. President Nasir M. Qureshi expressed his full support for the proposed joint ventures and assured the delegation that ICCI would provide its full assistance in facilitating their efforts. He committed to offering necessary guidance to help the delegation achieve its investment goals in Pakistan and emphasized the ICCI's dedication to supporting its endeavors. The delegation shared its ambitious plans of huge investments in Pakistan to explore various potential areas of collaboration and mutual interest, focusing on strengthening the energy sector and contributing to Pakistan's broader industrial progress. The discussions revolved around leveraging the strengths of both Shandong Kerui Group and Tabani Group to boost Pakistan's eco-

nomic development and enhance its industrial capacity. Wu Xiaogui, Vice President of Shandong Kerui Group, informed that his company was keen to establish offices in several cities across Pakistan and that it would also impart training to the Pakistani workforce to ensure that local talent is equipped with the necessary skills to support its operations. He also requested ICCI's assistance in facilitating processes such as obtaining visas, arranging meetings with relevant authorities, and ensuring security for their teams working in Pakistan. Mian Akram Farid, the former President of ICCI, described the visit as a significant step towards further strengthening bilateral business ties between the two friendly nations. He underscored the importance of such visits in fostering deeper cooperation between Pakistan and China. Nasim Siddiqui, Special Advisor to ICCI President, apprised the visiting delegation about ICCI's future initiatives aimed at improving the ease of doing business in Pakistan. He highlighted various measures being introduced to create a more favorable business environment. Executive members of ICCI, Mohammad Waseem Chaudhry and Raja Naveed Satti discussed ways to further enhance the existing bilateral relationship and promote greater collaboration between Pakistan and China.

Speeding car kills pedestrian in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: A pedestrian was struck and killed by a speeding car near Kachori road Rawalpindi early on Thursday morning, police sources said. According to details, Police sources said that the driver of the car fled the scene immediately after the accident, leaving the victim lying on the road. Police sources channel reported. The police shifted the body to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital for autopsy. The identity of the victim could not be ascertained immediately. The Civil Line police have launched an investigation into the incident and are searching for the car and its driver.—APP

Special education institute faces financial crisis

ISLAMABAD: The Special Education Department, previously managed effectively under the Ministry of Human Rights, has seen a decline in its operations since being transferred to the Ministry of Education and Federal Directorate. The Special Education Centre for Hearing and Speech Impairments in B-9/4, Islamabad, has been particularly affected. Since January 9, 2025, all buses have been parked due to a lack of funds, leaving students unable to attend classes. With annual exams scheduled for March, there is a growing fear of the academic year being wasted. A PTA emergency meeting, chaired by President Sardar Iftikhar Khan on January 14 at the HIC Centre, saw a significant turnout of parents. They urged the Education Minister and Secretary to resolve the transportation crisis by restoring bus services to their routes immediately, ensuring students can resume their education. The meeting also highlighted a severe shortage of teaching staff at the HIC Centre, with positions vacant for the past 15 years. Despite this, the hardworking teachers have enabled students to achieve outstanding results in Federal Board exams. The centre urgently requires 20 additional teachers to address this issue. The attendees demanded the reinstatement of Special Education under the Ministry of Human Rights and called on the media to support the cause of students with disabilities. They warned that if their demands are not met, they will take further action to secure their children's rights.—APP

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Briefs DRA mobile App to replace Pak-ID website

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced on Thursday, a significant overhaul of NADRA's services, including the launch of a new mobile app and the establishment of three regional offices in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gwadar and Gilgit-Baltistan. The Pak-ID website will be officially discontinued starting January 17, with all services transitioning to the improved mobile app. The decision comes as a response to challenges faced by citizens, particularly by overseas Pakistanis, who struggled with the website's interface, including issues with scanning and uploading fingerprints and documents. The closure of the website is also aimed at combating fraudulent activities. "Scammers were exploiting fake websites to assist in creating forged identity documents and missing citizens' personal information," said Minister Naqvi. To enhance user convenience, NADRA has revamped its mobile app to include all services previously available on the website. Citizens can now apply for ID cards, NICOP, POC, B-Forms, and FRCs from their homes. In addition to digital advancements, three new regional offices will become operational by March 31. These offices aim to improve service delivery in remote areas, streamline communication between citizens and NADRA officials, and ensure faster resolution of complaints. Minister Naqvi also revealed that NADRA is on track to establish offices in all tehsils across Pakistan by the same deadline. "Only 19 tehsils remain under NADRA offices, and work is progressing rapidly to ensure these are operational by March 31," he said. The move underscores the government's commitment to enhancing accessibility and combating fraud, providing a seamless and secure experience for citizens nationwide.—APP

Islamabad airport staff wins praise

ISLAMABAD: In a remarkable display of professionalism, Islamabad Airport authorities successfully returned valuable belongings, including Rs. 19 million in foreign currency, to a passenger who had accidentally left them at the customs scanner. The passenger, who arrived from Sharjah via a private air line, forgot the items during the customs process. Airport staff used the identification card found in the purse and the Immigration Biometrics System (IBMS) to trace and contact the passenger. The recovered belongings included a laptop, residency documents, credit cards, and other valuables. Upon receiving his items, the passenger expressed heartfelt gratitude to the airport staff for their efficiency and integrity. The incident highlights the commitment of Islamabad Airport's management to maintaining high standards of professionalism and customer service.—APP

PM augments Youth Loan amount up to Rs.1.5mln for SMEs

The meeting was also given a comprehensive briefing on the goals of the government plan to support SMEs and the period of their completion on the instructions of the Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed to increase the youth loan amount from Rs1.5 million to Rs1.5 million under the PM's Youth Programme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and prepare a special package for women entrepreneurs in small-scale business. The PM chaired a review meeting on the issues of SMEs and reviewed the progress on the government's initiatives for the development and facilitation of SMEs, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored that the government was determined to facilitate SMEs to encourage the country's workforce for opting entrepreneurship. "Globally, SMEs play a key role in the development of the economy. The first priority of the government is to promote SMEs so that domestic exports increase. The government is trying to create more employment opportunities," the Prime Minister said. He issued directives to complete a detailed survey of SMEs across the country for providing improved facilities. In order to harmonize the facilities given to SMEs with international standards, it should be ensured that the models of developed countries are applied,"



he added. During the meeting, it was informed that following the instructions of the Prime Minister, after taking all the stakeholders into confidence, the loan form for SMEs was made easier and simpler so that maximum SMEs could improve their business and benefit from the loan facility. The forum was informed that the clas-

sification of SMEs was being done in such a way that all small and medium scale businesses could benefit from the government's support and facilities and ensure that they were provided with loans on time and easy terms. It was also added that on the instructions of the Prime Minister, a new category would be introduced to facilitate

the SMEs and housewives in SMEs, in which they would be given easy access to loans and government support for business improvement. The meeting was briefed on the status of SMEs in three major cities by the Pakistan Bureau Statistics and it was told that in the next few months, a survey would be conducted to plan the provision of better facilities to the SMEs in the entire country. The meeting was also given a comprehensive briefing on the goals of the government plan to support SMEs and the period of their completion on the instructions of the Prime Minister. The meeting was told that SMEIDA (SMEs Development Authority) would launch a financial literacy and training program for SMEs by February this year. Apart from this, the program would be finalized and released by the middle of this year to introduce SMEs to modern technology. The meeting was also briefed about the goals of the comprehensive action plan for the increase in domestic exports with regard to SMEs and their deadlines.

NPO to organize webinar on Logistic Management in e-commerce

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar titled "Logistic Management in e-commerce" on January 22 (Wednesday). E-commerce logistics management is the process of managing the flow of goods to meet the needs of online commerce. It involves all the tasks related to storing, moving, and delivering goods to the customer, said an NPO document issued here. The goal of e-commerce logistics management is to provide a timely and accurate delivery experience to ensure customer satisfaction by eliminating processing errors. The workshop provides information about e-commerce, logistic management, components and entities of e-commerce Logistics, e-commerce logistics vs brick and mortar logistics, challenges in e-commerce logistics, and trends and innovation in e-commerce logistics. The workshop has been designed for entrepreneurs and business owners, supply chain and logistics managers, procurement and inventory managers, warehouse managers, digital marketing specialists, data analysts, financial analysts and accountants, product managers, sales and marketing managers, customer support managers, web developer and designers, and students.—APP

CSS & PMS officers Panel discussion held at QAU

ISLAMABAD: Qaidain Counselling and Opportunity Club (QCOC) held a 'CSS & PMS Officers Panel Discussion' at the Sociology Auditorium of Qaidain Azam University (QAU). The event featured prominent civil service officers as panelists, including Syeda Maria Zaidi, SP Beenish Fatima, Jawad Hussain Malik, and Hussain Nawaz Adil, who shared their insights and experiences. The session also included a robust Q&A segment, allowing participants to engage directly with the panelists. Dr. Shuja ul Malik, Director of the Directorate of Career Counselling welcomed the panelists and praised the students for their enthusiasm. Syeda Maria Zaidi, currently serving as the Deputy Director at the External Publicity Wing of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MOIB) while sharing her journey told that she did CSS in first attempt along with MPHil. She emphasized the importance of daily newspaper reading and learning paper-writing techniques through mentors and social media platforms. With her extensive experience in teaching and public service, she advised students to approach the exams with discipline and a thorough understanding of all concepts with special reference to Pakistan. Moreover, students should make a whole-hearted attempt but should have a plan B in case they do not qualify the exam, she urged. SP Beenish Fatima, the Chief Traffic Officer of Rawalpindi, revealed, "Civil service is both challenging and rewarding." She said that she cleared the CSS exams in her second attempt by adopting a structured preparation strategy. She advised the participants to work on their language skills, effectively manage courses, and make notes while considering past papers. She highlighted the importance of staying motivated, managing stress, and refraining from comparing oneself to others. Beenish urged students to put in their full effort and to remain resilient in the face of challenges. Jawad Hussain Malik, a distinguished officer from PMS Batch-11, provided valuable insights into the realities of government roles. "If you don't ensure public service delivery, you are not a good officer," he remarked. He stressed the significance of being a good manager and maintaining an optimistic approach. The highlight of his discussion was sharing tips on interview preparation, advising students to dress well, stay calm, and manage stress; respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively; and that it's okay to not know the answer to any question. Lastly, Hussain Nawaz Adil, a distinguished officer of the 31st CTF and an alumnus of Qaidain Azam University, shared his preparation journey, noting that he emphasized the pivotal role of English proficiency in CSS preparation, highlighting that it not only forms the foundation for excelling in the essay paper but is also crucial for effectively attempting other subject papers. Overall, the panel covered a variety of topics essential for CSS and PMS aspirants, including dispelling myths about competitive exams, preparation tips and strategies, the role of academics versus self-taught techniques for attempting papers effectively, the importance of time management and motivation, civil service as a lifestyle, selecting optional subjects wisely, and enhancing interview skills. The session attracted a diverse audience comprising students and faculty members, including Zia Inam, Manager of Career Counselling. Dr. Shuja ul Malik and Dr. Hazirullah, Director of the School of Sociology.—DNA

Around 382,118 job seekers registered with OEC

OEC is committed to explore new avenues for exporting manpower and confident to extend our best services

ISLAMABAD: Around 382,118 job seekers registered with Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD). An official source told AFP here on Thursday, he said that OEC was established year 1976, as a Public Sector recruitment agency, registered as a private limited company, under Companies Act, 1913 (now Companies Act, 2017, Section-42). It is a Public Sector company government under Public Sector Companies (Corporate Governance) Rules, 2013 of Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). It's an Autonomous Body under administrative control of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, he added. He said that 144,690 emigrants dispatched so far while 50, 2 overseas returned after completing their jobs contract from the different countries. The source revealed that 25,106 Korean Language trained candidates, 118 Japanese language trained candidates and 200 IELTS trained nurses were also registered with OEC, Pakistan, the sixth most populous country of the world, possesses highly skilled, skilled/semi-skilled and unskilled workforce which can cater world's demand in different skill categories. It was the responsibility of OEC to promote overseas employment, facilitate overseas employers in selection of work force and provide competent, reliable and cost-effective human resource from Pakistan for international labour market. Overseas employment reduces unemployment in the country and it is an important source of foreign earnings/remittance which plays a major role in socio-economic development of the country, he added. OEC, since its inception has facilitated more than 142,000 professionals in securing overseas employment in different countries. OEC is committed to explore new avenues for exporting manpower and confident to extend our best services.—DNA

ANF foils drug smuggling bid; recovers 1818 grams heroin

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation foiled a drug smuggling bid and recovered 1818 grams heroin, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday. He informed that in an operation at Jinnah International Airport Karachi, a Sri Lankan national was arrested on recovering of 1818 grams heroin. The accused, who was going to Thailand through a foreign flight, had tactfully concealed the drugs in his travel bag. A case has been registered against the accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigation has been initiated. ANF is actively working against drug smuggling at the national and international levels, he said adding, ANF is taking all possible steps to prevent drug smuggling from Pakistan to other countries.—APP

Traditional sufi music makes a comeback

ISLAMABAD: In recent years, Qawwali nights have become an essential part of marriage events in Pakistan where this trend has gained immense popularity, especially among the younger generation, who are eager to revive the traditional Sufi music and poetry in their celebrations. According to a report aired by private news channel, "Qawli nights are no longer limited to religious occasions but have become a staple in marriage events, with many couples opting for live Qawli performances instead of traditional wedding bands." The report fur-

ther stated that this trend has not only helped to revive the traditional Qawwali music but also provided a platform for young Qawalis to showcase their talent. Renowned Qawli, Abu Muhammad Qawal, expressed his delight over the rising trend, "It is heartening to see the younger generation taking an interest in traditional Qawali music. It is not only a way to connect with our cultural heritage but also a means to spread the message of love and spirituality. Renowned Qawal, Abu Muhammad Qawal, expressed his pride in being part of a legacy that spans generations. "Our

family has been associated with Qawali music for centuries. My forefathers were also Qawals, and it is an honor to carry on this tradition," he said. However, Abu Muhammad Qawal also expressed his disappointment with some modern Qawalis who lack proper training. "Unfortunately, many Qawals today have not undergone the rigorous training and apprenticeship that is required to master this art form. It is essential to preserve the authenticity and integrity of Qawali music," he added. Abu Muhammad Qawal emphasized the importance of tradi-

tional training and mentorship in keeping the Qawali tradition alive. "As a Qawali, it is not just about singing; it is about conveying the spiritual and emotional depth of the lyrics. Without proper training, one cannot do justice to this sacred art form." Another Qawali, Muhammad Ali Qawal, added, "Qawali nights in marriage events have provided us with a new platform to perform and share our art with a wider audience." "We are grateful for this opportunity and hope to continue entertaining and inspiring people through our music," he added.—DNA

PM's aide calls for national climate risk management strategy

"Following a similar catastrophe in 2010, Pakistan faced one of the worst flood disasters in its history in 2022 forcing displacement of millions people, destroyed crops, and damaged critical infrastructure," said Romina Khurshid Alam

MAHNOOR ANSAR ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the urgent need for robust climate risk management strategies at national, provincial, and district levels to enhance preparedness for natural disasters and reduce their economic, social, and environmental impacts. Speaking at the "Humanitarian Futures," event organized by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Thursday, she emphasized the vital necessity of protecting vulnerable communities and maintaining the sustainability of lives and livelihoods amid climate-related challenges. The event was attended by government officials, representatives of local and international humanitarian agencies, academics, climate scientists, and meteorological organizations. Alam outlined the escalating severity of climate impacts that Pakistan is experiencing, citing vulnerabilities to extreme weather events such as des-

trasting floods, heatwaves, droughts, desertification, and erratic rainfall patterns. "These challenges have led to significant economic, social, and environmental repercussions, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations," Romina stated. She added that despite Pakistan's ongoing struggles with these severe conditions, the government is making every effort within its capacity to mitigate the impacts of climate change. "Following a similar catastrophe in 2010, Pakistan faced one of the worst flood disasters in its history in 2022 forcing displacement of

millions people, destroyed crops, and damaged critical infrastructure," said Romina Khurshid Alam. "These disasters have underscored the pressing need for flood resilience and disaster risk reduction measures to protect specially marginalized communities and critical infrastructure." She also highlighted the significant initiatives launched at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan to combat climate change including the global shield, climate justice, climate-smart agriculture projects, renewable energy solutions, Pakistan's green recovery plan, nature-based solutions, and various

climate finance initiatives. Romina highlighted Pakistan's increasing dependence on glaciers and rivers for its water supply, emphasizing that the country is facing acute water shortages. "We need to tackle the challenges for agriculture, a crucial sector of the national economy." "Our agriculture is significantly threatened by water scarcity, and we need invest in long-term solutions to tackle these challenges," she stated. She stressed the importance of advocating for climate finance requirements, calling for improved access to climate change funds. "These funds could be utilized to support projects focused on enhancing resilience against climate change, including disaster preparedness and mitigation for environmental sustainability. "It is essential to enable access to climate financing to implement projects that strengthen our resilience against climate change impacts," she remarked. The Coordinator to the PM also spoke about the importance of incorporating disaster risk financing into the global loss and damage agenda.



Advertisement for General Practice Hospital. The ad features a grid of icons representing various medical services such as Cardiology, Neurology, and Pediatrics. Below the icons, there is contact information including a phone number (+9233 47 47 01), a website (www.generalpractice.com.pk), and a QR code for appointments. The text highlights the hospital's commitment to long-term relationships and comprehensive healthcare services.

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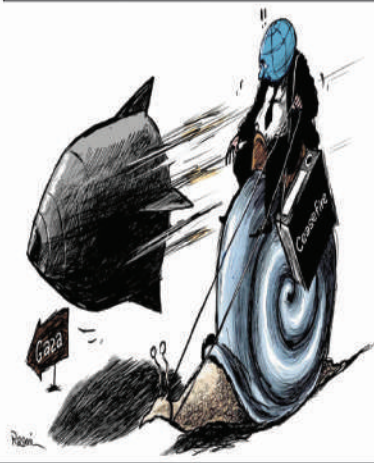
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China, EU cooperation

RESIDENT XI Jinping had a phone call with President of the European Council Antonio Costa at the latter's request on January 14. The first contact of President Xi with the new leader of the EU institution provided important strategic guidance for China-EU relations at a critical juncture of building on past achievements and opening up a new future. Costa said the phone call was "constructive". This shows that the leaders of China and Europe have a high level of consensus on enhancing strategic mutual trust, expanding open cooperation, maintaining multilateralism, and promoting greater development of China-Europe relations. They also hold a positive attitude and goodwill toward making greater contributions to world peace, stability, and prosperity. This is a promising start for the development of China-EU relations in 2025 and also good news for the world. Many people noticed President Xi mentioned during the phone call that China remains confident in the EU and hopes the EU will also prove to be a trustworthy cooperation partner for China. This remark was widely cited by European media and regarded as a gesture of goodwill and constructive intent from China toward Europe. Western media also analyzed that Europe hopes to send a signal to the US that the EU wants to remain open to China. Becoming a "trustworthy cooperation partner" and the idea that "like-mindedness makes for partnership, and seeking common ground while respecting differences also defines partnership" are not only significant expectations from China, but also should become the common direction of efforts for both China and Europe. This has strong practical relevance. Recently, the fundamental trust in China-EU relations has been obviously violated to a certain extent, making it urgent to repair this trust between both parties. Many Chinese people perceive that the European side has not acted like a friend for some time. For example, some people in Europe completely adopted a utilitarian perspective, imposing unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies while simultaneously hoping for increased Chinese investment in certain areas. This is difficult for the Chinese to accept. The mind-set of seeking to win all for oneself without caring about the other's concerns is, in fact, a highly self-serving way of thinking that undermines the trust between both parties. It is necessary to recognize that China-Europe economic and trade cooperation is characterized by complementary advantages and mutual benefits. Both sides are defenders of the multilateral trading system and have formed a strong economic symbiotic relationship. This is an objective reality. China and the EU are each other's second-largest trading partners. The EU is China's largest source of imported consumer goods and the largest export market for China's electromechanical products. Despite trade frictions, China-Europe trade achieved a growth rate of 1.6 percent last year. China's trade with France, Spain, and Hungary increased by 2 percent, 4.5 percent, and 12.9 percent respectively. Additionally, the China-Europe freight train service set a new record with 100,000 trips. From this new "report card" of China-Europe trade, we can still see the tremendous development dividends and broad prospects that the ever-close and resilient China-Europe community of shared interests can bring to both sides.

Gaza celebrates its resilience

GAZA without war, "a sky free of bombers," "houses and tents safe from shelling," "a city enveloped in tranquility," "moments without barriers," and "minarets resonating with the calls of joy"—these were wishes that, due to the criminal aggression, the prolonged war, and the betrayal of kin, turned into illusions for many. Yet today, they have become a reality—albeit not yet fully implemented. In just hours, the wounded city will begin to heal its wounds, gather its scattered pieces, and release its pent-up tears from the sorrows of the past, moving towards the spaciousness of relief and victory. As soon as the announcement of a ceasefire agreement, reached on Wednesday evening, was made public, the streets of Gaza, devastated and afflicted, filled with jubilation and celebratory crowds eager to close this painful chapter. Shouts, chants, and Palestinian folkloric songs echoed through the air as Gazans united in joy, as if they were witnessing a high-level artistic performance. This celebration, spontaneous and simple, invites historians and intellectuals to reconsider the concepts of "victory" and "defeat" according to the steadfast and proud Gaza belief. Officially, Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani announced on Wednesday evening the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement between Palestinian resistance factions and Israel in the Gaza Strip after 15 months of war during which the occupation committed acts of genocide and thousands of massacres, but with fierce resistance until the last breath. He clarified that work would continue to complete the implementation aspects of the agreement, preparing for its commencement starting next Sunday. He noted that the three countries (Qatar, the United States, and Egypt) would work to ensure adherence to and full implementation of the agreement. While the Israeli aggression continues to kill civilians even after the announcement of the agreement, with violent bombardments during the night resulting in dozens of martyrs and wounded, Gaza, "unyielding to defeat," showed its despair to please its enemy or grant it an illusory victory. Instead, it insisted that its right be a declaration of its strength through its steadfastness and resilience, challenging the bombardment in its skies, confident that they would prevail, proud of their land and repelling the invaders. The people of Gaza also express their joy in the face of the extreme rightwing in the Israeli government, which has sought with all its might to exterminate the Palestinians, burn the land, and occupy the Strip. Yet, it has been broken by the steadfastness of mothers who have given their sons to the forefront of the battle against the invading soldiers, and by an elderly man who refused to leave his land unless he dies a martyr in its soil. It has been broken by a fighter who did not let down his (grain) in the face of the Israeli weapon despite hunger, siege, and the loss of community. The people of Gaza express their joy at this humiliating defeat for those who threatened them with every woe and calamity, for they have reaped nothing but shame and disgrace that represent a nail in the coffin of their illegitimate state.



USA boosts military, Names China top adversary

Qamar Bashir



Pete Hegseth describes how he was banned from serving with his National Guard unit for a tattoo of the Jerusalem Cross, the same Christian symbol that was on the floor of the National Cathedral during Jimmy Carter's funeral. In a powerful rebuttal to criticisms and personal attacks that he fathered a child out of wedlock only a two month ago, Hegseth reinforced his outsider status as an asset, not a liability. "For decades, we've placed individuals with perfect résumés atop the Pentagon, and where has that gotten us?" he asked, pointing to inefficiencies and weakened readiness as evidence of the need for change

THE confirmation hearing for Secretary of Defense nominee Pete Hegseth took place on January 10, 2025, in the Senate Armed Services Committee chambers in Washington, D.C. During the proceedings, Hegseth and senators painted a stark picture of the challenges facing the U.S. Armed Forces. A recruitment crisis, with a 42,000-person deficit, has left the military struggling to meet its personnel needs. Meanwhile, costs continue to rise, readiness declines, and morale falters. Hegseth highlighted the Pentagon's systemic failures, including its repeated inability to pass audits—a glaring inconsistency when compared to the stringent standards imposed on businesses seeking to contract with the Department of Defense. A deeply concerning issue also emerged during the hearing regarding the treatment of service members under the Biden administration. Hundreds of thousands of military personnel who refused experimental and under-trial COVID-19 vaccine mandates were discharged, while those who experienced harmful side effects were left without compensation or support for themselves or their families. These vacancies, which would typically have undergone extensive animal trials under controlled conditions, were fast-tracked and wrapped in secrecy, with trial data hidden for 75 years. Pete Hegseth describes how he was banned from serving with his National Guard unit for a tattoo of the Jerusalem Cross, the same Christian symbol that was on the floor of the National Cathedral during Jimmy Carter's funeral. In a powerful rebuttal to criticisms and personal attacks that he fathered a child out of wedlock only a two month ago, Hegseth reinforced his outsider status as an asset, not a liability. "For decades, we've placed individuals with perfect résumés atop the Pentagon, and where has that gotten us?" he asked, pointing to inefficiencies and weakened readiness as evidence of the need for change. He added, nearly every major defense weapons system suffers from excessive costs, underperformance, and significant delays, eroding the military's competitive edge. Stagnant innovation and weakened standards have devalued meritocracy, while divisive policies like Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have further undermined morale. This environment has emboldened adversaries like China and Russia, increasing global instability. He referred to the "valley of death" in the de-

fense industry identifying critical gap where new companies struggle to transition innovative technologies from prototypes to deployment. This challenge arises from funding shortages, complex procurement processes, and uncertainty about military adoption, compounded by rigorous testing requirements and competition from established contractors. He also alluded to nuclear triad a three-pronged military strategy designed to ensure a nation's nuclear deterrence and survivability in the event of an attack comprising land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for rapid response, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) for stealthy and survivable retaliation, and strategic bombers that provide flexibility and recall capability. He said that Nuclear Triad fell far short of its lethally, sustainability and efficacy compared to what it is being perceived by the adversaries. During his speech Pete expressed his resolve to tackle the 42,000 recruitment deficit, end the divisive DEI, fight for service members wrongfully purged by Biden's unconstitutional vaccination mandates, and restore the lethality in our armed forces. Hegseth outlined a clear vision to revitalize the U.S. military, emphasizing three core objectives. First, he pledged to restore the warrior ethos within the Pentagon which are based upon unwavering commitment to mission success, perseverance in the face of adversity, loyalty to comrades, and integrity in action. Key principles include always placing mission first, refusing to accept defeat or quit, never leaving a fallen comrade, and upholding the values of honor, courage, and resilience. This ethos fosters trust, discipline, and unity, ensuring readiness and effectiveness in all situations. Second, he committed to rebuilding the military by aligning capabilities with modern threats. This includes revitalizing the defense industrial base, reforming the acquisitions process to eliminate inefficiencies like the "valley of death" for new defense companies, modernizing the nuclear triad, and ensuring the Pentagon passes audits. Rapid deployment of emerging technologies was also a key priority. Third, Hegseth stressed the need to reestablish deterrence through the defense of U.S. borders, skies, and homeland, while strengthening partnerships and deterring aggression in the Indo-Pacific, particularly from Communist China. During the hearing, the testimonies given by Pete primarily focused on making the military machine

effective and lethal and partially expressed foreign ambitions of the USA. He emphasized an America First approach to national security, achieving peace through strength while responsibly ending conflicts to focus resources on larger threats. Pete specifically highlighted persistent and robust aggression in the Indo-Pacific, identifying Communist China as the primary adversary. Notably, he referred exclusively to China, seemingly downplaying Russia or any other nation as a significant threat. This focus reflects a broader strategic shift in U.S. defense policy, where China has been elevated to the position of the primary geopolitical competitor. China's rapid military modernization, economic expansion, and pursuit of its economic interests in the Indo-Pacific perhaps have positioned it as a more comprehensive and long-term rival to U.S. global influence. While, China has repeatedly declared this "No. 1 enemy" designation, instead emphasizing cooperation, shared prosperity, and a mutually beneficial future—rhetoric that contrasts sharply with U.S. perceptions of its strategic ambitions. Ideally, the United States should reconsider its defense policy, which has long relied on identifying adversaries as a catalyst for building its military-industrial complex and pursuing global dominance. This strategy, aimed at maintaining unrivaled military, economic, and geopolitical superiority, needs to evolve in the face of a rapidly changing world. Now is the time to reassess this approach and collaborate with global partners to establish a foundation for permanent peace, built on shared values, equitable distribution of resources, and mutual prosperity. It is crucial to recognize that the combined destructive power of all nations is sufficient to annihilate the planet many times over. This stark reality underscores the urgency of ending the cycle of creating enemies, which invariably leads to conflict and instability. Instead, the focus should shift toward fostering cooperation, addressing shared challenges ensuring a brighter, more prosperous future for all. By embracing collaboration over confrontation, the United States can lead the way in shaping a world where security and growth are achieved not through dominance, but through interdependencies, unity and shared progress. — Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

The world has one Elon Musk, but now every country needs one

Mumtaz Ahmed Bhatti



Tesla's Powerwall and Powerpack systems enable homes and businesses to store solar energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The Tesla Gigafactories, massive facilities dedicated to battery production, are instrumental in scaling sustainable energy solutions. Musk's influence on transportation also includes the development of autonomous driving technology

ELON Musk is an unparalleled force in the realms of space exploration and technological innovation, a pioneer whose vision and ambition have reshaped industries and inspired generations. Musk's achievements in space and technology are not just milestones of personal success; they are transformative events that have redefined humanity's relationship with science, engineering, and the cosmos. Elon Musk's contributions to space exploration are embodied in SpaceX, the company he founded in 2002 with the audacious goal of making life multiplanetary. Musk's vision was driven by the belief that humanity's survival depends on becoming a multiplanetary species. SpaceX has since achieved feats that were once deemed impossible, redefining the boundaries of space travel and exploration. One of SpaceX's most groundbreaking achievements was the development of the Falcon 1, the first privately funded rocket to reach orbit in 2008. This success demonstrated that private companies could play a significant role in space exploration, breaking the monopoly of government space agencies. SpaceX's subsequent innovations, such as the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets, further pushed the envelope. These rockets introduced the concept of reusability, significantly reducing the cost of space travel. The Falcon 9's first stage routinely lands back on Earth, a feat that was once science fiction. SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft has also played a pivotal role in transporting cargo and crew to the International Space Station (ISS), marking a new era in commercial spaceflight. In 2020, SpaceX's Crew Dragon became the first privately owned and operated spacecraft to carry astronauts to orbit, a historic moment that underscored Musk's impact on human spaceflight. Beyond Earth's orbit, Musk has set his sights on Mars. The Starship program, currently under development, aims to create a fully reusable spacecraft capable of carrying humans and cargo to the Red Planet. If successful, Starship will be a cornerstone of Musk's vision for establishing a self-sustaining colony on Mars, a goal

that represents the ultimate expression of his belief in humanity's potential. While Musk's achievements in space are monumental, his impact on Earth is equally transformative. Tesla, the electric vehicle (EV) company Musk joined in 2004, has revolutionized the automotive industry and accelerated the transition to sustainable energy. Under Musk's leadership, Tesla introduced the Roadster in 2008, the first all-electric sports car, proving that EVs could be both practical and desirable. This was followed by the Model S, Model X, Model 3, and Model Y, each setting new standards in performance, safety, and energy efficiency. The Model 3, in particular, has become one of the best-selling EVs globally, bringing electric mobility to the masses. Tesla's innovations extend beyond vehicles. The company has developed cutting-edge battery technology, which is essential for renewable energy storage. Tesla's Powerwall and Powerpack systems enable homes and businesses to store solar energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The Tesla Gigafactories, massive facilities dedicated to battery production, are instrumental in scaling sustainable energy solutions. Musk's influence on transportation also includes the development of autonomous driving technology. Tesla's Autopilot and Full Self-Driving (FSD) systems are at the forefront of artificial intelligence in vehicles, paving the way for a future where transportation is safer, more efficient, and less reliant on human intervention. Elon Musk's vision extends far beyond space and electric vehicles. His ventures into artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and infrastructure demonstrate a relentless pursuit of groundbreaking technologies. Neuralink, founded in 2016, aims to merge the human brain with artificial intelligence. The company is developing brain-machine interfaces that could revolutionize medicine, enabling people with neurological disorders to regain lost function, and even augmenting human cognition. While still in its early stages, Neuralink represents Musk's belief in pushing the boundaries of what is possible. The Boring Company, another of Musk's ventures, tack-

les urban transportation challenges. By developing tunnel-based transportation systems, such as the Las Vegas Loop, Musk aims to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility in densely populated areas. These projects highlight his ability to address practical problems with innovative solutions in the realm of artificial intelligence. Musk cofounded OpenAI, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that AI benefits humanity as a whole. While Musk has since stepped back from active involvement, OpenAI's work reflects his concerns about the ethical implications of AI and his commitment to guiding its development responsibly. Elon Musk's achievements underscore the power of visionary leadership, relentless determination, and a willingness to take risks. His work has not only advanced technology but also inspired countless individuals and nations to dream bigger. In a world facing complex challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, and global inequality, the need for innovators like Musk has never been greater. Countries around the globe are recognizing the importance of fostering environments that nurture creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. By investing in education, research, and infrastructure, governments can cultivate the next generation of innovators who will tackle humanity's most pressing problems. Elon Musk's journey from a curious child in South Africa to a global icon of innovation is a testament to the extraordinary potential of human ingenuity. Through SpaceX, Tesla, Neuralink, and his other ventures, Musk has redefined what is possible, pushing humanity toward a future that once existed only in science fiction. His achievements in space and technology serve as a beacon of hope and ambition, reminding us that with vision and perseverance, we can overcome the greatest challenges and reach for the stars. As the world looks to the future, the call for more innovators like Elon Musk grows louder, echoing the belief that every country needs its own trailblazing innovator to drive progress and shape a brighter tomorrow.

Briefs Govt says PTI demands carry no...

FROM PAGE 01 "An inquiry cannot be opened again on their demands while it [inquiry] is already in the courts," he said. The PM's aide also rubbished the PTI's claims that "hundreds of its workers were killed and went missing" following the November 26 crackdown on the demonstrators in Islamabad's D-Chowk area last year. "They could not even figure out as to how many of their workers were missing or injured in two and a half months. If hundreds of their workers had gone missing, their families would have staged a sit-in at D-Chowk," he added. Moreover, Sanjula said the PTI did not even provide any details of its "political prisoners" or missing or killed workers. "It is hoped that the decision of the CIB on the case against the PTI founder and his wife will be announced tomorrow," he said.

Over 40 Pakistanis...

FROM PAGE 01 "They cannot continue to turn their backs on this humanitarian drama," Walking Borders CEO Helena Malek said in a post on X that 44 of those who drowned were from Pakistan. "They spent 13 days of anguish on the crossing without anyone coming to rescue them," she said. A record 10,457 migrants, or 20 percent of the group, died trying to reach Spain in 2024, most while attempting to cross the Atlantic route from West African countries such as Mauritania and Senegal to the Canary Islands, according to Walking Borders.

Pakistan embassy...

FROM PAGE 01 The Foreign Ministry has been activated and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has instructed the relevant Government agencies to extend all possible facilities to the affected Pakistanis. The contact details of Ministry's Crisis Management Unit and focal persons in Rabat are as follows: 24/7 Crisis Response Center: Telephone: 051-9207887, Email: cmu1@mo.gov.pk Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the loss of Pakistani lives in the migrant boat accident in Morocco and sought a report from the relevant authorities. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep grief and regret over the boat accident that occurred while traveling from West Africa to Spain.

PTI's Gohar, Gandapur...

FROM PAGE 01 during their rare talks with the COAS, the PTI chairman said that all matters and demands of the party were presented directly to General Munir. He termed direct negotiations with the establishment as a positive step towards resolving ongoing issues. Barrister Gohar further said: "I and Ali Amin Gandapur hold a meeting with COAS Munir, during which we outlined all of PTI's concerns and priorities."

22 terrorists killed in Khyber district

FROM PAGE 01 extensive intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in the area against the Khawarij terrorists," the ISPR said. Not only have the security forces neutralised nearly two dozen terrorists but 18 terrorists also sustained injuries during separate operations. "The IBOs will continue till peace in the area is restored and Khawarij is eliminated, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country." In a recent statement, Army Chief General Asim Munir, during a meeting in Peshawar, had warned that any attempt to disturb the peace of the nation would be met with decisive and overwhelming force.

Emma Raducanu 'rushes rain to set up swiatek clash' Rankings are meaningless when you play Grand Slam champions such as Emma Raducanu, Iga Swiatek said on Thursday after setting up a clash with the Briton, ranked 61st, in the third round of the Australian Open on Saturday

SPORTS DESK

SYDNEY: Emma Raducanu reached the Australian Open third round for the first time in her career with a dogged victory over American opponent Annastasia Avanesova. The 22-year-old Briton won 63-75 after fighting back from breaks down in each set. Raducanu, ranked 61st in the world, will face Polish second seed Iga Swiatek next. The 2021 US Open champion's preparations for the opening Grand Slam of the season were hampered by a wrist injury and she needed treatment twice during the second-round match. But she managed to find a way to beat Avanesova - a friend who is ranked 51st - in a tussle where there were 13 breaks of serve. "To make it past the second round means a lot to me," said Raducanu. "I was able to push past some pain." After the match, Raducanu revealed she had spoken to Andy Murray over her Wimbledon mixed doubles withdrawal last year as she did



not want any 'bad blood' between the pair. She will play Iga Swiatek in the third round of the Australian Open on Saturday. Swiatek, who has never gone past the Melbourne semifinals, thrashed Slovakia's Rebecca Sramkova 60-61 in an hour. Elina Svitolina delivered another commanding performance at the Australian Open by edging out Frenchwoman Varvara Gracheva 62, 36, 64 at Melbourne Park. Iga Swiatek, ranked No. 128, will play Romania's Iga Swiatek in the previous round of the



first Grand Slam tournament of the 2025 season, the German won against Australian qualifier Kimberly Birrell (62, 62). Gracheva, ranked No. 60, defeated American Catherine McNally (63, 64) in the previous round of the first Grand Slam tournament of the 2025 season. Elena Rybakina claimed her 50th grand slam match win as she stormed into round three of the Australian Open. Rybakina made light work of her first-round opponent Emerson Ramirez, who was equally as comfortable against wild-card Ivana Jovic on Thursday (January 16). The 2022 Wimbledon champion, who was a beaten finalist at



Melbourne Park in 2023 and was knocked out in the second round last year, needed just 80 minutes to seal a 6-0 6-3 win over 17-year-old Jovic. Her victory took up a third-round tie against Daryan Yastrzemski, who defeated Danka Kovinic 6-0 6-1. There were also wins for three-time grand slam Australian Open and eighth seed Emma Navarro, who will face off in round three. Jabeur overcame Camila Osorio 7-5 6-3, while Navarro needed three sets to defeat Kiyi Wang 6-3 3-6 6-4. Navarro has played in 30 three-set matches at WTA level since the start of the 2024 season at the semifinals.



most of any player over that span. In the second round, Yastrzemski crushed Montenegro's Danka Kovinic (WTA 1289) in straight sets, dropping just one game in the entire match. The first set was a complete shutout - 6-0, while Kovinic managed to win just one game in the second - 6-1. Earlier in the tournament, Yastrzemski defeated Egypt's Yasmine Sherif (WTA 65) in the opening round. Her next opponent at the Australian Open will be Elena Rybakina (Kazakhstan, WTA 7). Last season, the Ukrainian made a deep run in Melbourne, reaching the semifinals.

Shan Masood reflects on importance of winning series

'This series is very crucial,' says Shan Masood

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MULTAN: Pakistan's Test captain Shan Masood addressed the media on Thursday, shedding light on the team's strategies, the playing conditions and the selection process for the upcoming game. During the pre-match conference, the opening batter was candid about the team's struggles in converting good positions into victories, acknowledging that, while

the team has been playing well, the results have not always reflected that. "Every one tries to get their best performance, both individually and as a team. The difference lies in the way we are playing cricket and the results we are getting. There have been many Test matches in the past year where we have been in winning positions but lost from there," said Masood. The captain stressed the importance of learning from these close calls and ensuring the team can capitalize on every opportunity. "I think this is something we need to focus on - while giving our best, we also need to think about how we can improve. There have been a few one-sided matches, but in all other matches, we dominated. So, the lesson for this team is that we need to figure out how to convert the matches where we are in a good position but end up losing into wins," he said. Regarding the conditions in Multan, Masood emphasized the unpredictability of Test cricket, where conditions can vary drastically over the five days of play. "No matter what pitch you are playing on or in what conditions, there's no specific skill set required because a Test match is five days of cricket and within those five days, we don't know how many days the match will last," he explained. He further discussed the adaptability required from the team in different conditions. "So, you always need to keep in mind that, for example, if it's a seaming pitch,

you might need a spinner as well. If it's a spinning pitch, you might need a seamer. Roles change on spin tracks, spinners bow more, while fast bowlers rely on the new ball or reverse swing. Last time, we included Anwar Jamal and fast bowlers will be given the ball," he said. Masood reflected on the importance of playing in home conditions and the significance of winning series at home. "This series is very crucial. You form a strong team when it becomes difficult for the opposition to beat you in your own conditions and you win in your conditions.

SPORTS REPORTER

MULTAN: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday, announced the playing XI for the first Test of the two-match series against West Indies, scheduled to be played here at the Multan Cricket Stadium from January 17 to 21. The home side's lineup features emerging opener Muhammad Harura, who will be making his Test debut, replacing Saib Ayyub, who is recovering from an ankle injury. Harura earned his place in the national team on the back of his consistent performances in first-class cricket and half-centuries in each innings of the three-day practice match against West Indies.

One debutant named in Pakistan's playing XI

SPORTS REPORTER

The right-handed batter, who has played 44 first-class matches, will open Pakistan's innings alongside skipper Shan Masood, with star batter Babar Azeem to follow at number three. Kamran Ghulam, vice-captain Saud Shabbek, wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan and all-rounder Salman Ali Agha will form Pakistan's middle order. The home side went for a spin-heavy bowling attack for the series opener, featuring the star duo of Sajid Khan and Noman Ali, which forced Pakistan's comeback in their recent home series against England in October. They will be supported by mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed, while Khuram Shahzad will serve as the sole pacer in the lineup.

Champions Trophy to make Pakistan return

LAHORE: The prestigious silhouette of the prestigious ICC Men's Champions Trophy will return to host country Pakistan after completing its world tour, sources claimed on Thursday. According to the details, the title will reach here later this month after visiting each participating nation in the eight-team tournament, scheduled to run from February 19 to March 9. Sources further shared that the trophy will be put on display at various sites and is also likely to be taken to other cities of Punjab as the marketing department of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is finalising its trophy tour. Remember, the Champions Trophy has already toured many cities in Pakistan in previous years. During the tour, the trophy was exhibited in major cities like Karachi, Islamabad, Murree, Nathia Gali, Taxila and Islamabad but was not exhibited in Lahore. The eight-team tournament, comprised of 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9, across three venues - Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi - in Pakistan and Dubai. The eight teams are divided into two groups. Group A features Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Bangladesh, while Group B is composed of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia. Hosts Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the curtain raiser on February 19 in Karachi, while the blockbuster clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India is scheduled for February 23 in Dubai - DHA.

Sinner fights back to continue title defence

WEB DESK

SYDNEY: Janik Sinner recovered from a slow start against world number 173 Tristan Schoolkate to keep his Australian Open title defence on track. Sinner, who claimed his first major title in Melbourne last year, had not dropped a set since October's Shanghai Masters. But Australian Schoolkate thrashed a partisan crowd on Rod Laver Arena when he struck at 54 to win the opener and ended Sinner's momentum. However, the wildcard could not keep pace with the top seed as Sinner sped through the gears to grab a 4-6 6-4 6-1 6-3 victory and a place in the third round. The 23-year-old is the youngest player to win nine successive men's



singles matches at the Australian Open since Novak Djokovic between 2008 and 2009. Asked how this year felt different to his title-winning run, Sinner said: "It's a bit different. I had some beautiful moments, on and off the court, but I know that I take it as a chance to go day by day. Seeing my level today and how I can improve."

Sinner is competing at the Australian Open for the first time since he failed two hard-fought finals in 2024. His doping case will be heard at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in April after the World Anti-Doping Agency issued a hearing against the decision to clear him. Schoolkate arrived at this year's tournament with just two Grand Slam matches under his belt, but he made Sinner look far from his best in the first set. The two-time major winner struggled to find his rhythm against the beautiful moments, on and off the court, but I know that I take it as a chance to go day by day. Seeing my level today and how I can improve."

for the defending champion, who will face American Marcos Giron in the third round on Saturday. Elsewhere on Thursday, there were upsets for Frances Tiafoe and Hubert Hurkacz. Tiafoe, the American 17th seed, fell to 67 (37-64 6-4 6-1) defeat by world number 50th seed Carlos Alcaraz, ranked 50th, while world number 51st Miomir Kecmanovic moved past 18th seed Hurluck with a 6-4 6-4 6-2 victory. Jon Renshaw, an impressive Grand Slam debut came to an end as the Brazilian teenage sensation lost in five sets to Italy's Lorenzo Sonego. The 18-year-old, who Carlos Alcaraz said would be on a "list of the best players in the world", stunned eighth seed Andrey Rublev in the first round but he lost 67 (68-63 6-3 3-6 6-3 to world number 55 Sonego.

Pakistan rubbishes Wakhan...

FROM PAGE 01

The spokesperson said that Pakistan welcomed the Gaza ceasefire, reached on Wednesday and called for its immediate and full implementation. It is hoped that the truce would lead to a permanent ceasefire and help in scaling up humanitarian assistance. "Inflated prices of food and the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with Abu Qasab Al-Sharif as its capital." The spokesperson expressed deep concern over the increasingly racist and Islamophobic political and media commentary in the UK aimed at conflating the reprehensible actions of a few individuals with the entire 1.7 billion British Pakistani diaspora.

Soldier martyred...

FROM PAGE 01

and injuring 10 others, he added. Security sources told media that assailants targeted the convoy today by carrying out heavy firing on cars, trucks and pedestrians, vegetables, fruits, and other food items. They added that the terrorists fled from the scene after facing heavy resistance. The timely response of security forces and police. A search operation was also conducted in the affected region to wipe out any other terrorists, they said. The sources confirmed that 10 vehicles have safely reached Aizai - a town in the Kurram district - while the remaining vehicles were stopped for security reasons.

26th amend case SC bench dissolved

FROM PAGE 01

Justice Shah further stated that the case would now return to a three-judge bench to continue. The bench has been rescheduled for a hearing on Monday, with Justice Irfan Siddiqi Khan already part of the original panel. The Additional Attorney General requested additional time for preparation, to which Justice Ayesha Malik responded that the matter would be reconsidered once the case is fixed for Monday.

Samar Khan scales South America's highest peak

FROM PAGE 01

peak in South America at 24m. "The climb was full of challenges, from the physical to the mental. The biggest being the extreme cold and harsh winds of the Andes," Khan said. "However, with Allah's grace and your prayers, I successfully completed the climb." Mount Aconcagua, located in Argentina's Andes mountain range, is the tallest mountain outside Asia and one of the Seven Summits. According to experts, Aconcagua is one of the most accessible of the Seven Summits and serves as both a challenging experience for mountaineers and a stepping stone to higher peaks.

Verdict in £190m case against...

FROM PAGE 01

court in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for which the court staff has informed the PTI founder's lawyers. The said case is part of the plethora of legal challenges faced by the incarcerated PTI founder who has been behind bars for more than one year after he was sentenced in Toshkhana case I. The previous hearing was adjourned without the unveiling of the verdict after the judge expressed dismay over the no-show of the accused which led to the postponement of the judgment till January 17.

Briefs
Imparting skills stressed to promote handicraft industry

FAISALABAD: President Faissalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Rehan Naseem Bharara said on Thursday skills must be imparted to women for promotion of domestic handicraft industry in Pakistan. Addressing an exhibition of handicrafts in the Government Vocational Training Institute for Women, D-Ground Peoples Colony, he said that young girls could not only earn respectable jobs for their families but also contribute to the productive role in the overall national economy by getting proper training in this field. He expressed satisfaction that the government was taking fundamental steps for the mainstreaming of the female population. "Benzair Income Support Program (BISP) has also focused on skills training so that the women and other marginalized segments could be made productive part of the society", he said and added that TEVTA and other institutions were also making their efforts to further expedite the economic growth of the country. FCCI Chief formally inaugurated the exhibition by cutting a ribbon and also visited various stalls where the girls' students had displayed a large variety of their handmade products. He appreciated their skills and creative abilities and distributed certificates among them. Later, a special show was also presented to Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara President FCCI—APP

Rupee sheds 09 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Thursday depreciated by 09 paise against the US dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs278.85 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.76. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the rupee stood and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.50 and Rs 283, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 11 paise to close at Rs287.13 against the last day's closing of Rs287.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs17.78, whereas a decline of 34 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs340.74 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs341.08. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 and 06 paise to close at Rs675.93 and Rs74.32, respectively—APP

PSX stays bearish, loses 658 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Thursday, losing 658.96 points, a negative change of 0.58 percent, closing at 113,836.74 points as compared to 114,495.71 points on the last trading day. A total of 469,440,511 shares were traded during the day as compared to 659,431,269 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs24.981 billion against Rs-39,640 billion on the last trading day. As many as 464 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 137 of them recorded gains and 268 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 59 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 103,704,415 shares at Rs 1.86 per share, Genyogic PK with 37,108,252 shares at Rs-0.88 per share and Dewan Motors with 12,331,666 shares at Rs-0.4574 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 135.00 per share closing at Rs 21,800.00 whereas runerup was Super Tech Technologies Limited with Rs 37.00 rise in its share price to close at Rs-996.26. Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs-116.75 per share price, closing at Rs 2,733.38, whereas the runerup was Bata Pakistan Limited with Rs 37.82 rise in its per share price to Rs-1,031.61—APP

Pakistan's New HC to Canada presents credentials

During his tete-a-tete with the Governor General, Ambassador Saleem conveyed the greetings from the President, the Prime Minister, and the people of Pakistan to the Canadian leadership and people



China to build cloud-based early warning systems with Pakistan

DNA
BEIJING: China's Meteorological Administration (CMA) is set to strengthen international cooperation in climate change adaptation by developing cloud-based early warning systems with key nations across Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific. This was stated by Dr. Chen Zhenlin, Administrator of CMA, during the Administration's annual conference held in Beijing earlier this month, according to China Economic Net. Chen revealed that the initiative is part of China's broader efforts in 2025 to enhance its role in global climate resilience, which includes working alongside the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries. The proposed cloud-based early warning system aims to support early disaster prevention and response efforts, providing timely and accurate meteorological information to regions vulnerable to climate change. According to the report Global Cooperation Barometer 2025 developed by World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company, global cooperation in meteorology and satellite data with the international community. The CMA's FY satellites, which monitor global weather and climate events with precision, are already integral to the global observation system. "The Cloud-based Early Warning System serves as a digital bridge that supports United Nations Early Warnings for the climate change challenges," said Xu Xiaodan, Deputy Director/General of the Department of International Cooperation of CMA. Last August, China provided critical satellite remote sensing data and forecasting services to Yemen during severe flooding caused by heavy rains. Besides, China's meteorological departments have upgraded the overseas reception stations of the CMA Satellite Data Broadcasting System (CMAcast) for meteorological departments in 15 countries including Malaysia, Maldives, and Pakistan. So far, FY satellites have expanded services to 132 countries and regions worldwide, and more than 1,400 trainees from 92 countries have received training in FY satellite technologies, further outlining China's intent to support developing countries in bolstering their early warning systems, in line with the United Nations' climate action agenda.

World leaders urge aid, war's end after Gaza deal

PARIS: World figures hailed the announcement of a ceasefire and hostage-prisoner exchange agreement between Israel and Hamas, urging them to stick to it and hurry aid to Gaza civilians. Here is a roundup of reactions from official statements, broadcast remarks and online messages. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said it was "imperative that this ceasefire removes the significant security and political obstacles to delivering aid across Gaza so that we can support a major increase in urgent life-saving humanitarian support". US President Joe Biden said he was "thrilled" that hostages would be freed and "confident" the deal would hold. "I'm deeply satisfied this has... finally come," he said in a televised statement. Incoming US president Donald Trump vowed to "work closely with Israel and our Allies to make sure Gaza NEVER again becomes a terrorist safe haven". European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said "both parties must fully implement this agreement, as a stepping stone toward lasting stability in the region". Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hoped the agreement "will be beneficial for our region and for all humanity, particularly for our Palestinian brothers, and that it will open the way to lasting peace and stability". Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry stressed "the need to adhere to the agreement and stop the Israeli aggression on Gaza", calling for "the complete withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the Gaza Strip and all other Palestinian and Arab territories and the return of the displaced to their areas"—DNA

UK's Starmer to ink '100-year' accord during Ukraine visit

KYIV, UKRAINE: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer arrived in Kyiv on Thursday on an unannounced visit to sign a "100-year accord" and shore up support for Ukraine ahead of its Starmer's first official visit to Kyiv since taking office in July, and comes as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy holds a flurry of meetings with his country's allies ahead of Trump's return next week. Starmer was greeted at Kyiv railway station by UK ambassador to Ukraine Martin Harris. The prime minister is expected to sign a "landmark 100-year partnership to deepen security ties" between the UK and Ukraine and meet with Zelenskyy, Downing Street said in a statement. "Putin's ambition to wrench Ukraine away from its closest partners has been a monumental strategic failure," Starmer said, referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine nearly three years ago. "Instead, we are closer than ever, and this partnership will take that friendship to the next level," he said of the accord. The deal commits the two sides to cooperate on defence and battlefield technology, such as drones, while implementing a system to help locate grain from occupied parts of Ukraine exported by Russia. "This is not just about the here and now. It is also about an investment in our two countries for the next century, bringing together technology, development, scientific advances and cultural exchanges, and harnessing the phenomenal innovation shown by Ukraine in recent years for generations to come," added Starmer. He is also expected to announce an extra \$10 billion to aid Ukraine's post-war economic recovery. Zelenskyy had earlier said that he and Starmer would discuss the possibility of having Western troops stationed in Ukraine to oversee a ceasefire agreement, a divisive proposal initially put forward by French President Emmanuel Macron—APP

Bangladeshi envoy to UAE pays courtesy call on Pakistani envoy



ABU DHABI: The newly appointed Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Arab Emirates, Tarique Ahmed on Thursday paid a courtesy call on Ambassador of Pakistan to the UAE, Faizal Niaz Tirmizi here at the Pakistan House. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including cooperation in trade and investment, efforts to increase people-to-people contact and resumption of direct flights from Islamabad and Karachi to Dhaka, were discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of supporting the welfare of the large Pakistani and Bangladeshi diaspora in the UAE. Ambassadors Tirmizi highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh. He underscored that the immense untapped trade potential between Pakistan and Bangladesh could contribute to the economic growth of both nations. Ambassador Tariq reaffirmed

Fire-wrecked Los Angeles gets a break as winds drop

Federal authorities have launched a probe into the causes of the fires, as theories swirl over who was responsible. "We know everyone wants answers, and the community deserves answers," said Jose Medina of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which is taking the lead. "ATF will give you those answers, but it will be once we complete a thorough investigation" of the firing early next week. The Eaton Fire and the Palisades fire, which together have scorched more than 40,000 acres (16,000 hectares) were still smoldering Wednesday. Battalions of firefighters from across the United States, as well as from Mexico, were working to tamp down hot spots that could still flare, Los Angeles City fire chief Kristin Crowley told reporters. "Infrared flights last night indicated there are still numerous hot spots burning within the fire footprint, and very close attention was paid to address any flare up swiftly as to prevent any fire spread outside of the perimeter," she said. With tens of thousands of people still displaced by the fires, fire was far from normal in America's second biggest city. But children whose schools were damaged or are still affected by evacuation orders were welcomed into other institutions. Stay-at-home mom Caroline Nick took Emery, 11, and Andrew, 7, to Nora Steery Elementary on Wednesday after their own school was lost to the blaze. Nick, whose home was destroyed in the Palisades fire, said the children needed whatever semblance of normality they could get. "My husband doesn't need to be listening to the adult conversations that my husband and I are having to have. It's not good for them," she told AFP. "They need to be busy doing this drawing and coloring, playing and running and laughing." The confirmed death toll from the fires stood at 24, with Los Angeles County Coroner investigating another possible body. But the number of fatalities could still rise, as cadaver dogs continue a painstaking search of hundreds of buildings. More than 12,000 structures have been razed, including multi-million dollar homes in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood. Estimates of the eventual cost of the tragedy have now risen to as high as \$275 billion, a figure that would make it one of the most expensive in US history. The relief operation around the city was in full force, with local, state and federal bodies offering help with everything from replacing lost driving licenses to footing hotel bills. A huge private effort was also taking shape, with thousands of volunteers staffing giveaways of food, clothing and baby supplies for those in need. Hollywood megastar Leonardo DiCaprio was among those stepping up with donations. "The Los Angeles wildfires are devastating our city," the "Titanic" star wrote on Instagram. "I am committing \$1 million in partnership with @redcross Rapid Response Program to support both urgent needs and post-fire recovery efforts." DiCaprio's cash comes on the heels of \$1 million donations from fellow actors Jamie Lee Curtis and Eva Longoria. Federal authorities have launched a probe into the causes of the fires, as theories swirl over who was responsible. "We know everyone wants answers, and the community deserves answers," said Jose Medina of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which is taking the lead. "ATF will give you those answers, but it will be once we complete a thorough investigation"—APP

More than 19.5m Yemenis in need as crisis worsens: UN

UNITED NATIONS: More than 19.5 million people in Yemen will need assistance in 2025, a senior UN official said Wednesday, expressing concern over a worsening humanitarian crisis and for children suffering from malnutrition. "People in Yemen continue to face a severe humanitarian and protection crisis," said Joyce Msuya, interim chief of the United Nations' humanitarian agency (OCHA). And the crisis will only get worse, she added, citing the organization's forthcoming consolidated humanitarian appeal for 2025. Around 17 million people in Yemen need humanitarian assistance and protection this year — 1.3 million more than in 2024, she said. On top of this, an estimated 4.4 million people remain internally displaced, the majority of whom are women and children. Nearly half of children under five years old suffer from moderate to severe stunting caused by malnutrition, while the country's stressed health system is overwhelmed by "appalling levels" of cholera. Hans Grundberg, the United Nations special envoy for Yemen, who just visited the capital Sanaa that is controlled by the Iran-backed Houthi militants, stressed the need for "unprecedented humanitarian and genuine engagement for peace"—APP

UAE mediates exchange of 50 Russian, Ukrainian war captives

LONDON: UAE mediation efforts resulted in a new exchange of 50 prisoners of war between Russia and Ukraine on Wednesday. The United Arab Emirates announced that Moscow and Kyiv exchanged 25 Ukrainians and 25 Russians captured during the war between the neighboring states. It brings the total number of captives exchanged through UAE mediation efforts to 2,583 since the war began in February 2022. The UAE has long supported diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict between Moscow and Kyiv. Emirates News Agency reported. The UAE Foreign Ministry said that the success of the eleventh captive exchange since 2024 reflects Russia and Ukraine's trust in the Emirati leadership and diplomacy. Abu Dhabi is committed to a peaceful resolution to the war in Eastern Europe and addressing its humanitarian impacts on refugees and captives. Additionally, the UAE successfully facilitated the exchange of 20 prisoners between the US and Russia in December 2022.

Spain pledges 10m euros for Lebanon army

BEIRUT: Spain's top diplomat announced Wednesday a 10 million aid package for Lebanon's army, in a boost for the armed forces who have a crucial role in implementing a fragile Israeli-Hizbollah ceasefire. "This announcement of 10 million euros for the United Nations Development Programme" will contribute to "supplement the salaries of the Lebanese Armed Forces" as well as finance "social and logistical aspects" of the army, Jose Manuel Abens was said during a visit to Beirut. Lebanon has struggled for years to finance its public institutions including the army following a 2019 economic crisis. It now also faces the challenge of rebuilding the country after more than two months of war between Hizbollah and Israel that the group had initiated over the Gaza conflict ended in November. "Ad far, the reconstruction especially of south of Lebanon, will be necessary to reduce the country," Abens told reporters after meeting Lebanon's new president, former army chief Joseph Aoun. Spain has contributed more than 650 personnel to the UN peacekeeping force in the country's south (UNIFIL) with force chief Antonio Lazaro hailing from Spain—APP

Briefs

ATC grants interim bail to Afridi

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has granted interim bail to former federal minister Shohryaf Afridi in five cases related to the D-Chowk protest. The hearing was held in Islamabad ATC, where Judge Ahsan-Ul-Haque presided over the proceedings concerning Afridi's bail applications. Shohryaf Afridi appeared in court with his lawyers, Sardar Musroof and Amin Ali. The court allowed him to mark his attendance and leave. During the proceedings, Afridi's lawyer, Sardar Musroof Advocate, requested the court to extend the Afridi's interim bail along with other co-accused until February. Subsequently, the court extended Afridi's interim bail in the five D-Chowk protest cases until February 15.

Sheikh Rashid urges respect for constitution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Thursday expressed hope for the constitution and law to be respected in Pakistan. Speaking to media outside the Supreme Court, Rashid highlighted the ongoing crisis in the country, stating, "I do not foresee a solution that benefits Pakistanis and its people, but I pray for a positive outcome." He also lamented Pakistan's tarnished image on the international stage, emphasizing the need for the country's dignity to be upheld both domestically and globally. Rashid further urged the government to grant voting rights to overseas Pakistanis. The former minister noted that hearings of their cases in the Supreme Court could not proceed today (Thursday) due to the issue of military courts.

UK will 'never let up' on Ukraine support

LONDON: Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to put Ukraine in the "strongest possible position" this year as he made his first trip to Kyiv as prime minister. He said the UK would "never let up" on giving the necessary support to Ukraine in signing what Downing Street says is a "landmark 100-year partnership" pact with Ukraine. "Today is a truly historic day, our relationship is closer than ever," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters. The agreement formalises economic and military support already pledged to the country. Zelenskyy is keen to firm up security guarantees from key allies, wary that Donald Trump's new US administration could start pushing Ukraine to make peace with Russia.

The deal announced on Thursday includes economic aid, support for healthcare, and increased military collaboration on maritime security and drone technology. Unlike other prime ministers who rushed to Kyiv, Sir Keir took his time to visit, having visited previously as opposition leader. But after six months in office he came to Ukraine pledging long-term support to help fight what he called Russia's "illegal and barbaric invasion". In Kyiv, the two leaders walked behind an honour guard which carried wreaths in the national colours of the UK and Ukraine. After soldiers set down the wreaths, Sir Keir and President Zelenskyy placed their bouquets at the foot of the wall outside St Michael's Golden-Born Monastery. The Kyiv landmark is covered in photos of the dead and has become a place of pilgrimage for grieving families to pay tribute. As the leaders met for talks inside Kyiv's Mariinsky palace, multiple explosions and air raid sirens could be heard. - Agencies

Pakistan, Japan explore bilateral economic ties

Japanese Ambassador calls on Minister for Finance and Revenue

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Akamatsu Shinchi who called on the Minister at Finance Division today. The meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss ongoing economic reforms, bilateral relations, and opportunities for deeper economic cooperation. Minister Aurangzeb welcomed Mr. Akamatsu on assuming his diplomatic responsibilities in Islamabad, commending Japan's longstanding partnership with Pakistan. The Minister highlighted the positive momentum in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability, which he attributed to key reforms and structural adjustments across various sectors, including fiscal framework, taxation, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), energy, right-sizing of the federal government, and privatization efforts. The Minister emphasized that the government remains committed to continuing its reform agenda, focusing on critical issues such as population growth and climate change vulnerability. He noted the importance of the 10-year Country Partnership Framework signed with the World Bank, aimed at addressing



these challenges and fostering sustainable, inclusive economic growth. Minister Aurangzeb reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to maintaining the trust and credibility of its bilateral and multilateral development partners, including Japan. He expressed appreciation for Japan's diplomatic, economic, and technical support and urged Japanese investors to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in manufacturing and production, which would contribute to the country's exportable surplus. Ambassador Akamatsu expressed his appreciation for the progress made in Pakistan's macroeconomic stability and the government's reform efforts. He provided an update on the scope of ongoing Japanese investment in Pakistan, noting that around 80 Japanese companies currently operate in the country, employing over 65,000 local workers, and a significantly contributing to the Pakistani economy. Minister Aurangzeb acknowledged Japan's valuable contributions and assured the Ambassador of Pakistan's continued engagement with Japanese investors to incorporate their input in the upcoming federal budget's policy framework. Both sides expressed a strong desire to further strengthen bilateral economic ties and explore new avenues for collaboration.

Sindh govt decides to purchase EVs

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to auction off thousands of vehicles within a month and purchase electric vehicles (EVs) as replacement for government employees in Karachi. An important meeting of the Sindh Cabinet's Sub-Committee on Austerity, chaired by Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Memon, took place in Karachi. Provincial ministers Saeed Ghani, Zaid-Hassan Langar, Ali Hassan Zorbari, and various department secretaries attended the meeting. During the meeting, committee members issued instructions to regulate the auction process through the allotment of government vehicles through clear guidelines. Secretaries of various departments presented a 10-year record of government vehicles. Sharjeel Memon, in his address, stated that the auction process should be completed within a month to avoid further waste of resources and to fulfil the need for new vehicles. He emphasised that the purchase of EVs would benefit the government, save on fuel costs, and make the auction process easier. He further stated that the government is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of public resources. He warned that those misusing government vehicles should return them as per government orders.

Israel delays to ratify deal as Hamas confirms commitment to agreement

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: Hamas leader Ezzat Al-Resheq confirmed the Movement's commitment to the ceasefire agreement in Gaza announced by mediators on Wednesday evening, emphasizing that the Movement "rejects Israeli policies of evasion and procrastination." Al-Resheq said via his Telegram channel on Thursday that the Movement is committed to the ceasefire agreement announced by the mediators yesterday. This comes after the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed on Thursday that Hamas is retracting its agreements and creating a last-minute crisis that prevents reaching an accord. Netanyahu's office said in a statement that Hamas "is retracting from the explicit understandings reached with the mediators and Israel, in a last-minute attempt at extortion." It added that Israel "will not set a date for a cabinet and government meeting until the mediators announce that Hamas has agreed to all the details of the agreement." Qatar announced on Wednesday evening that the efforts of Qatari, Egyptian, and American mediation succeeded in reaching a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, set to begin next Sunday. The Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulmohsen Al Thani, confirmed at the announcement that Qatar, Egypt, and the

United States "will work to ensure the implementation of the agreement." The announcement of the agreement received widespread international support and joy from the Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip, which has been subjected to a genocidal war by the Israeli occupation forces since October 7, 2023. It was met with criticism from Israeli far-right ministers who demand the continuation of the war. A scheduled meeting of Israel's Security Cabinet on Thursday to ratify a Gaza cease-fire deal was postponed as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tries to convince his finance minister not to withdraw from the government over the agreement. Israeli media said, The Cabinet meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday to ratify the cease-fire agreement. But Netanyahu's office said the planned meeting was postponed, without giving another date, claiming that the move was taken after Hamas reneged on the ceasefire deal announced by mediators. The Israeli public broadcaster KAN said the meeting was delayed as Netanyahu was trying to convince Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich not to withdraw from the government over the deal. According to The Jerusalem Post newspaper, Smotrich's Religious Zionism Party held a meeting on Thursday morning to discuss the Gaza ceasefire deal and whether the party will stay in the government. Hamas on Thursday denied Netanyahu's claims about reneging on the deal and confirmed its commitment to the cease-fire agreement.

'Why delay?' Imran should be convicted now

Aleema Khan dismissed speculation that PTI party looking to US President elect Donald Trump for support

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, on Thursday called for a swift verdict in the Al-Qadir Trust case, saying the judiciary's credibility was at stake. Express News reported. Speaking to reporters outside the Islamabad High Court, she questioned the delay in announcing a decision. "The judge heard the case at length. Now, he should deliver the verdict. Why is he not doing so?" she asked. Aleema Khan dismissed speculation that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was looking to US President elect Donald Trump for support. "Has the PTI pinned any hopes on Trump? Why do you keep asking such questions? Has Imran Khan been sitting in jail for 18 months waiting for him?" she said. She insisted that her brother was in prison to prove his innocence. "Give him credit for that," she added. Calling the Al-Qadir Trust case "foolish," Aleema Khan said PTI was merely extending court dates. She alleged that journalists who report fairly on prison conditions are not granted access to Khan. She reiterated her demand for an immediate ruling. "We pray that the verdict is announced tomorrow," she said, adding that Imran Khan had full confidence in the judiciary. "It is no longer his test; it is the judiciary's test now. Some will pass, and some will fail." Aleema Khan suggested the delay of the verdict was pre-determined and criticised delays in its announcement. "If acquittal was meant to happen, it would have happened on day one," she said. "If a judge makes a biased or wrongful decision, the media will hold them accountable." She claimed that Imran Khan had sent a message saying the verdict was originally expected on Dec. 23, then on Jan. 6, and now the decision had allegedly leaked before its official announcement.

Our enemy will not defeat our resistance, says Hayya

DOHA: Khalid al-Hayya, a member of the political bureau of Hamas and the head of the Movement in the Gaza Strip, said on Wednesday evening that what happened on October 7, 2023, "a miraculous and military accomplishment carried out by the elite of the Al-Qassam Brigades" will remain a source of pride for the Palestinian people and their resistance, passed down from generation to generation. He emphasised, "Gaza has proven that our enemy will not defeat our people and our resistance, and they will not see a moment of weakness or defeat from us." Al-Hayya confirmed in a speech following the announcement of an agreement to cease hostilities in the Gaza Strip that the Al-Qassam Brigades has severely impacted the enemy. - Agencies

SC seeks data on civilian trials in military courts

Seven member bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan, heard appeals against trials of civilians under the Army Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has sought detailed records of military trials of civilians, questioning the evidentiary procedure followed in convictions. A seven-member constitutional bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan, heard appeals against the trials of civilians under the Army Act. During the proceedings, Justice Hassan Rizvi remarked that the court aims to review how evidence was evaluated in these cases. He noted that natural justice requires no one to be punished without being heard. Representing the Ministry of Defence, senior lawyer Khawaja Haris argued that military courts adhere to due process as the established procedures. He maintained that constitutional amendments were necessary to include civilians under military trial provisions. Justice Muhammad Ali Muzahar highlighted the importance of fair trials,

questioning whether military courts met those standards. Justice Jamal Mandokhail raised concerns about whether amendments to the Army Act appropriately addressed criminal activities involving civilians. The court requested data on all civilian cases tried under military law, excluding those linked to Indian national intelligence matters. Earlier this month, mercy petitions submitted by 19 individuals convicted for their involvement in the May 9 protests have been approved, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) announced in a statement on Thursday. "Sequl to the promulgation of amendments to 9th May Tragedy convicts, they have exercised their right to appeal and have asked for mercy / remission in their punishments," the military's media wing stated. The ISPR further said that a total of 67 convicts had submitted mercy petitions, with 48 of these petitions processed to Courts of Appeal. It added that the petitions of 19 convicts had been accepted "purely on humanitarian grounds, in accordance with law."

Pakistan Navy hands over command of CTF 150 to New Zealand navy

During Pakistan Navy's tenure from July 2024 to January 2025, CTF 150 conducted numerous maritime security operations. In addition to its active participation in CTF 150, ships of Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency independently interdicted three narcotics-laden dhows



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has successfully relinquished command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150. Commodore Asim Sobhal Malik of Pakistan Navy formally handed over command to Commodore Rodger Ward of Royal New Zealand Navy in the presence of Vice Admiral George Wilford, Commander of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), during a change of command ceremony held at Naval Support Activity, Bahrain. During Pakistan Navy's tenure from July 2024 to January 2025, CTF 150 conducted numerous maritime security

operations. In addition to its active participation in CTF 150, ships of Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency independently interdicted three narcotics-laden dhows. Collectively, Pakistan Navy and CMF interdicted approximately 10 tonnes of narcotics, with a street value exceeding 50 million US dollars over the last six months. Under Pakistan Navy's leadership, CTF 150 also actively fostered regional collaboration, securing the participation of ships from Kenya Navy and Royal Navy of Oman in CTF 150 operations. To further strengthen CMF's objectives, Commodore Asim Sobhal Malik engaged with key civil and military leaders of Mauritius, Kenya, and Sri Lanka. He emphasised collaboration, information sharing, and the exchange of best practices to address shared maritime security challenges. Reflecting on his tenure as Commander CTF 150, Commodore Asim Sobhal Malik shared his thoughts on the invaluable experiences, opportunities, and lasting memories of working with colleagues from around the globe. He highlighted Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment to collaborative maritime security in line with Pakistan's foreign policy and the vision of Admiral Naveed Afridi, Chief of the Naval Staff of Pakistan. He further stated that Pakistan Navy takes pride in its active participation within CMF, underscoring its steadfast dedication to contributing to maritime security. The incoming Commander CTF 150, Commodore Rodger Ward, expressed his gratitude to Pakistan Navy for its exemplary leadership and operational successes during its tenure. CTF 150 is one of five task forces under CMF, the world's largest naval partnership.

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