



# Islamabad POST

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**EU ready for 'tough' negotiations with US: Ursula von der Leyen**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Pak to enhance bilateral coop with France**

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**Mbappe out of Copa del Rey quarters**

Detailed News On Page-06



## To curb cross-border terrorism Army demands 'concrete actions' by Afghan govt

Forum expresses concern over "reckless, provocative statements" from Indian military leadership

ANSAR M BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: Amid rising terror incidents in the country, the military's top brass on Tuesday expressed grave concern over the continued use of Afghan soil against Pakistan by terrorists and demanded "concrete and tangible actions" by the interim Afghan government. The concern was expressed during the 267th Corps Commanders' Conference at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, chaired by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). "The forum stressed the imperative of concrete and tangible actions by interim Afghan government against Fitna Al Khawarj instead of denials as well as continuing with the strategy of undertaking all necessary measures in defence of Pakistan and its people," the military's media wing said. The meeting came days after 18 soldiers were martyred while thwarting an "act of terrorism" in Balochistan, adding that 23 terrorists were killed in subsequent clearance operations. The ISPR had said the terrorists attempted to establish roadblocks in the general area of Mangocher in Kalat district. "On behest of inimical and hostile forces, this cowardly act of terrorism was aimed at disrupting the peaceful environment of Balochistan by targeting mainly innocent civilians." It said that security forces and law enforcement agencies were immediately mobilised, "who successfully thwarted the evil design of terrorists and sent twelve terrorists to hell, ensuring security and protection of the local populace". However, the ISPR said that 18 soldiers "made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced martyrdom" during the conduct of operations, adding that sanitisation operations were being conducted and the "perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of this heinous and cowardly act, will be brought to justice".

Continued on Page 06

## Official who criticised girls' education ban leaves Afghanistan

Taliban has enforced a three-year ban on female education, preventing girls from attending school beyond grade six

AGENCIES

KABUL: A senior Taliban minister who publicly condemned the group's ban on girls' and women's education has reportedly fled Afghanistan, citing fears of arrest. Sher Abbas Stanikzai, the Taliban's political deputy at the foreign ministry, had previously called for the reopening of schools for girls and women, claiming the ban contradicted Sharia law. In January, Mr Stanikzai spoke out during a graduation ceremony in Khost province, urging the Taliban leadership to reconsider its stance, saying, "There is no excuse for this - not now and not in the future." He added, "We are being unjust to 20 million people," referring to the female population of Afghanistan. His remarks marked the first public criticism of the Taliban's education policy, highlighting internal divisions within the group. The Taliban has enforced a nationwide ban on female education for over three years, preventing girls from attending school beyond the sixth grade.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing about Jinnah Square (underpasses) constructed in record 72 days. - DNA

## US deports over 200 Indians

This is likely the first of many such flights that will bring illegal Indian immigrants

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: A US military aircraft is bringing back more than 200 Indians deported from the US, according to a media report on Tuesday. Local broadcaster, citing sources, reported that a US C-17 military aircraft is returning the Indian nationals and that "each deported Indian national is verified, indicating New Delhi's involvement in the deportation process." "This is likely the first of many such flights that will bring illegal Indian immigrants in the US back," the report said. The Indian Foreign Ministry has yet to issue a statement on the matter.

Continued on Page 06

## Major reshuffle in IHC

Justice Dogar replaces Justice Kayani as administrative judge for ATC, accountability courts

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has undergone significant administrative changes following the arrival of three new judges. An office order, issued with the approval of Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, states that Justice Sarfraz Dogar has replaced Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani as the administrative judge for the anti-terrorism courts (ATC) and the accountability courts. Previously, Justice Kayani held this position.

Continued on Page 06

## Sans utility stores

# PM Shehbaz vows corruption-free Ramadan package

Government received complaints about Ramadan Package run by the USC last year, says premier

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Tuesday that the government would unveil the Ramadan Relief Package this year without the involvement of the Utility Stores to prevent corruption and the distribution of low-quality commodities to the people. "As the month of Holy Ramadan is about to start, I have asked the Ministry of National Food Security to bring about a Ramadan package without Utility Stores. I had asked many months ago that this cannot go on with the Utility Stores," the premier said while addressing a federal cabinet meeting on Tuesday. Last month, the incumbent government formed a seven-member cabinet committee to oversee the prompt shutdown of USC operations nationwide. The committee was also tasked with devising a strategy for distributing the Ramadan package in coordination with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

Continued on Page 06

## Zardari's visit holds great significance: Chinese envoy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong has said that President Asif Ali Zardari's visit to China holds great significance in charting the course for China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperation and guiding the direction for bilateral relations amid profound changes unseen in a century. This high-level strategic guidance provides fundamental guarantee for the development of China-Pakistan relations, the ambassador

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### 'Contacts with military confirmed'

"The Army Chief asked to sit with the federal government," KP CM said

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has said that the PTI's formal contacts with the powers that be started after October 4. "The Army Chief asked to sit with the federal government," KP CM said. Chief Minister KP said that everyone has to be taken onboard over the issue of the delegation to Afghanistan. "It is good that the PTI's founder has written a letter to the Army Chief, we will see what the reply comes from him," Gandapur said. "Our formal communication was begun on October 04. It was suggested to sit with the party's founder for talks," Gandapur said. "There was a suggestion to shift the founder to Nathia Gali, Governor House, Bani-Galla or the Chief Minister's House", KP chief ministers said.

### JCP to meet on Feb 6

Meeting would consider the name of AG Punjab for his appointment as an additional judge

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi will chair the Judicial Commission meeting on Thursday (February 6) at the Supreme Court (SC) building in Islamabad to discuss the appointment of additional judges to 26 vacant posts in the Lahore High Court (LHC). Sources told that the meeting would consider the name of Advocate General Punjab Khalid Ishaq for his appointment as an additional judge. Similarly, they informed, the names of Advocate SC Awasi Khalid, Hassan Nawaz Makhdoom, Waqar Haider Awan, Advocate SC Malik Javed Iqbal Wains and others.

## In civilian trials case

# SC judge questions military courts' powers

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar says Army Act applied when civilians incited military personnel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail questioned the scope of military courts' authority under the Army Act on Monday. A seven-member constitutional bench, led by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, was hearing the intra-court appeal against the military trials of civilians, during which senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja presented arguments on behalf of the convicted defendant, Arzam Junaid. During the hearing, Raja referred to the Brigadier (ret'd) FB Ali case, saying that the decision was based on the 1962 Constitution, which only allowed civilians' trial in military courts if fundamental rights were ensured. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned how FB Ali, a civilian, was court-martialed under the same precedent. Justice Mandokhail further raised a critical query: "What are the powers of military courts under the Army Act? Can a non-military person be tried solely on the basis of their crime?" Raja explained that in the FB Ali case, discussions focused on

Continued on Page 06

## SC moved against Peca amendments

Petitioner urges apex court to "strike down Act" and review the tweaks as well as law too by full court

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ruling coalition government's amendments to the controversial Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) have been challenged in the Supreme Court on Tuesday. "It is humbly requested in the national interest of peace, and stability both the amendment and existing law may kindly be reviewed in the full court bench in the light of the freedom of expression of our opinion and view to disseminate to our society," reads the plea. Muhammad Qayum Khan, in his petition, has requested the SC to declare amendments to the Peca as "ultra vires" to

Continued on Page 06

# United States suspends \$ 845 million aid projects in Pakistan

Abrupt suspension has halted development initiatives and placed hundreds of Pakistani jobs at risk

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The United States has suspended aid projects worth over \$845 million in Pakistan following President Donald Trump's directive to cut funding for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) projects worldwide. The abrupt suspension has halted crucial development initiatives and placed hundreds of Pakistani jobs at risk. The US has immediately frozen 39 major USAID-funded projects in Pakistan across various sectors, including energy, economic development, agriculture, democracy, human rights and governance, education, health, and humanitarian assistance. Many of these initiatives, fully or partially funded by USAID, have now come to a standstill, with local NGOs and organisations struggling to sustain operations due to the withdrawal of promised funds. Among the most significant suspended projects is the Integrated Health Systems Strengthening and Service Delivery Integrated Health System Program, a \$86 million initiative aimed at strengthening Pakistan's healthcare infrastructure. The Global Health Supply Chain Program, valued at \$52 million, was designed to ensure

Continued on Page 06

## FO confirms


# 13 Pakistanis among dead in boat tragedy

Out of around 66 Pakistanis on board, only 22 survived: Reports


STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) confirmed that 13 Pakistanis died in last month's boat tragedy near Mauritania-Morocco. The FO had earlier reported that the boat, carrying 80 people, capsized near Morocco on January 16. Over 40 Pakistanis were believed to be among the dead. Migrant rights group Walking Borders estimated that around 50 people may have drowned while trying to reach Spain's Canary Islands from West Africa. Reports suggest that more than 40 Pakistanis were killed by African human traffickers on the boat.

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# Pak, France discuss enhancing bilateral coop in key sectors

“We want the French government to help train Pakistanis according to the specific demands of the French labor market. By equipping them with the right skills, we can ensure that they excel in these sectors while working in France,” said Minister Hussain

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, met with the Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, to explore ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in key sectors such as labor migration, human resource development, and overseas employment. During the meeting, Minister Hussain emphasized the invaluable contributions of overseas Pakistanis to the national economy and stressed the importance of further strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and France. He also highlighted the potential for Pakistanis to thrive in sectors of high demand in France, including hospitality, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, shipbuilding, and civil engineering, said a press

release issued here on Tuesday. “We want the French government to help train Pakistanis according to the specific demands of the French labor market. By equipping them with the right skills, we can ensure that they excel in these sectors while working in France,” said Minister Hussain. He further added, “Such targeted training programs would not only address labor shortages in France but would also provide a safe and legal pathway for Pakistanis to work abroad, preventing the tragic loss of life that many have suffered while attempting illegal immigration routes.” The minister said that my vision to provide opportunities for Pakistanis to work abroad through legal means, preventing illegal migration by enabling them to gain the skills required by foreign job markets. He emphasized that this approach would be the most effective strategy to reduce illegal immigration

and protect the lives and dignity of Pakistani citizens. Ambassador Galey expressed France’s keen interest in exploring opportunities for collaboration in Pakistan’s human resource development, particularly in vocational education and training. He acknowledged the skilled Pakistani workforce and noted the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships in technology, innovation, and other sectors. Minister Hussain also reiterated the government of Pakistan’s firm commitment to ensuring the safety, rights, and interests of overseas Pakistanis, promising to continue efforts to guarantee their safe and dignified employment abroad. He appreciated France’s ongoing support for Pakistan’s development initiatives, especially in education and vocational training. This meeting is seen as a key step towards further strengthening Pakistan-France relations and fostering collaboration in areas of shared interest.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists are on their way through newly inaugurated Serena Interchange by Prime Minister, which is completed in record timing of 72 Days in Federal Capital

## Ayaz reaffirms Pak's unwavering support for Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday reaffirmed the country’s strong and unwavering commitment to supporting the Kashmir cause on all diplomatic, political, and international fronts. He emphasized that Pakistan will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir. In his statement, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the nation’s resolute and steadfast position on the Kashmir dispute, noting that Pakistan observes Kashmir Solidarity Day every year on 5th February. He reiterated Pakistan’s firm support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right to self-determination. The Speaker condemned the persistent human rights violations and abuses by Indian forces in Kashmir, expressing grave concern over the plight of the Kashmiri people. Denouncing India’s revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A—which had accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir—he termed the move a blatant violation of international law and a disregard for the region’s disputed status. He underscored the urgent need for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, reaffirming that these resolutions guarantee the Kashmiri people’s right to self-determination and call for an end to India’s unlawful occupation of the territory.—APP

## Massive human chain to express solidarity with Kashmiris: Imtiaz

ISLAMABAD: Former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Imtiaz Khan, in his special message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5, stated that the people of Pakistan, as in previous years, will once again show unparalleled solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. From Karachi to Khyber and from Bhimber to Tattobut in Azad Kashmir, a human chain will be formed on all bridges, while rallies and

gatherings will be held to express solidarity. The citizens, both inside Pakistan and abroad, will raise their voices in support of the Kashmiri people. In his message, Sardar Imtiaz Khan emphasized that Pakistan remains a steadfast supporter of the Kashmir Liberation Movement and is central to the aspirations and hopes of Kashmiris. He praised the courageous stance of the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan, General Asim Munir, whose firm support for the

Kashmir cause has given new strength and courage to the Kashmiri people. He further stated that Kashmiris continue to make sacrifices for the fulfillment of their internationally recognized right to self-determination. Despite India’s occupation of the region, turning it into a military garrison, the Kashmiri people continue to struggle for the ideological foundation of Jammu and Kashmir’s freedom from India and its rightful integration with Pakistan.—APP

## Alhamra presents play 'Paisa Bolta Hai'

LAHORE: The Lahore Arts Council, Alhamra, delighted audiences with the uproarious play “Paisa Bolta Hai” (Money Talks), a comedy that left the audience in splits. The play, staged at Alhamra, showcased the exceptional talents of renowned actor Iftikhar Thakur, who captivated the audience with his impeccable performance. He was joined by artists from the Alhamra Academy of Performing Arts, who had participated in a comedy theatre workshop and delivered their roles with finesse and flair. The event was graced by Alhamra Executive Director Tauqeer Haider Kazmi, along with esteemed actors such as Khalid Abbas Dar, Aurangzeb Laghari, Mohsin Gillani, Javed Rizvi and Ashraf Khan among others. The dignitaries thoroughly enjoyed the performance and lauded the artists for their outstanding portrayal of the characters. The play, written by Professor Sadiq Ahmed and directed by Qaiser Javid, will continue to be staged at Alhamra until February 5, with free entry for the public. The play “Paisa Bolta Hai” entertained and taught a profound moral lesson. Its engaging dialogue, compelling narrative and visually captivating scenes resonated deeply with the audience. The overwhelming response from the public highlighted their appreciation for Alhamra’s efforts to promote quality theater and cultural activities. Earlier in the day, Khalid Abbas Dar met with Tauqeer Haider Kazmi at his office. Kazmi discussed literary and cultural activities being organized at Alhamra during the meeting. Expressing his admiration, Khalid Abbas Dar remarked, “Those who work for literature and art are the true assets to this nation.” The Lahore Arts Council continues to be a beacon of artistic excellence, bringing thought-provoking.—APP

## Multinational maritime exercise AMAN to start from Feb 7

KARACHI: The 9th edition of Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN and maiden AMAN Dialogue 2025 aimed at bringing maritime nations together to adopt safe and sustainable procedures, share experiences and collectively address maritime challenges to commence from February 07. The exercise, divided in sea and harbor phases, is scheduled from 7 to 11 February with participation from over 60 countries including ships, aircrafts, special operations forces, EOD marine teams and observers, the commander Pakistan Fleet Rear Admiral Abdul Munib informed the media personnel in a press briefing here on Tuesday. The growing global participation with representation from every region of the world in the AMAN 2025 reflects the international community’s confidence in Pakistan Navy’s role in collaborative maritime security, he said.

“This confidence has led to yet another milestone the introduction of the maiden AMAN Dialogue, which will be conducted from February 8 to 10 alongside Exercise AMAN 2025,” he announced and informed that the AMAN Dialogue will bring together Chiefs of Navies, Coast Guards and Defence forces to exchange views on shared global and regional maritime issues. It will serve as a platform for adopting innovative solutions to address the ever-evolving challenges at sea, he stated adding, in essence, the AMAN Dialogue will merge intellectual discourse with real time practical experiences in the maritime domain. With the evolving global landscape shifting from geo-politics to geo-economics, the security of global seaborne trade and energy routes has gained unprecedented importance while the Indian Ocean region faces a range of challenges from

traditional security threats to non-traditional risks, he highlighted. These multifaceted issues have broadened the scope of maritime security, compelling nations to re-evaluate their strategies and policies, he added. Pakistan recognizes that no single country can address the complex challenges at sea alone, he stated adding that Pakistan Navy, in this context, launched biennial multinational exercise AMAN in 2007 under the slogan “Together for Peace”. The participation of naval chiefs of 14 countries has been confirmed so far while we are expecting to receive more confirmations as well, he added. On a question about the contribution of the exercises in fostering the blue economy, he said that our objective is secure and safe seas for global trade as security and maritime economy are intertwined in maritime domain.—APP

## Faisalabad photojournalist association elects new leadership unopposed

DNA

FAISALABAD :The Faisalabad Photojournalist Association has elected its new leadership for the 2025 annual term, with all officials selected unopposed. A general house meeting was held at the Press Club, where approximately 38 photojournalists participated in the election process, demonstrating unity and enthusiasm. The newly elected office bearers include: President: Muhammad Tahir Najfi, General Secretary: Taya Bashir Ahmed, Senior Vice President: Javed Mahesh, Vice President: Rana Liaquat Ali, Finance Secretary: Taswar Abbas, Joint Secretaries: Malik Saeed and Rana Adnan, In-



formation Secretary: Aqeel Pervaz, Governing Body Members: Ali Hassan, Sagar, Shabbir, Qaiser Iqbal, Roman Rumi, Sheikh Sharafat, Usman Butt, Shaikat Lazar, and Mirza Haroon. The elections took place in a peaceful and vibrant atmosphere, with a large number of association members actively participating. In his address, newly elected President Muhammad Tahir Najfi reaffirmed his commitment to working diligently for the betterment of photojournalists.

The event was also graced by the presence of senior photojournalists, including Naeem Chaudhry, Idrees Chughtai, Asadullah, and Zafarullah Khan, who extended their support and encouragement to the newly elected body.

## Carbon neutrality experts discuss climate solutions with PM's aide

ISLAMABAD: A five-member delegation of Minus 2 Degrees (M2D), a USA-based company specializing in carbon neutrality solutions, met with Romina Khurshid Alam, the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, at her office on Tuesday. The meeting focused on carbon reduction strategies aimed at tackling climate change challenges and environmental sustainability. Romina emphasized that Pakistan’s carbon trading policy guidelines represent a significant milestone in establishing a national carbon market. These guidelines, she stated, are crucial for attracting green investments and helping Pakistan meet its climate goals under the

Paris Agreement. Romina said, “This initiative is designed to encourage businesses to adopt cleaner technologies and practices, facilitating the transition to a low-carbon economy. By operationalizing these guidelines, we are aligning with international standards and positioning Pakistan as a leader in carbon trading.” She said M2D offered a range of services focused on carbon neutrality, utilizing advanced tools for emissions management and compliance with environmental standards. During the meeting, PM’s aide called for collaboration with both local and international stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the carbon

trading guidelines. She also underscored the importance of maintaining integrity and transparency in carbon credit generation. “This is a watershed moment for Pakistan’s climate action journey,” she remarked, urging developed nations to support emerging economies in leveraging the benefits of carbon markets. The delegation presented a portfolio of proposed projects aimed at fostering collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) and other stakeholders. These initiatives align with Pakistan’s climate priorities, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, transitioning to 60% renewable energy,


and expanding nature-based solutions. Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change, Aisha Humera Moriani, encouraged the delegation to collaborate with the Board of Investment at the federal level and the Punjab government to promote net-zero carbon initiatives within the industrial sector. She also highlighted the importance of involving the business community in this transition toward sustainability. Moriani noted the success of Bangladesh’s economic zone dedicated to similar climate objectives, which could serve as a model for Pakistan. She emphasized the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate environmental responsibility into economic development frameworks.


Additional Secretary of the Climate Ministry, Zulfiqar Younas, reviewed the delegation’s proposals and provided valuable feedback to guide future collaborations. Romina underscored the importance of these initiatives in addressing Pakistan’s pressing climate challenges. “Collaborative action today will safeguard our communities and ecosystems for a more secure future,” she stated. PM’s aide reiterated her commitment to engaging all stakeholders in achieving Pakistan’s national climate goals. She said the Ministry of Climate Change remains committed to fostering partnerships that align with global climate action frameworks while addressing local needs.—APP

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### FEBRUARY

Feb 04/Sri Lanka	National Day
Feb 06/N. Zealand	National Day
Feb 06/Uganda	Army Day
Feb 11/Iran	Revolution day
Feb 16/ DPR Korea	National Day
Feb 16/Lithuania	National Day
Feb 18/Gambia	National Day
Feb 19/Nepal	Democracy Day
Feb 23/Uzbekistan	National Day
Feb 23/Brunei	National Day
Feb 23/Guyana	National Day
Feb 23/Russia	National Army Day
Feb 23/Tajikistan	Armed Forces Day
Feb 25/Kuwait	National Day



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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
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& Rescue Services.....	4451122
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PIMS.....	9261170-79
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Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Nasir calls for govt-business community collaboration

President Nasir Qureshi emphasized that the ICCI is fully committed to working alongside the government to ensure continued economic stability. "The initiatives being undertaken by the government are a step in the right direction, and we are optimistic that they will create a favorable environment for businesses to thrive, which will directly contribute to the nation's economic prosperity," he said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), underscored the vital role of a strong partnership between the government and the business community in tackling the country's economic challenges and paving the way for sustainable growth. Speaking at a ceremony held at the Chamber House,

Qureshi commended the government for its recent achievements, including the stabilization of the dollar, reduction in markup rates, and controlling inflation. He emphasized that the ICCI is fully committed to working alongside the government to ensure continued economic stability. "The initiatives being undertaken by the government are a step in the right direction, and we are optimistic that they will create a favorable environment for busi-

nesses to thrive, which will directly contribute to the nation's economic prosperity," Qureshi said. Qureshi also praised the Federal Finance Minister, Senator Aurangzeb, for his proactive approach in addressing tax-related issues with the Chief Justice of Pakistan, aiming for faster resolution of disputes between the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and taxpayers. He proposed the establishment of a Dispute Resolution Committee consisting of

members from both the ICCI and the FBR, which would streamline dispute resolution, reduce litigation costs, and foster a collaborative business environment. Furthermore, Qureshi called for the creation of an FBR facilitation desk at the ICCI, similar to the ones already operating for TDAP, NADRA, FTO, and Police Verification, to improve coordination and support the business community. He also emphasized the importance

of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the economy. Qureshi proposed extending tax exemptions to startups and small e-commerce businesses while offering incentives to promote entrepreneurship. Lastly, he advocated for special incentives for Special Economic Zones in the region to foster the growth of businesses and enhance regional economic development.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with H.e. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador Of Japan.

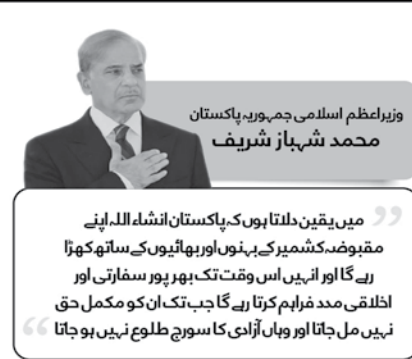
# Salik calls for modern education in seminaries

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Tuesday visited Jamia Muhammadiyah in the federal capital and reviewed the ongoing examinations conducted under the auspices of Wifaq-ul-Madaris. During the visit, the minister expressed satisfaction with the examination system managed by Wifaq-ul-Madaris, highlighting its adherence to international academic standards and its role as a model for other educational institutions.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasized the significance of religious seminaries, noting that their curriculum is designed to provide education in a pure and spiritually enriching environment. He acknowledged the pivotal role played by seminaries, mosques, and religious scholars in promoting and preserving Islamic teachings. "The existence of religious seminaries has been a fundamental part of Muslim society throughout history. Their importance today remains as vital as it was in the past," he remarked. "These institutions continue to be the primary centers for imparting authentic Islamic education." The minister further stated that seminaries serve as vital institutions that help Muslims safeguard their faith and beliefs. He highlighted the long-standing support of his father, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, for religious scholars and seminaries, emphasizing his father's commitment to advocating for their cause. He also lauded the contributions of renowned scholars such as Maulana Taqi Usmani and Maulana Hanif Jalandhari in shaping societal values and promoting Islamic teachings. "Religious seminaries are not just fortresses of Islam and sources of guidance; they are also among the world's largest non-governmental organizations, providing free education, accommodation, food, and healthcare to millions of students," he noted. "They are significantly contributing to literacy and education levels in society." Chaudhry Salik Hussain also underscored the role of seminaries in preserving Islamic family values and cultural heritage, describing them as a shield against the influence of non-Islamic traditions. He pointed out that female enrollment in seminaries has surpassed that of male students and that these institutions are offering education to girls in remote areas where access to schooling was previously limited. Highlighting the need for modern education in seminaries, the minister called for the introduction of vocational training programs alongside religious studies. "It is essential to incorporate courses that equip students with professional skills in addition to religious education," he said. —DNA

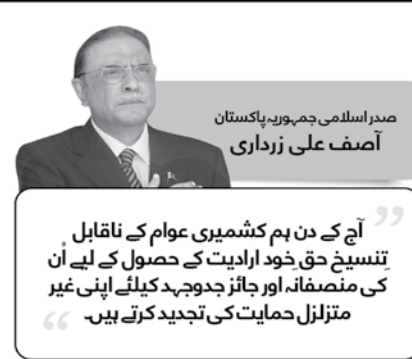
## Pakistan to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day with global advocacy: Muqam

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, on Tuesday said Pakistan will mark Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 (tomorrow) with nationwide events and global advocacy to reaffirm support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination. Addressing a press conference, Minister Muqam announced a series of activities, including a one-minute silence at 10:00 AM to honor Kashmir's martyrs. Flanked by Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, he said a solidarity rally will be held at Constitution Avenue, Islamabad, attended by federal ministers, lawmakers, and Kashmiri leaders. President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued statements reaffirming Pakistan's diplomatic, political, and moral support for Kashmiris. The federal minister said, Pakistani embassies and consulates worldwide organized seminars, rallies, and exhibitions exposing India's human rights violations in Indian occupied Kashmir. The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, in collaboration with PNCA and Lok Virsa, arranged documentaries, poetry recitals, and theatrical performances in Islamabad. — APP



وزیراعظم اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان محمد شہباز شریف

میں یقین دلاتا ہوں کہ پاکستان انشاء اللہ اپنے مقبوضہ کشمیر کی پختہ اور بھائیوں کے ساتھ کھڑا رہے گا اور انہیں اس وقت تک بھرپور سفارتی اور اطلاقی مدد فراہم کرتا رہے گا جب تک ان کو مکمل حق نہیں مل جاتا اور وہیں آزادی کا سورج طلوع نہیں ہو جاتا



صدر اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان آصف علی زرداری

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78 سال سے جاری حق خود ارادیت کی جدوجہد میں اپنی جانوں کا نذرانہ پیش کرنے والے تمام شہداء کو سلام

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#KashmirSolidarityDay  
#5thFebruary

## Over Rs 186b distributed under PMLYS

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, on Tuesday, said that loans worth more than Rs 186 billion had been distributed under the Prime Minister's Loan Youth Scheme (PMLYS) so far. According to the PMYP office, Mashhood said that the scope of the PMLYS had been expanded and the State Bank of Pakistan had issued a notification in this regard.

The Chairman PMYP informed that in addition to the provision of loans to youth, loans for laptops would also be available under the PMLYS programme.

Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan further stated that students aged 18 to 30 from Higher Education Commission-approved institutions can avail the facility of getting laptops.

He said that youngsters going abroad for employment would also be eligible for obtaining a Rs one million loan while these loans would be given for training, visa, and travel expenses.

"Empowering youth is key to driving economic development and ensuring a prosperous future for our nation," he said and added that the PMYP office was striving to provide more opportunities for the youth of the country. —APP

## Anti-polio campaign continues in ICT on Second Day

ISLAMABAD: The second day of the polio vaccination campaign is underway in the federal capital, with teams working across schools, bus stops, and public spaces to ensure every child receives the anti-polio drops. In this regard, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration was closely monitoring the efforts, emphasizing the importance of community cooperation. The polio vaccination campaign in the federal capital has entered its second day, with teams actively administering drops to children in schools and public areas. Polio workers have been stationed at various bus stops and high-traffic locations to reach as many children as possible. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioners are overseeing the operations, ensuring the campaign runs smoothly. On the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner East has also conducted inspections to monitor the teams' progress. Security measures have been tightened for polio teams, following directives from the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, said Memon. —APP

## letter to editor

### Symphony of perspectives

IN today's society, it's easy to get caught up in the idea that our own point of view is the only one that matters. We often find ourselves immersed in a culture of intolerance, where differing opinions are met with hostility and disrespect. However, it's essential to recognize that every individual has their unique perspective, shaped by their experiences, values, and beliefs. It's time for us to learn to respect and appreciate these diverse viewpoints.

When engaging with others, it's crucial to approach conversations with empathy and an open mind. We must acknowledge that our own perspective is not the only truth and that others may have valid points to share. By listening actively and responding thoughtfully, we can foster a culture of respectful dialogue. Imposing our own point of view on others can lead to division, conflict, and even hatred. When we expect others to conform to our way of thinking, we undermine their autonomy and individuality. This can result in a breakdown of relationships, both personal and professional. In contrast, embracing diversity of thought can enrich our lives and broaden our understanding of the world. It's time for us to shift our mindset and recognize the importance of respecting diverse perspectives. Whether in our personal, political, professional, or social lives, we must strive to create an environment where differing opinions are valued and encouraged. In conclusion, respecting diverse perspectives is essential for building a more tolerant, empathetic, and inclusive world. By embracing the beauty of diverse thought, we can create a society where everyone's voice is valued and respected.

— Khadija Noor



## Briefs

## Constable Zafar laid to rest with Police honours

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police on Tuesday offered the funeral prayer of Constable Zafar Iqbal at the Police Lines Headquarters with full honors. A public relation officer told APP that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Headquarters & Security, and a large number of police officers attended the funeral. He said that after the funeral, a police contingent and senior officials carried the coffin in a traditional manner. He further stated that the body was later sent to the deceased's native area for burial. The IGP Rizvi extended condolences to the bereaved family and assured them of the department's full support during this difficult time.—APP

## ANF seizes over 33 kg drugs

RAWALPIND: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations recovered 33,839 kg drugs worth over Rs 9.3 million and arrested seven accused including three women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation, 6,712 kg absorbed ice drug was recovered from the bag of a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad International Airport. 327 grams hashish hidden in the shoes of a passenger going to Dubai at Peshawar International Airport was rounded up. 6 kg opium and 4.8 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Bhuwana in Chiniot. 4 kg heroin and 4 kg ice were recovered from a car intercepted on M-1 Motorway Islamabad and two accused including a woman were arrested. In 5th operation, 6 kg hashish hidden in secret cavities of a car was recovered near Pashkhara Chowk Peshawar.—APP

## Govt launches 6th Round of Mass Deworming Campaign

ISLAMABAD: The launch event for the 6th Round of the Mass Deworming Campaign, scheduled to take place from February 10 to 14, 2025, was successfully held on Tuesday at the Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) F-7/4. The event brought together esteemed government officials, health experts, and key stakeholders to mark the beginning of a nationwide effort to protect school-aged children from the harmful effects of intestinal worm infections. Organized by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MoFE&PT) in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination, the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, and IRD Pakistan's Pakistan Deworming Initiative (PDI), the campaign aims to improve child health and education outcomes across the country.—APP

## NUML inaugurates new building of Peshawar Campus

Rector NUML officially inaugurated the building by cutting the ribbon, followed by a dua for future success. During a briefing by the Acting Regional Director, Peshawar Campus, he was apprised of the campus facilities and future development plans

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages (NUML) inaugurated its new Peshawar Campus building today and reaches the truly deserving communities. A meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Division was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Atif at Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. "The Committee raised serious concerns regarding the 'Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project (IFRAP)'. The committee highlighted that many deserving individuals are not being adequately supported under the project. Members criticized the beneficiary selection process, noting that the criteria fail to align with the needs of the most vulnerable populations." In response to these concerns, the committee has decided to write to the Chief Secretary of Baluchistan to address grievances and ensure closer monitoring of the project's implementation. The committee stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in the selection process, calling for immediate corrective measures to guarantee that the project's benefits are delivered effectively to those in need. IFRAP, a \$15.60 million (Rs. 4.36 billion) initiative spanning three years (2024-2027), aims to construct 35,100 houses for flood-affected families, providing them with safe and resilient housing solutions as one of



the project thematic area. While the project reflects the government's commitment to flood resilience and long-term recovery, the committee's critique underscores the need for improved oversight to ensure its success. Additionally, the committee expressed concerns over the credibility of certain NGOs involved in IFRAP, calling for greater transparency and accountability in their selection to ensure that only credible organizations may be engaged for such projects. The committee

has decided to conduct a detailed review of IFRAP-related issues, with findings to be presented for further discussion and action. Beyond IFRAP, the committee plans to extend its oversight to major projects in key sectors such as transport, water, and power, addressing any irregularities to safeguard public interest and ensure optimal resource utilization. Furthermore, the committee will review the proposed 10-year development project in collaboration with the World Bank, providing

input to align the initiative with national priorities. To address broader systemic challenges, the committee will also examine development policies, NGO regulations, and sectoral projects in its upcoming meetings. These steps reflect the committee's unwavering commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and effective governance in all development endeavors, ensuring that projects like IFRAP fulfill their promise of supporting vulnerable communities and driving sustain-

able development. The meeting was attended by MNA's including Muhammad Atif, Bilal Azhar Kayani, Mr. Shahid Usman, Muhammad Khan Doha, Ms. Zahara Wadood Fatemi, Ms. Akhtar Bibi, Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Muhammad Jawed Hanif Khan, Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, Nasim Ali Shah and Faisal Amin Khan. The meeting was also attended by officials from Economic Affairs Division and Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

## NA body emphasizes for need to prioritize equitable resource distribution

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Division has emphasized the urgent need to prioritize equitable resource distribution to ensure that aid reaches the truly deserving communities. A meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Division was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Atif at Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House, Islamabad, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. "The Committee raised serious concerns regarding the 'Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project (IFRAP)'. The committee highlighted that many deserving individuals are not being adequately supported under the project. Members criticized the beneficiary selection process, noting that the criteria fail to align with the needs of the most vulnerable populations." In response to these concerns, the committee has decided to write to the Chief Secretary of Baluchistan to address grievances and ensure closer monitoring of the project's implementation. The committee stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in the selection process, calling for immediate corrective measures to guarantee that the project's benefits are delivered effectively to those in need. IFRAP, a \$15.60 million (Rs. 4.36 billion) initiative spanning three years (2024-2027), aims to construct 35,100 houses for flood-affected families, providing them with safe and resilient housing solutions as one of the project thematic area. While the project reflects the government's commitment to flood resilience and long-term recovery, the committee's critique underscores the need for improved oversight to ensure its success. Additionally, the committee expressed concerns over the credibility of certain NGOs involved in IFRAP, calling for greater transparency and accountability in their selection to ensure that only credible organizations may be engaged for such projects. The committee has decided to conduct a detailed review of IFRAP-related issues, with findings to be presented for further discussion and action. Beyond IFRAP, the committee plans to extend its oversight to major projects in key sectors such as transport, water, and power, addressing any irregularities to safeguard public interest and ensure optimal resource utilization. Furthermore, the committee will review the proposed 10-year development project in collaboration with the World Bank, providing input to align the initiative with national priorities. To address broader systemic challenges, the committee will also examine development policies, NGO regulations, and sectoral projects in its upcoming meetings. These steps reflect the committee's unwavering commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and effective governance in all development endeavors, ensuring that projects like IFRAP fulfill their promise of supporting vulnerable communities and driving sustainable development.—DNA

## Exports increase by 9.98% to \$19b

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country increased by 9.98 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year. Exports during July-January (2024-25) were recorded at \$19.551 billion against \$17.777 billion during July-January (2023-24), according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data. On the other hand, imports

into the country went up by 6.95 percent by growing from \$30.893 million last year to \$33.039 million during the first seven months of the current year. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$13.488 billion against the deficit of \$13.116 billion last year, showing a slight increase of 2.84 percent. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in

January 2025 increased by 4.59 percent to \$2.920 billion from \$2.792 billion in January 2024. On the other hand, the imports went up by 10.04 percent by going up from \$4.756 to \$5.233 percent, according to PBS data. On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country went up by 0.31 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.911 billion during December 2024. The imports however witnessed a decrease of 2.33 percent when compared to the imports of \$5.358 billion in December 2024, PBS reported.—APP

## JUI-F stands in solidarity with Kashmiris

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) spokesperson Aslam Ghauri reaffirmed his party's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. In a statement issued by the JUI-F media cell, on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day (February 5), Ghauri emphasized that his party stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Kashmir in their struggle for freedom. He urged the international community to take notice of India's continued occupation of the region, calling it an act of oppression that must not be ignored. "The demand for the right to self-determination by Kashmiris must be acknowledged," he stated, adding that no unjust distinction between the Muslims of Pakistan and Kashmir will be accepted. Ghauri also announced that JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has called for nationwide demonstrations on February 5 to express full solidarity with Kashmiris. He highlighted that Fazlur Rehman has consistently raised the Kashmir issue on international forums, striving to bring global attention to the cause. The JUI-F spokesperson urged Pakistanis to participate actively in Kashmir Solidarity Day events, reaffirming their commitment to supporting the Kashmiri people's struggle for justice and freedom.

## AIOU holds training workshop on Kitchen Gardening

ISLAMABAD: A training workshop on "Organic Kitchen Gardening" was held here on Tuesday at Allama Iqbal Open University in collaboration with Green Youth Movement Club and the Department of Agricultural Sciences. The workshop was attended by students, university faculty, and staff members who received hands-on training. Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad, Dean of Faculty of Scies and Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, was resource person of the workshop. He educated participants on the natural cultivation of vegetables free from pesticides and chemical fertilizers. He also taught methods for growing healthy organic vegetables on a household scale, preparing natural fertilizers, and using botanical techniques for pest and disease control. Speaking at the closing ceremony, Dr. Sher Muhammad emphasized that objective of the training workshop was to encourage students toward kitchen gardening, which is a necessity for a healthy society. He noted that, worldwide, kitchen gardening is becoming popular to avoid the harmful effects of store-bought vegetables, yet in Pakistan, this practice has not received much attention. Dr. Sher lamented that people in Pakistan do not give importance to vegetables and pulses and instead prefer consuming commercially farmed chicken, which is often unhealthy. Similarly, the significance of organic kitchen gardening is overlooked, leading to the consumption of chemically grown vegetables that are a primary cause of many health issues.—DNA

## Literary icon Bano Qudsia remembered

ISLAMABAD: The eighth death anniversary of renowned Pakistani novelist, playwright, and short story writer Bano Qudsia was observed on Tuesday. Born on November 28, 1928, in Ferozpur, British India, Bano Qudsia later became one of the most influential figures in Urdu literature. She was the wife of the legendary writer Ashfaq Ahmed, with whom she shared a deep intellectual and literary bond. Her masterpiece Raja Gidh remains one of the most celebrated novels in modern Urdu literature, exploring themes of morality, spirituality, and human psychology. Throughout her career, she authored numerous acclaimed works, including Aatish-i-Zeri-Paa, Aik Din, Asay Pasay, Chahar Chaman, Chhotaa Sheher Baray Log, Footpath ki Ghaas, Haasil Ghaat, and Hawa Kay Naam. In the realm of drama, her plays Aadhi Baat, Tamasil, Seharay, Khaleej, and Hawa ke Naam captivated audiences with their depth and social commentary. Her contributions to Urdu literature were recognized at the highest level, earning her the prestigious Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 1983 and the Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2000. Bano Qudsia passed away on February 4, 2017, in Lahore at the age of 88.—APP

## DIG reviews crime control measures

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police, Muhammad Jawad Tariq, chaired a late-night crime meeting for Saddar Zone, City Zone, and Industrial Area Zone, directing officials to intensify action against land grabbers, drug dealers, and illegal arms holders. A public relations officer told APP that the meeting was attended by zonal SPs, SDPOs, and SHOs, during which the DIG Tariq reviewed the performance of all zones and instructed officers to strengthen crime control measures and improve investigation standards. DIG Tariq said officers must ensure merit-based investigations and submit challans for pending cases in a timely manner. He also emphasized the need for targeted operations against criminal gangs and ordered the immediate arrest of absconding suspects. DIG said citizens' complaints should be addressed effectively at the police station level, while a zero-tolerance policy must be maintained against crimes involving women and children. Tariq said strict action should be taken against kite flyers and sellers. Furthermore, he directed officials to integrate technology alongside traditional investigative methods to enhance policing effectiveness.—APP

## Digital photographic &amp; painting exhibition at ISA

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Digital Photographic and Painting Exhibition and Competition" held at Information Service Academy (ISA) on Tuesday showcased thought-provoking paintings and photographs, capturing both the natural beauty of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IloJK) and the struggles faced by its people. The exhibition was organized by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications (DEMP), under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. The exhibition served as a powerful tribute to the resilience, courage, and unyielding spirit of Kashmiris. On this occasion, Executive Director General of DEMP,

Mubashir Tauqeer, as a chief guest, spoke about the significance of art in raising awareness about Kashmiri's struggle. "Art has always been at the forefront of raising awareness about struggles. The photographers and artists whose work we are showcasing today have used their craft not only to capture the beauty of IloJK but also to shed light on the reality faced by its people," he said. Highlighting the importance of storytelling through visual mediums, Tauqeer stated, "The importance of today's event—the Digital Photographic Exhibition and Painting Competition—cannot be overstated. Art, in all its forms, has always been a powerful medium for social change, for telling stories that words alone cannot." "Through these exhibition,

we not only celebrate the artistic expression of the human spirit but also provide a platform to highlight the struggles of the people of IloJK," he observed. He further praised the students and artists for their creativity and vision, emphasizing their role in keeping Kashmir's story alive through artistic expression. "Your creativity, your vision, and your commitment to raising awareness through art are deeply commendable. Let us stand united today, and always, in our solidarity with IloJK," he concluded. He said, "Kashmir Solidarity Day holds deep significance for all of us, it is a time to express our unwavering support for our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who continue to endure hardships in their struggle for justice, peace, dignity and

right to freedom". A total of 56 students from various educational institutions participated in the painting and photography competition, demonstrating their artistic talent and passion for the Kashmir cause. The winners of the competition were Tanzila Shahid from Allama Iqbal Open University who secured first prize, Ummehani from Riphah International University obtained second prize while Alina Tariq from National University of Medical Sciences got third prize. Their artworks were praised for their depth, creativity, and strong messaging, portraying both the struggles and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Earlier, a documentary titled 'The Story of Kashmir' was also presented highlighting the Indian atrocities against Kashmiri people.



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## Deep Seek success

On January 1, people who don't closely follow innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) would not have heard of DeepSeek. However, by late January, it became a widely celebrated sensation. US tech corporations such as Meta and OpenAI were shocked by the apparent breakthroughs accomplished by this hitherto obscure Chinese start-up. In a comprehensive and publicly available post, the Chinese "David" revealed that it had managed to develop a R1 model with performance comparable to OpenAI's o1, at a fraction of the cost that American "Goliaths" have poured into AI over the years. Yet DeepSeek's triumphs should not be construed as a victory for China or a loss for the US. Instead, the breakthrough vindicates the importance of Sino-American cooperation over AI development and governance. The China-located venture succeeded by fusing the best of Silicon Valley-style entrepreneurship, the grit and perseverance of home-grown Chinese talent and a stroke of genius rooted in its intellectual openness. As with many other top Chinese AI and advanced technological firms, the start-up has a uniquely horizontal and non-hierarchical corporate culture. Its staff are driven by a common devotion to purpose but are granted considerable flexibility in the workplace. Indeed, founder Liang Wenfeng – an engineering-trained venture capitalist-turned-AI whizz – once declared, "experience is not that important". DeepSeek had acquired 10,000 Nvidia A100 graphics processing units (GPUs) before export controls imposed by Washington. In embracing the open-source ethos, however, the start-up eschewed an iron grip over its innovation and data, as embraced by many of its American peers. Chinese AI disrupter DeepSeek claims top spot in US App Store, dethroning ChatGPT. The intellectual Earth thrives best when it is flat. The whole world benefits when users globally can download and tweak models. Indeed, for those who criticise DeepSeek for its apparent censorship, they can download the application, run it on their own GPUs or cloud servers, as they wish. Moreover, Chinese and American AI scientists and data engineers have much to gain from sharing research and aligning best practices. While AI is certainly increasingly applied in military technologies, there are many civilian domains where improvements in algorithmic efficiency can benefit producers and consumers. The classic response levied by hawks in both countries is that cooperation would compromise national security. In an essay casting doubt on some of DeepSeek's professed achievements, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei called for a doubling down on US export controls to inhibit China's technological rise. He framed the Sino-American technological race as a struggle between "democratic" and "authoritarian" nations. Amodei would find good company in Washington. From lawmakers pushing to revive the "China Initiative" to then incoming US secretary of state Marco Rubio declaring that China had "lied, cheated, hacked and stolen" their way to global strategic strength, the prevailing sentiment does not favour cooperation. Panama President Mulino rejects US claims of Chinese influence in Panama Canal Zero-sum logic is ineffective at best. Chinese AI firms were spurred by the 2022 Chips and Science Act to explore alternative paths to scaling – touted as the holy grail in model quality improvement.



## Trump renewal of trade war

As promised, US President Donald Trump has renewed his trade war, firing an opening salvo of punitive tariffs at Canada, Mexico and China. His unfortunate decision, just two weeks into his new term, is a risky gambit likely to spur inflation in America and curb global economic growth. It also is probably just the beginning. Trump has said the tariffs are needed to curb illegal immigration and trafficking in fentanyl, which kills thousands of Americans every year. Mention of the narcotic is perhaps designed to convince those at home the trade war is for a good cause and to distract from the likely wave of inflation to come. Canada and Mexico have announced retaliatory tariffs. China plans to file a claim with the World Trade Organization. Hong Kong is bracing for resurgent US inflation to prolong the high interest rate environment and pressure businesses. Trump's stated broader goal is to restore US manufacturing might, and forcing foreign firms to set up in the United States would help do so. His ultimate target is rival China, the biggest US competitor and the world's largest manufacturer. It will be easier said than done. This may explain why Trump started with close neighbours and trade partners Canada and Mexico, which got whopping levies of 25 per cent, while China saw a relatively marginal 10 per cent. The aim is get the two allies on board, then force others to toe the US line on trade. Trump has warned tariffs against the European Union will "definitely happen". Japan and South Korea are likely targets among US allies in Asia. With allies in line, and a large and attractive market, the US would be better positioned to challenge China. Still, it is unclear how effective Trump's bid will be. World leaders have spent years signing trade pacts and cutting tariffs and non-tariff barriers and are well aware of the costly damage of trade conflicts. China is in a stronger position and better prepared than it was during Trump's first trade war in 2018, having entered into free-trade agreements around the world, built up trade relations with partners in the Global South, and bolstered its technological self-reliance. Its share of global manufacturing output has increased as well, from around 28 per cent in 2018 to nearly 32 per cent last year – double that of America, which it overtook in 2010. While Beijing may soften the blow by letting the yuan depreciate, Hong Kong has no such option due to the US dollar peg. The US should bear in mind it ran a trade surplus of US\$271.5 billion with the city in the past decade. It is questionable how much manufacturing Trump could restore in four years. His plan may prove counterproductive and unilaterally starting trade wars could stir resentment towards Washington, especially as prices rise, both in America and globally. What is certain is there will be more trade frictions to come.

## Kashmir amidst two-front war

Nida Khattak

Take for example, the current political situation of IIOJK. Through measures such as the delimitation of the constituencies, the inclusion of non-resident voters via remapping electoral roles, and the New Domicile Law of 2019, which granted domiciles to non-Kashmiris, the BJP-led central government has created a perfect recipe for creating a politically charged and polarised environment in the region. If in case, the local parties wish to govern the region, the state has effectively ensured their eventual failure. This, in turn, seems to be an effort to retain the centre's control over the region and alter the political distributions in such a way as to solidify pro-Hindutva parties in the region. The ideological state apparatus that is currently employed by the Indian state also takes the form of digital and print...

LOUIS Althusser, in his exploration of state power, explains two apparatuses through which authoritarian states seek to acquire absolute submission: the repressive state apparatus and the ideological state apparatus. At present, it would seem that India, as a state, is currently operating this twin mechanism well with full rigour in the occupied territory of Kashmir. As if the armed oppression of the people of Kashmir did not suffice, the state is actively indulged in political oppression coupled with propagation of a narrative that paints the very people of Kashmir as villains in India's manufactured tales of the Kashmiri land, trapping the people in two-front war in efforts to gradually erase their identities. The repressive state apparatus is operating at full throttle, armed oppression in the form of brutal tortures and killing of Kashmiri people have become the state's instrument of control within the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Ideological state apparatus in the form of political oppression, on the other hand, aims at making the region ungovernable so that status of union territory can be retained in favour of the central government. The recent developments including the so called legislative Assembly elections that were held in IIOJK from 18 September to 1 October 2024, elected 90 members to the new illegally formed Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly as to puppet legislatures under a titular chief minister with its cabinet playing second fiddle to an unelected appointee, the lieutenant governor. Although, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s effort to convert a demographic Muslims majority valley into a political minority failed this time as the votes in the valley were highly anti-BJP and their proxies like 'Apni Party' and 'Awami Ittehad Party'.

However, this marks the first instance that BJP has secured 29 seats in the Jammu region by emerging as a second largest party after Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), which secured 49 seats in coalition with the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)). The whole situation is highly indicative of growing realisation of Hindutva aspirations to shift the balance of power in the region.

Take for example, the current political situation of IIOJK. Through measures such as the delimitation of the constituencies, the inclusion of non-resident voters via remapping electoral roles, and the New Domicile Law of 2019, which granted domiciles to non-Kashmiris, the BJP-led central government has created a perfect recipe for creating a politically charged and polarised environment in the region. If in case, the local parties wish to govern the region, the state has effectively ensured their eventual failure. This, in turn, seems to be an effort to retain the centre's control over the region and alter the political distributions in such a way as to solidify pro-Hindutva parties in the region. The ideological state apparatus that is currently employed by the Indian state also takes the form of digital and print mediums of knowledge and entertainment, which constitutes a significant aspect within the broader scheme of oppression. Althusser reveals that the experience of watching a film or reading a book has underlying mechanisms and psychological processes which are related to deep ideological implications. In a way, these mediums can be used to 'reinvent' history and reconstruct memories.

For the past couple of years, Indian state has accelerated its efforts to produce cinema that portrays Kashmiri Muslims in a

villainous light. Such content skyrocketed specially after the abrogation of the Article 370, establishing false narrative, propagating Islamophobia, and building false icons of Hindutva. The media industry executes it in such a cunning way that it would put Goebbels to shame. Such fictional content mainly aims to justify Indian armed forces illegal presence in the occupied region by dehumanising the local people. In the recent years, it has been consistently observed that incidents of violence against Muslims across India surge right after such media productions.

This rhetoric extends beyond the fictional media to Indian news agencies that readily disseminate misinformation. Indian media promotes the narrative of Indians being welcome by Kashmiris and portrays the region as normal. It is a tactic that has been functional since occupation to re-enforce illegal India control over the region. Furthermore, international coverage has also been influenced by offering incentives to the foreign journalists in an effort to align India's domestic and international narratives with the state interests as part of a wider strategy of gaining total ideological control over public discourse. Under this scheme, the Indian government has attempted to suppress the voices of Kashmiris in two ways: by physically eliminating them and by manufacturing false stories about them. However, the community has persevered by demonstrating indomitability. At the time, when Kashmiri people are trapped in a two-front war, it becomes even more important to express solidarity for Kashmiris, voice their concerns, and bear witness to their struggle and resilience.

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## America under Trump regime

Tanveer Hussain



The previous Pakistani government halted CPEC projects under US pressure. However, after a change in leadership, CPEC development resumed with full force, which does not sit well with the US. To disrupt CPEC and curb Chinese investments and loans in Pakistan, US is expected to increase pressure on the Pakistani government under the pretext...

DONALD Trump won the U.S. presidential election by a large majority, becoming the 47th President of the United States. Although elections in any country are considered its internal matter, the U.S. elections hold a unique significance. The U.S. president is the most powerful person in the world, controlling various international and regional institutions, including the United Nations. Financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank also operate under the influence of the U.S. government. If the U.S. wants to politically destabilize a country, overthrow a government, or diplomatically and economically isolate a nation under the pretext of human rights and political freedoms, a single statement from the American president is often enough. In the past, pressure was exerted on unfavorable countries by accusing them of political repression or interfering in neighboring states. However, such justifications are no longer necessary. Now, merely labeling a country, political party, or financial institution as a financier of terrorism is enough to blacklist it. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the U.S. plays a role in almost all global conflicts. During his first term, President Trump pursued policies of withdrawing from international agreements and organizations, such as the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization. Instead of engaging in healthy economic competition with China, he imposed bans on Chinese products and levied heavy tariffs on trade goods. Additionally, he

halted work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Although the media often portrayed Trump as an unserious politician, the reality is that, like his predecessors, he will continue to create global turmoil. Immediately after taking office, Trump decided to build a wall along the Mexican border and introduced strict measures against illegal immigrants. He also imposed severe visa restrictions on citizens of Muslim countries, a policy widely known as the "Muslim Ban". The U.S. has urged Egypt and Jordan to resettle the people of Gaza so that Jewish settlements can be established there. Additionally, America has demanded that Saudi Arabia invest \$1 trillion in the U.S. and has ordered wealthy Arab nations like Qatar and the UAE to invest at least \$500 billion each. Furthermore, the U.S. is pressuring Arab countries to lower oil prices. Arab rulers understand the consequences of defying U.S. orders. Meanwhile, US will continue to support Israel and even help expand its geographical boundaries. Similar to Arab countries, Pakistan is also expected to face significant challenges. The previous Pakistani government halted CPEC projects under U.S. pressure. However, after a change in leadership, CPEC development resumed with full force, which does not sit well with the U.S. To disrupt CPEC and curb Chinese investments and loans in Pakistan, the U.S. is expected to increase pressure on the Pakistani government under the pretext of political freedoms and the release of PTI leadership. The U.S. may also seek Pakistan's assistance for potential military action against Iran in the future, and in such cases, it

does not hesitate to exert extreme pressure. President Trump has decided to cut U.S. aid to several countries, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, which will have far-reaching consequences. To maintain control over trade in Africa, the U.S. has expressed its intent to carry out military operations in Muslim countries. In his previous term, Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran and imposed further economic sanctions. Some argue that if the U.S. takes action against illegal immigrants or provides military aid to certain countries, it has the right to make such economic decisions in its national interest. However, the real question is: Who will be held accountable for the wars and conflicts ignited by the U.S. across all seven continents? Millions have lost their lives due to these wars, and America and its allies have profited immensely by selling weapons. Yet, the imposed wars and instability have destroyed the infrastructure and economies of the affected nations, leading to widespread unemployment and poverty. Adding insult to injury, wealthy nations have imposed strict economic conditions under the guise of economic recovery, stripping poor nations of their independence and decision-making abilities. In such circumstances, if people suffering from poverty and joblessness turn to the U.S. or Europe, where else are they supposed to go? Judging by the newly elected American president's recent actions, it can be said with certainty that Trump's presidency will prove to be even worse for Muslims and Muslim countries than those of Bush, Obama, or Clinton.



## Briefs

## Army demands 'concrete...'

FROM PAGE 01  
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and COAS Muneer also visited Quetta and met security forces personnel at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH). During today's conference, the participants paid profound tribute to the sacrifices made by the armed forces, law enforcement agencies (LEAs), and citizens who have laid down their lives in pursuit of peace and stability. The participants also underscored the need to accelerate people-centric socio-economic development initiatives in Balochistan, recognising the urgency of countering externally driven narratives of exclusion.

## Official who criticised...

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despite widespread international condemnation. Following his speech, the Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, allegedly ordered Mr Stanikzai's arrest and imposed a travel ban on him. However, reports indicate that the minister managed to leave Afghanistan and travelled to Dubai, where he confirmed his departure, citing health reasons. This is not the first time Mr Stanikzai, seen as a moderate within the Taliban, has opposed the education ban. In September 2022, he publicly stated that there was no religious justification for denying girls education, calling it an obligation for both genders.

## PM Shehbaz VOWS...

FROM PAGE 01  
Speaking during today's meeting, PM Shehbaz said that last year, the government had received immense complaints about the execution of the Ramadan Package run by the USC. Referring to the polio vaccination drive, the prime minister mentioned the killing of a policeman Abdul Khaliq in Jamrud who was deployed for the security of the polio team, paying tribute to his sacrifice to make Pakistan a polio-free nation. He also lauded the services of PM's Coordinator on Health Dr Mukhtar, Polio Coordinator Dr Ayesha Farooq, secretary health and polio vaccinators for their tireless efforts to rid the country of this crippling disease.

## Zardari's visit holds...

FROM PAGE 01  
mentioned in his article written on the historical visit of President Zardari to China, highlighting the importance of the trip. He said that this visit presents an opportunity to advance the alignment of development strategies, enrich the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, and contribute to a more balanced and inclusive global order. Zaidong said that the China-Pakistan friendship is constantly tested and enhanced in practice. He said that China-Pakistan relations have great significance for regional peace and prosperity. Both China and Pakistan are facing the historical task of developing their economies and improving people's livelihoods.

## US suspends \$845m aid...

FROM PAGE 01  
the availability of essential medical supplies. In education, the Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program, worth \$30.7 million, was set to support underprivileged students pursuing higher education. Meanwhile, the Inclusive Democratic Processes and Governance, a \$15 million initiative, was intended to enhance democratic governance and transparency. The suspension has also impacted development efforts in the recently merged tribal areas. The Merged Areas Governance Program for former FATA, valued at \$40.7 million, had been working to improve governance and administrative systems.



LAHORE: Players of Rising Stars Hockey Club in a group photo with the team management on the occasion of the opening match with Mardan, played in connection with the 2nd Chief of Army Staff Hockey Tournament. The final round is being played in Lahore with 10 teams participating. – DNA

## Mbappe, Bellingham out of Copa del Rey quarters

While Madrid did not sign any new players in the January transfer window, which closed on Monday, their Champions League rivals City have splashed over 180 million pounds (\$223 million) on new arrivals

## SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Real Madrid will be without forward Kylian Mbappe and midfielder Jude Bellingham for Wednesday's Copa del Rey quarter-final at Leganes, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on the eve of the match. The duo join midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, defenders David Alaba and Antonio Rudiger as well as other long-term defensive absentees Eder Militao and Dani Carvajal on the sidelines. France captain Mbappe, 26, has scored 21 goals in 33 appearances

across all competitions since moving to the Santiago Bernabeu from French champions Paris St Germain on a free transfer in June, while 21-year-old England international Bellingham has netted 10 times in 30 matches. "Bellingham had a bruise from a knock and will not be available. Vinicius Jr. has been given an extra day to recover, but will be available for tomorrow," Ancelotti told reporters on Tuesday. "Mbappe trained today. He has a bruise on his calf. He trained normally today, but he won't be available for the game tomorrow." Madrid, who top the LaLiga standings

with 49 points from 22 matches, one point ahead of second-placed Atletico Madrid, are set for a tough set of fixtures in coming days as Ancelotti tries to navigate through the defensive injury crisis. Their visit to Leganes will be followed by a league derby against Atletico at home on Saturday and a trip to Manchester City in the Champions League knockout phase playoffs on Feb. 11. "What I have to think about is how to deal with the emergency we have. We had it last year. We have to manage it well. We managed it well last year. The young players

will be able to show their quality. We are going to rely on (20-year-old defender) Jacobo (Ramon)," Ancelotti said. While Madrid did not sign any new players in the January transfer window, which closed on Monday, their Champions League rivals City have splashed over 180 million pounds (\$223 million) on new arrivals including Spanish midfielder Nico and Egyptian forward Omar Marmoush. "I have to think about the game against City with these players they have signed," Ancelotti said. "They are always competitive. But we have other things to think about at the moment."

## Champions Trophy

## Tickets for Pakistan-India clash sold out in minutes

The blockbuster clash is set to be played in Dubai on February 23

## DNA

DUBAI: The tickets for the most anticipated match of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 between hosts and defending champions Pakistan and arch-rivals India were sold out minutes after the online sale of the Dubai-bound matches went live, Geo News reported on Tuesday. According to the details, around 140,000 passionate cricket fans rushed to the tickets' sale website to get their hands on the tickets for the blockbuster fixture, scheduled to be played at the iconic Dubai International Cricket Stadium (DICS) here on February 23. The ticket price for the Pakistan-India match was AED500 and went up to as high as AED12,500, while for the remaining three fixtures at the venue,

the lowest price was AED 125.

The tickets for the Pak-India match were sold out for a total of AED45.6 million – Rs3.4 billion – with the venue having the capacity to entertain 25,000 spectators. Meanwhile, the tickets for all the matches set to take place in Dubai were sold out for AED88.5 million. The physical tickets sale for the 10 matches, set to be played in Pakistan, received an equally overwhelming response from fans, who flocked to the designated centres to acquire the tickets for their preferred fixtures. The minimum ticket price is set at 1,000 PKR, while the highest ticket price is 25,000 PKR Gallery. Tickets are available in multiple categories, including General Enclosure, First Class, Premium, VIP, VVIP and Gallery, ensuring that spectators can choose an option that suits their preferences. The se-

cond semi-final, slated to be held here on March 5, expected to draw larger crowds, has a higher base price, with the minimum ticket for the match pegged at 2,500 PKR, while the highest remained locked in at 25,000 PKR. The opening match of the Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled to be played between Pakistan and New Zealand in Karachi on February 19, is another exception, with the minimum ticket for the match set at 2,000 PKR.

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 and Bangladesh, while Group B is comprised of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia.

## Jasprit Bumrah ruled out of England ODIs

Bumrah is recovering from a back injury he picked in Test series against Australia

## WEB DESK

MUMBAI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Tuesday, replaced ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah with mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy for the upcoming three-match home ODI series against England, scheduled to run from February 6 to 12. The development came a day after Indian media reported that the right-arm pacer had reached the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to undergo scans on his injured back. He was already supposed to miss the first two ODIs of the upcoming series but was likely to return for the final fixture in a bid to play at least one match before the eight-team tournament. "Bumrah has been told to off-load for five weeks after and he won't be available for the first two ODIs against England," said chairman of men's senior selection committee Ajit Agarkar, while announcing their squad for the Champions Trophy 2025. "We are waiting on his fitness and will know his status in early February from the medical team. We'll probably find out a bit more around that time, what exactly, and with regards to what his medical condition is, I'm sure BCCI might just put something out, from the physio itself," he added. Meanwhile, his absence from the entirety of the series has raised doubts regarding his participation in the global tournament.

## SBP, PTV secure fifth-round victories

The sixth round of the first-class tournament begins on Friday

## DNA

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Pakistan Television (PTV) won their respective fifth-round matches of the President's Trophy Grade-I here on Tuesday. At the KCCA Stadium, emerging opener Shamil Hussain's unbeaten century powered last edition's runners-up PTV to a resounding seven-wicket victory over Ghani Glass. PTV resumed their second innings from an overnight score of 204/2 while chasing a modest 243-run target. The team conceded only 26 deliveries to score the remaining runs and lost one wicket in the process. Shamil Hussain top-scored for the PTV with an unbeaten 143 off 137 deliveries with the help of 14 fours and four sixes. Top-order batter Mohammad Taha also made an important contribution with an anchoring half-century, scoring 53 off 68 deliveries, laced with four boundaries. For Ghani Glass, Mohammad Rameez Jnr picked up two wickets, while Ubai Shah chipped in with one scalp. At the SBP Stadium, the home side romped to a four-wicket victory over Higher Education Commission (HEC), thanks to Test batter Usman Salahuddin's sensible half-century. Resuming their second innings from an overnight score of 158/3 in 66 overs, SBP chased down a stiff 293-run target for the loss of six wickets.

## Aston Villa rope in Rashford on loan from Manchester United

Rashford terms his move to Villa 'an easy decision'

LONDON: Aston Villa signed Marcus Rashford on loan from Manchester United for the rest of the season on Sunday to end the England international's exile under Ruben Amorim at Old Trafford. Once a hero for the United fans, Rashford has not featured for his boyhood club since December 12 and admitted earlier this season he was ready for a "new challenge". The 27-year-old had been linked with a move to AC Milan and Barcelona, but the European giants were put off by his reported £300,000-a-week (\$372,000) wages. According to Sky Sports, Villa will pick up at least 75 percent of that pay packet for the coming months, rising to 90 percent depending on performance-related bonuses and have an option to make the deal permanent at the end of the season for £40 million. "I was lucky to have a few clubs approach me but Aston Villa was an easy decision - I really admire the way that Aston Villa have been playing this season, and the manager's ambitions," said Rashford in a Villa statement. "I just want to play football and am excited to get started. I wish everyone at Manchester United all the best for the

rest of the season." Aston Villa moved to bolster their attacking options after selling Colombia striker Jhon Duran to Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr on Friday for a reported £64 million. Unai Emery's men have qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League and still have aspirations to qualify for that tournament again next season. Villa sit eighth in the Premier League, eight points above 13th-placed United. Marcus Rashford scored 138 goals in 426 appearances since coming through the ranks at Old Trafford and has lifted the Europa League, two FA Cups and two League Cups as a Manchester United player. However, his attitude and work ethic in training has been questioned by Amorim, since he took charge in November. After last weekend's 1-0 win at Fulham, the Portuguese coach sensationally claimed he would rather put the club's 63-year-old goalkeeping coach, Jorge Vital, in the squad than Rashford. "Our team should be so much better with Rashford, but he has to change," Amorim said last week. "If he does change, we are more than welcome to put a talent like Rashford in, and we need it. "But in this moment I think it's really clear that we have to set some standards. That's all." A temporary switch to Villa allows Rashford a fresh start to rehabilitate his tarnished reputation after his astonishing fall from grace.

## Pakistan, Azerbaijan explore new avenues for coop

CDA Chairman Highlights Opportunities for Collaboration with Azerbaijan

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: On Tuesday, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, welcomed the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov, to the CDA Headquarters. During the meeting, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted the strong and friendly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, emphasizing the need to further strengthen bilateral ties and explore new avenues for cooperation. He highlighted that there are excellent opportunities to enhance collaboration between the two nations, which would benefit the people of both countries. The discussion also underscored the importance of identifying new opportunities for cultural exchanges to enhance mutual understanding and appreciation. This meeting reflects the commitment of both countries to building a robust partnership. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa assured his full support in promoting mutual relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.



## US deports over 200 Indians

FROM PAGE 01  
Since US President Donald Trump took office, the US has conducted several military flights – to Guatemala, Honduras, and Ecuador – to return illegal immigrants to their respective countries. The US president has said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that India "will do what's right" regarding the deportation of illegal Indian migrants.

## Major reshuffle in IHC

FROM PAGE 01  
Additionally, Justice Azam Khan has been appointed as the administrative judge for district courts (West), replacing Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb. According to the office order, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir will oversee FIA courts, Justice Saman Rafatmiatiz has been assigned banking courts while Justice Raja Inam Amin Minhas will serve as the administrative judge for sessions courts (East).

## SC moved against Peca...

FROM PAGE 01  
the constitutional power of the legislature while terming the tweaks as "extremely repugnant against the human rights, fundamental rights and rights of freedom of expression, speech". Urging the apex court to immediately strike down the Act to prevent new legal crises, the plea also wants the existing law, approved by previous governments, to be revisited in light of the Constitution. "We live in the global village where all human beings have equal human rights and such hurting and targeting the opponents could not be sustained and must be restricted along with the current Peca," the petition says. The development comes as ruling coalition bulldozed the controversial amendments from both the National Assembly and the Senate to an already contentious Peca law within days with the opposition parties, journalists and media bodies decrying the lack of consultations as well as its provisions.

## 13 Pakistanis among...

FROM PAGE 01  
Out of around 66 Pakistanis on board, only 22 survived. The survivors were brought back to Pakistan, with the last group of eight arriving in Islamabad on Saturday. In a statement, the FO confirmed that after thorough verification, the bodies of 13 Pakistanis have been identified. The remains of four – Muhammad Arslan Khan, Qaisar Iqbal, Hamid Shabbir, and Sajjad Ali – will arrive in Islamabad on February 5 via a Saudi Airlines flight. Initial investigations revealed that the majority of the traffickers involved are reportedly from Wazirabad, Lahore, Gujrat, and Sialkot. The victims paid between Rs1.6 to Rs2.5 million each to human traffickers for a promised air trip to Spain. However, they were illegally sent to Ethiopia and then to Senegal on visit visas.

## SC judge questions...

FROM PAGE 01  
Clause 2 (d)(i) of the Army Act, and the ruling acknowledged that the Act brought via a presidential ordinance could be reviewed with regard to basic rights. However, it was also stated that such amendments were subject to judicial review under fundamental rights, he argued. Justice Mandokhail further inquired about the definition of "nexus" in the FB Ali case. Raja responded that the term referred to the incitement of the armed forces and an explicit link between the crime and Pakistan's defence, which was interpreted in a way that implied a separate court could be formed for such cases. Raja argued that if the court upheld Justice Ayesha Malik's ruling on Article 10-A, it would strengthen their case. Similarly, if the court ruled that no special courts could be established outside Article 175(3), it would still support its stance.



## Briefs

Gold prices  
up by Rs1900  
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.1900 and was sold at Rs 294,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 292,400 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewelers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1629 to Rs.252,314 from Rs. 250,685 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs.231,296 from Rs. 229,802. The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.49 to Rs3,314 from Rs 3,265. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$16 to \$2,815 from \$2,799, the Association reported.—APP

PSX  
witnesses  
bearish trend,  
loses 809  
more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing, 809.63 points, a negative change of 0.72 percent, closing at 111,935.38 points as compared to 112,745.01 points on the last trading day. A total of 436,325,053 shares were traded during the day as compared to 401,456,556 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs23.225 billion against Rs20.351 billion on the last trading day. As many as 440 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 129 of them recorded gains and 225 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 54,615,977 shares at Rs 1.58 per share, Nergico PK with 21,090,416 shares at Rs.7.49 per share and K-Electric Limited with 20,621,518 shares at Rs.4.43 per share. Sazzar Engineering Works Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs78.01 per share closing at Rs1,140.96 whereas runner-up was Bata Pakistan Limited with Rs 28.54 rise in its share price to close at Rs1,968.16.—APP

Rupee gains  
09 paise  
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.95 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.04. However, according to the Foreign Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.50 and Rs 281.00, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.98 to close at Rs288.02 against the last day's closing of Rs285.04, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).—APP

Israeli forces  
kill 70 in  
West Bank  
since start  
of year

GAZA: The office of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas denounced an Israeli operation in the occupied West Bank as "ethnic cleansing" on Monday, with the health ministry saying Israeli forces killed 70 people in the territory this year. In a statement, spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said the Palestinian presidency "condemned the occupation authorities' expansion of their comprehensive war on our Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank to implement their plans aimed at displacing citizens and ethnic cleansing". Later the Palestinian health ministry in Ramallah said there had been "70 martyrs in the West Bank since the beginning of this year", with 10 children, one woman and two elderly people among the dead. The ministry confirmed to AFP they were "killed by the Israeli occupation". The figures showed 38 people killed in Jenin and 15 in Tubas in the north of the West Bank.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A large number of Teachers holds protest in the favor of their demands outside National Press Club in Federal Capital.

# Mövenpick Hotel opens its doors in heart of Capital

The 380-key five-star property is the capital's premier high-rise hotel offering elevated hospitality experiences

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mövenpick Hotels, the brand synonymous with Swiss hospitality and culinary excellence, expands its global footprint with the opening of Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad. As the city's first premium high-rise hotel, this landmark addition to the Mövenpick portfolio is set to redefine hospitality in Pakistan's capital, offering world-class services, unparalleled dining experiences, and cutting-edge event facilities designed to deliver extraordinary and lasting moments. Strategically located adjacent to the city's iconic Centaurus Mall, Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad offers convenient access to shopping, entertainment, and cultural landmarks that celebrate Pakistan's rich heritage. Its proximity to key corporate districts, business hubs, and diplomatic institutions positions the hotel as an ideal choice for both business and leisure travelers. Islamabad's status as a thriving business hub makes the hotel a welcome addition to the city's growing hospitality sector.

The hotel features 380 elegantly designed rooms and suites, including an opulent Presidential Suite. Guests can enjoy a range of amenities, from a state-of-the-art fitness center and a spa with eight treatment rooms, to the city's first helipad, ensuring seamless VIP arrivals and departures. Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad is a paradise for food enthusiasts, offering an array of seven dining experiences that cater to diverse tastes and preferences. Café Swiss welcomes guests with its cozy ambiance, serving premium coffee blends, refreshing juices, and light snacks. The Marketplace presents a vibrant all-day dining option, blending Pakistani and Continental flavours while offering panoramic views of the natural landscape and urban skyline. For those craving Mediterranean flavours, Desert Rose provides an oasis of exquisite dishes infused with classic Middle Eastern hospitality. Embers is a haven for meat lovers, featuring premium cuts and seafood prepared with unique flavours and techniques. Zen Asia transports diners to the Far East with its authentic Japanese, Thai, and Chinese delicacies, ensuring a truly immer-

sive experience. Sky 24, the rooftop lounge, offers breathtaking views of the Margalla Hills, complemented by handcrafted drinks and gourmet bites. For an authentic taste of Pakistan, Koh delivers a rich culinary journey through the country's diverse regional flavours, promising a memorable dining experience. Adding to the indulgence, Mövenpick's signature Chocolate Hour, held daily in the lobby, offers guests an opportunity to enjoy an array of Swiss chocolate desserts, celebrating the brand's heritage

with an irresistible sweet touch. The grand opening ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif, and Philip Jones, Senior Vice President of Operations for Accor's Premium Midscale and Economy brands in the Middle East, alongside distinguished dignitaries and industry leaders dedicated to advancing Pakistan's economic and cultural potential. Hilp Jones, Jones, Senior Vice President of Operations for Accor's Premium Midscale and Economy brands in the Middle East

said: "The unveiling of Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad marks a significant milestone in our commitment to redefining hospitality in Pakistan. Perfectly positioned in the heart of the city, this exceptional property combines a strategic location with world-class amenities, setting a new benchmark for the region's hospitality landscape." "Our vision is to establish Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad as a true destination – a place where guests can immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of Pakistani culture, forge meaningful connections, and experience the exceptional hospitality that defines Mövenpick," adds Nicolas Verdun, General Manager at Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad. "We are committed to elevating Pakistan's diverse tourism and hospitality industry through our signature Swiss-inspired services, culinary excellence, and sustainable practices. We take immense pride in contributing to the region's transformation". Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad is set to become the city's leading venue for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE).



## 'Made in Uzbekistan' expo to setup connections between business leaders

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan, is going to organize the much-anticipated 'Made in Uzbekistan' exhibition from February 11 to 13 at the Expo Lahore (foyer area), showcasing a diverse range of Uzbek products, industries, and cultural highlights. This single-country exhibition will be attended by an esteemed delegation of around 150 companies and business partners from Uzbekistan, offering a unique opportunity to explore a wide array of Uzbek products and services. Featured in the exhibition are Uzbek textiles, leather goods, home appliances, pharmaceuticals, agricultural machinery, and food and agricultural products. Additionally, the exhibition will offer visitors a rich cultural experience, with performances and a chance to indulge in traditional Uzbek cuisine, providing a deeper insight into the country's rich heritage. The event will help foster stronger economic and trade ties between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, building on the significant bilateral trade between the two countries, which amounted to 404 million USD in 2024. The exhibition is designed to serve as a platform for promoting mutual trade, investment opportunities, and enhanced business relations between the two brotherly nations. In support of building lasting business partnerships, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev said the Embassy will also facilitate Government-to-Business (G2B) and Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings, assisting in the establishment of meaningful and mutually beneficial connections between Uzbek and Pakistani business leaders.—DNA

## Iranian Army launches 'Eqtedar 1403' air defense drill

The country's officials have repeatedly underscored that the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will never be subject to negotiations.

TEHRAN: The Iranian Army has kicked off the second phase of the "Eqtedar 1403" air defense drill, focusing on the protection of the national airspace amid efforts to further bolster the country's defense capabilities. Iran's homegrown 'Majid' air defense missile system took the lead during the new stage of the drill by bringing down various types of pilotless aircraft on Tuesday. During this phase of the comprehensive maneuver, tactics to detect, track, intercept and shoot down hostile targets are set to be practiced. The air defense units participating in the exercise will employ indigenous radar systems as well as a surveillance network in the general areas of the drill, which covers the southwestern and central sectors of Iran. Command and control centers will use homegrown sophisticated active and passive radar systems, and utilize signal and electro-optical monitoring to track hostile targets in the war game zone. Upon interception, smart command-and-control systems will assign appropriate air defense systems to neutralize threats. Under the operational command of the Joint Air Defense Base of Iran, the 'Eqtedar 1403' air defense drill seeks to integrate efforts from the Army's Air Defense Force and the Air Force. The exercise is designed to simulate realistic battlefield conditions, providing an opportunity to test a variety of advanced, domestically produced air defense systems. The systems will engage in countering a range of threats, including aerial assaults, missile strikes, and electronic warfare tactics. By recreating such scenarios, the drill aims to evaluate and enhance the readiness of Iran's air defense forces in responding to potential external threats. Iranian military forces hold routine exercises according to a detailed schedule in various parts of the country in order to test their weaponry and equipment and evaluate their combat preparedness. The country's officials have repeatedly underscored that the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will never be subject to negotiations.—APP

# Türkiye received 15 Palestinians as part of Israel-Hamas deal

ISTANBUL: Turkish security sources said Tuesday that 15 Palestinians released by Israel as part of a cease-fire deal between the Tel Aviv administration and the Hamas resistance movement arrived in Türkiye. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan confirmed the move. The National Intelligence Organization (MIT) arranged the trip upon the orders of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to help facilitate the handover. Israel and Hamas agreed upon a cease-fire after more than two years of attacks by Israel on the Gaza Strip, which killed nearly 50,000 people and injured more than 100,000 others. Some 15,000 people from Gaza have been detained since then. The cease-fire deal included the exchange of Israeli and Palestinian prisoners. Israel agreed to

release Palestinian prisoners who were sentenced to life on the condition that they would not return to Palestine. Fidan announced last week in Qatar that some Palestinians forced to leave their country would be hosted by Türkiye and other countries. Sources said MIT worked to arrange the travel of 15 Palestinians in the first stage of a plan to accommodate freed prisoners in another country. They traveled to Türkiye via Egypt. Sources said Türkiye has also arranged for Palestinians to live a "secure, happy life" in the country. At a news conference with the visiting Egyptian foreign minister, Minister Fidan said their admission should not be misinterpreted, and Türkiye sought to serve peace. Since Israel launched its ground invasion of Gaza in 2023,

thousands of Palestinians – including women, children, medical personnel and civil defense workers – have been detained. Only a small number have been released, many of whom showed clear signs of torture and starvation. A cease-fire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas, which began on Jan. 19, includes a three-phase prisoner exchange process, with each phase lasting 42 days. The agreement was mediated by Qatar and Egypt and supported by the United States. The second phase will involve the release of Israeli soldiers, and the third phase will address the return of Israeli remains. A list issued earlier by the Israeli Justice Ministry indicated that over 180 prisoners set to be released were to be deported outside the coun-

try in exchange for Israeli hostages held in Gaza. The agreement does not specify the countries where deported prisoners will be sent, but Israeli media, including the country's public broadcaster KAN, reported that destinations might include Qatar or Egypt. Israel claims the deportation aims to minimize "security risks" as the prisoners might pose if returned to the occupied West Bank. "We have supported the cease-fire agreement from the beginning. One of its conditions, agreed upon by the parties, is that certain Palestinian prisoners will not remain in Palestinian territories after their release. We saw this in the case of Gilad Shalit when we were asked to take in some Palestinians, and we agreed," Fidan said in Doha on Sunday. Israeli soldier

Gilad Shalit was captured by Hamas in 2006 and was released in 2011 with efforts of Türkiye, which admitted a group of Palestinian prisoners released by Israel in exchange for Shalit. Türkiye is a staunch supporter of Hamas and repeatedly denounced Israel's "genocide" in Gaza against millions of Palestinians. On the diplomatic side, it has worked to establish a cease-fire and a lasting solution to the issue since October 2023. It also dispatched a large amount of aid to the Gaza Strip, although those supplies largely failed to reach their destination due to the Israeli blockade. Aid was only allowed last week after the cease-fire deal. Fidan said that they set up mobile field hospitals in the region and were ready to admit patients from Gaza.—Agencies

## Five people shot in attack at Swedish school

STOCKHOLM: Swedish police said on Tuesday five people were shot in an attack at a school in the city of Örebro some 200 km (125 miles) west of Stockholm, triggering a massive response by rescue services. "Five persons are confirmed shot," police said in a statement, adding that the extent of any injuries was unclear. "This is currently seen as attempted murder, arson and aggravated weapons offence," the police said. Ambulances, rescue services and police are onsite, a spokesperson for local rescue services said. The shooting took place in a campus area where several schools, for both children and adults are located. Police said students were held indoors at the affected school and also at nearby schools. "The news of an attack at Örebro is very serious," Justice Minister Gunnar Strömmer told public broadcaster SVT, adding that the government was in close contact with police.—APP

## Nepal hikes Everest climbing fee by a third

KATHMANDU: Nepal has hiked the cost of an Everest climbing permit by a third, arguing it will help tackle pollution and boost safety on the world's highest mountain, the tourism chief said Tuesday. Fees for the peak spring climbing season will rise from \$11,000 to \$15,000 for a permit to scale the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak, Narayan Prasad Regmi, director general of the tourism department, told AFP. "The cost had remained constant for a decade and it was high time to revise that," he said. Costs of climbing at less popular – and more demanding – times of year such as during winter or the monsoon rains have also risen at similar rates, including from \$5,500 to \$7,500 during the autumn season. Nepal is home to eight of the world's 14 peaks over 8,000 metres and welcomes thousands of climbers each year. Foreign climbers already spend tens of thousands of dollars in their attempt to climb Everest, with more than 400 purchasing permits last year, bringing in around \$4 million to government coffers. The funds are put towards cleaning trash from the mountain left by climbers as well as search and rescue operations. Mountaineering expedition companies hoped the price hike would not deter climbers, warning some might look to scale Everest through China. "Some climbers might shift to Tibet where the facilities are much better," said Mingma G Sherpa, who runs the Imagine Nepal mountaineering company, saying the fee must be spent on improving conditions. "Our government just increases the royalty, but doesn't do much," he said. "It needs to also provide support to the climbers and guides."—APP

## Madinah launches portal for iftar providers

RIYADH: The General Authority for the Care of the Affairs of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque has launched an online portal for iftar service providers at the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah to update their information for Ramadan. According to the authority, updating data is mandatory to continue service, along with contracting approved catering companies and complying with iftar service guidelines. The list of approved companies will be provided after data updates to finalize contracts and issue electronic permits, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Last month, the authority also launched a portal for charitable organizations and individuals to apply for iftar meal services inside the Grand Mosque in Makkah during Ramadan. The service allows the selection of meal sites, with one meal site per person and 10 sites allocated for charitable organizations. The authority highlighted the need to provide low-calorie meals for individuals with chronic diseases and diabetes.



## Briefs

### CJP, LHC CJ Aalia discuss judicial matters

Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar was also present during the meeting

#### COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi met Lahore High Court Chief Justice Aalia Neelum in Islamabad on Tuesday. According to sources, the discussion focused on judicial matters and the nomination of judges. Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar was also present during the meeting. Last week, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Islamabad High Court Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan held separate meetings with the chief justice of Pakistan.

### Senate body passes anti-human smuggling bill

#### FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Standing Committee on Interior also unanimously passes Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Bill. The Committee has also approved bills increasing penalties for begging and strengthening measures against human smuggling. The committee, chaired by Senator Faisal Saleem, reviewed and approved the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Bill, presented by the government. During the session, Interior Secretary Khurram Agha highlighted the rising cases of human trafficking, stressing the importance of stricter laws. He stated that the proposed legislation includes measures to ensure stronger convictions and harsher punishments for offenders. Senator Shahadat Awan supported the move, stating that harsher penalties would prevent suspects from securing easy bail. Previously, the maximum sentence for human smuggling was seven years, but under the new bill, it will be extended to ten years.

### 10 additional judges take oath at PHC

#### SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: A swearing-in ceremony was held at the Peshawar High Court, where 10 new additional judges officially took oath of office. The oath was administered by Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim in a formal ceremony held at the High Court.

The newly appointed judges include:

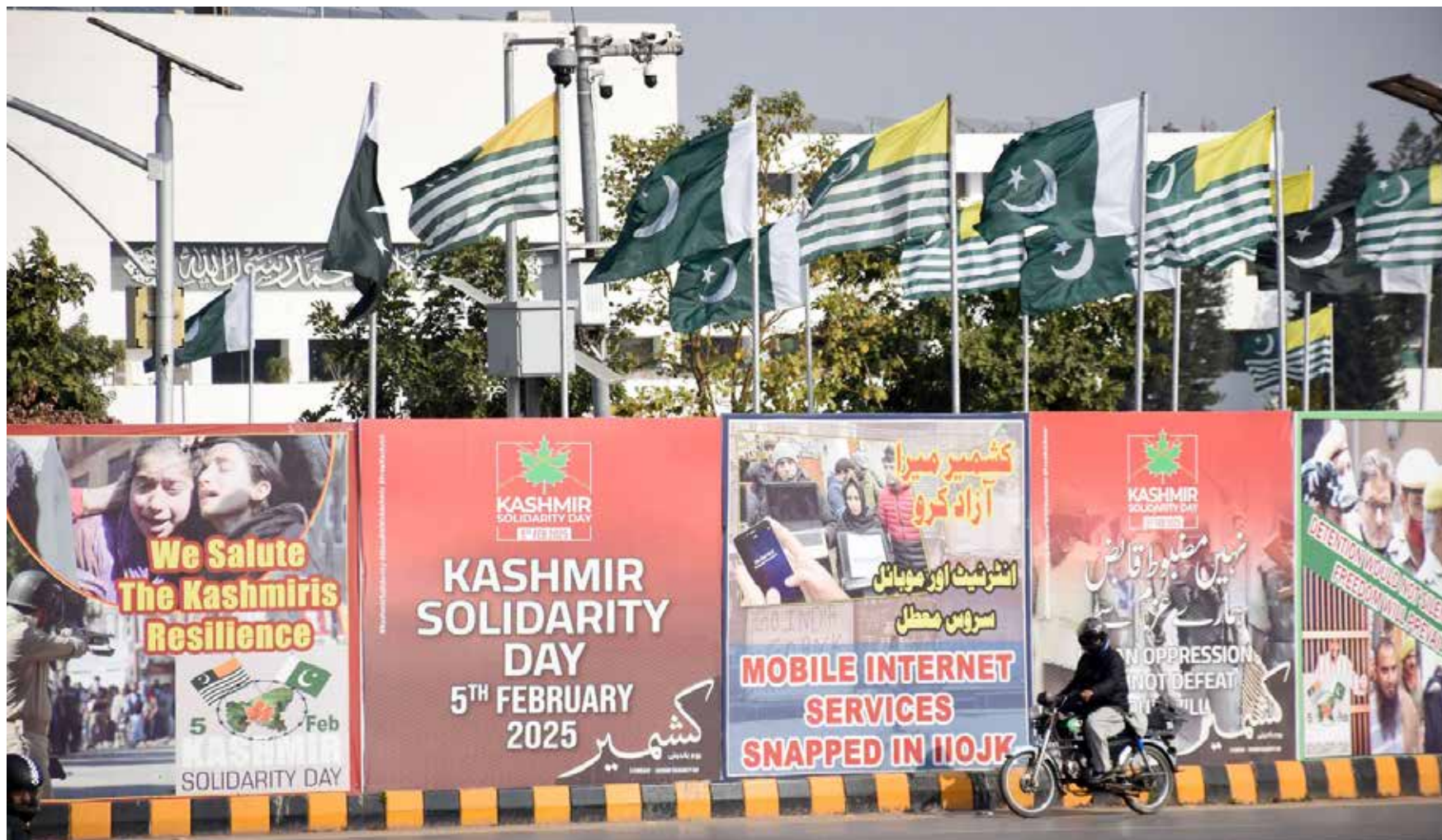
- Justice Tariq Afridi
- Justice Abdul Fayyaz
- Justice Farah Jamshed
- Justice Inamullah
- Justice Sabitullah Khan
- Justice Salahuddin
- Justice Sadiq Ali
- Justice Mudasar Ameer
- Justice Aurangzeb
- Justice Qazi Jawad Ehsan

With their induction, the total number of judges at the Peshawar High Court has now reached 23. These appointments were approved by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan.

### ATC extends Swati's interim bail

#### DNA

LAHORE: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore has extended interim bail for PTI leader Azam Khan Swati in five cases related to the May 9 events until February 12. The hearing was presided over by Judge Manzar Ali Gul, who reviewed Swati's bail applications. During the proceedings, Swati's counsel, Chaudhry Adnan Kalar, submitted an application for exemption from court appearance, citing Swati's heart condition and ongoing medical treatment in Manshra, which prevents him from traveling. Judge Manzar Ali Gul accepted the exemption request but issued a stern warning, stating, "I am granting a few more days, but the accused must appear in court at the next hearing."



ISLAMABAD: A view of the banners and flags of Pakistan and Kashmir along the Constitution Avenue to show solidarity with oppressed Kashmir's of IIOK, in Federal Capital. - Online

## China hits back with tariffs on US goods after Trump's move

China will impose tariffs of 15 percent on imports of coal and LNG from the US in retaliation for 10 percent levies on Chinese goods

#### NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China will impose tariffs of 15 percent on imports of coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States in retaliation for Washington's 10 percent levies on Chinese goods. China's Ministry of Finance also announced on Tuesday that there would be 10 percent tariffs on imports from the US of crude oil, agricultural machinery, large-displacement vehicles and pick-up trucks. The new measures were in response to the "unilateral tariff hike" by the US, it said, adding that Washington's decision "seriously violates World Trade Organization rules, does nothing to resolve its own problems, and disrupts normal economic and trade cooperation between China and the United States". Beijing's tariffs, which come into force on February 10, were announced shortly after US President Donald Trump said he would hold a call with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, in the next 24 hours. Syria plans 10 million agriculture jobs, climate action and water treaty reforms says new minister On Saturday, Trump announced sweeping measures against its top trade partners, including Canada and Mexico, with goods from China facing an additional 10 percent tariff on top of the duties they already endure. Trump said the measures aimed to punish countries for failing to halt flows of un-

## EU ready for 'tough' negotiations with US

EU, US trade volume stands at around \$1.5T

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Tuesday that the EU is ready for "tough negotiations" with the US, while reaffirming the bloc's commitment to safeguarding its interests. "We will be open and pragmatic," she said of negotiations with the US during a speech at the EU ambassadors conference in Brussels. "But we will make it equally clear that we will always protect our own interests - however and whenever that is needed. This will always be the European way." Von der Leyen acknowledged the enduring strength of EU-US relations, which she described as the "strongest of transatlantic partnerships" and a "cornerstone of peace and prosperity for the best part of the century." She also highlighted the deep economic ties between the two, with total trade volume standing at around \$1.5 trillion. "No other economies in the world are as integrated in such an advanced way as the European Union and the United States," she said. Together, the EU and the US account for nearly 30% of global trade in goods and services. "Europe will safeguard its economic and national security, but it is important that we strike the right balance," she said. EU-based companies in the US employ 3.5 million Americans, with another million American jobs directly dependent on trade with Europe, von der Leyen said. She also discussed the complex relationship with China, which will see a pivotal year as the EU marks half a century of diplomatic ties with the Asian giant. She emphasized that the EU is open to "constructive engagement" to find solutions of "mutual interest." "I think we can find agreements that could even expand our trade and investment ties. It is a fine line that we need to walk. But it can lead us to a fairer and more balanced relationship with one of the world's economic giants. And that can make sense for Europe." - Agencies

umented migrants and drugs, including fentanyl, into the US. However, on Monday, he suspended his threat of tariffs on Mexico and Canada, agreeing to a 30-day pause in return for concessions on border and crime enforcement with the neighbouring countries. "China's retaliatory tariffs are a calibrated response rather than an outright escalation," Julien Chaisse, professor at City University of Hong Kong specialising in international economic law, said. "The measures demonstrate Beijing's willingness to impose economic costs on Washington while maintaining flexibility for negotiation. "The choice of a February 10 start date appears strategic. It allows time for a possible discussion between Trump and Xi which is creating space for last-minute diplomacy before the measures take effect. If talks between the two take place in the coming days, there is room for adjustments, partial exemptions or reciprocal gestures that could prevent a further spiral in trade tensions. "That said, much will depend on Washington's interpretation of these measures. If the US views them as a calibrated step leaving room for negotiation, this could set the stage for discussions rather than further escalation. However, if Trump sees this as a direct challenge, his administration could respond with additional trade restrictions. This would intensify the conflict."

## Fly Jinnah secures nod for Karachi-Dhaka route soon

Bangladeshi media outlet reported a day ago that Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan told it: "They (Fly Jinnah) applied to us, and we have approved it"

#### MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Fly Jinnah, a low-cost air carrier for domestic routes, has secured the nod from Bangladesh to operate flights from Karachi to Dhaka, it emerged on Tuesday. The development comes after Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Iqbal Hussain announced last week that direct flights between the two countries were expected to begin within the next few months. He had also revealed that cargo flights between Dhaka, Karachi and Lahore would also commence soon, further facilitating trade and business exchanges. Bangladeshi media outlet The Daily Star reported a day ago that Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan told it: "They (Fly Jinnah)

applied to us, and we have approved it." He further said: "Now they (Fly Jinnah) will appoint a GSA (General Sales Agent). Once they request slots and frequencies, we will provide them. Our part is currently complete." Indian media outlet ANI also reported that a direct air link between the two countries would be set up soon after the launch of a direct shipping line between Chittagong and Karachi. "CAAB has approved a proposal of Fly Jinnah to operate direct flights between Bangladesh and Pakistan. We will sign a deal to resume Dhaka-Karachi direct flights," the outlet quoted the said Abdul Naser Khan, additional secretary to Bangladesh's Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, as saying. The two countries were once one nation but split following a bloody civil war, which saw the territory previously referred to as 'East Pakistan' seceding to form the independent nation of Bangladesh. In the years since the split, Dhaka's leaders - especially the recently ousted regime of Sheikh Hasina - stayed firmly in the Indian camp, preferring to maintain close ties with New Delhi and keeping Islamabad at arm's length.

## Erdogan holds talks with Syria's interim President al-Sharaa

Despite being constrained by its own economic crisis, Turkiye is offering to help with Syria's recovery after a devastating civil war

#### FOREIGN DESK



ANKARA: Syrian president, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, arrived in Turkiye on Tuesday for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his second international trip since ousting President Bashar Assad, an official told AFP. Al-Sharaa was to meet the Turkish leader in the capital Ankara after flying in from Saudi Arabia, where he was seeking help from Gulf countries to finance the reconstruction of his war-ravaged nation and revive its economy. Turkiye, which has close ties with Al-Sharaa, reopened its diplomatic mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and sent its spy chief and foreign minister for talks with him soon after the HTS overthrow Assad on December 8. The pair will discuss "joint steps to be taken for economic recovery, sustainable stability and security," Erdogan's communications chief Fahrettin Altun said on Monday. Despite being constrained by its own economic crisis, Turkiye is offering to help with Syria's recovery after a devastating 13-year civil war. In return, Turkiye is keen to secure Damascus's support against Kurdish militants in northeastern Syria, where the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have been battling Ankara-backed forces.

## LHC seeks reply from DC over PTI's plea

#### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday sought a reply from the city's deputy commissioner on a PTI plea seeking permission to hold a public rally at Minar-i-Pakistan on February 8. The opposition PTI has decided to observe a "black day" on February 8 (Saturday) to protest against its "stolen mandate" in last year's general elections, which were dominated by independent candidates that the party fielded.

Malik, the PTI's newly appointed Punjab chief organiser, had submitted an application to Lahore DC Syed Musa Raza on January 29, seeking permission for the gathering. However, upon receiving no response, she then approached the LHC yesterday for the rally's approval. Presiding over the hearing today, Justice Farooq Haider directed DC Raza to appear in person on February 6 (Thursday) and submit a response on the petition filed by Malik, also a former PTI MNA.

The judge also sought responses from other respondents named in the plea - namely the Punjab government; the Lahore commissioner, DC and additional DC; and the state.

## FBR uncovers Rs 977 mln tax fraud in EF scheme

#### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has uncovered a tax fraud worth Rs 977 million carried out under the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). According to Director Customs Post Clearance Audit (PCA) South, Shiraz Ahmed, two fraudulent companies misused the EFS to evade taxes on the import of precious metal molds. The companies allegedly imported 47 containers of high-value metals but manipulated records, declaring only 111 metric tons while 1,560 metric tons of imported goods went missing. One company was found to have evaded Rs 499 million, while the second dodged Rs 478 million in taxes. Further investigation revealed that the fraudulent companies were not even listed in FBR's active registration database, raising concerns about regulatory loopholes.

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