



Islamabad POST

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No act of aggression to go unanswered, COAS on AJK visit

Detailed News On Page-08

No ties with Israel without Palestinian state

Detailed News On Page-08

Former No. 1 Halep retires from tennis

Detailed News On Page-06



BEIJING: President Asif Ali Zardari being welcomed by the Chinese President Xi Jinping upon his arrival at the Great Hall of the People. DNA

'Time-tested relationship'

Pak, China vow to support each other's interests

President Asif Ali Zardari meets Chinese counterpart Xi, reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to its partnership with China

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday met his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping and discussed the positive trajectory of the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China, reaffirming support for each other on the issues of core interest. Zardari, who is currently on a five-day visit to China, met his Chinese counterpart at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, stated a press release issued by the President Secretariat. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the positive trajectory of the bilateral relationship, regional and international issues of common interest, and opportunities to even further expand the scope of bilateral partnership, especially through continued high-level exchanges. President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to its all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China and underlined the unique, time-tested and special relationship between the two countries. He also commended China's exemplary development, progress and prosperity,

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Pakistan, China agree to improve intelligence sharing

The interaction between Naqvi and his Chinese counterpart lasted two hours and came in the backdrop of attacks on Chinese personnel

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan and China agreed to further improve mutual intelligence sharing in a meeting between their interior ministers on Wednesday. The development came in a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his Chinese counterpart Qi Yanjun during the former's visit to Beijing. Naqvi is part of a delegation led by President Asif Ali Zardari that landed in China a day ago and also includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Senator Saleem Mandiwala, and

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Against Gohar Some PTI lawmakers to write to Imran

Sources say that PTI MNA Dr. Amjad Khan raised questions on Barrister Gohar

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Some members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentary party have decided to write a letter to the party's founder. According to sources from Islamabad, the parliamentary party members will write a letter to the founder of the party against party chairman Barrister Gohar. According to sources, parliamentary leaders have accused Barrister Gohar of taking decisions against the party's interests. The members expressed reservations about Barrister Gohar's parliamentary affairs. Sources say that PTI MNA Dr. Amjad Khan raised questions on Barrister Gohar, Dr. Amjad Khan had presented the bill on free health facilities in the standing committee.

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Prince Karim Aga Khan passes away

Prince Rahim Aga Khan V named 50th hereditary imam



DNA

LISBON: His Highness Prince Karim Al-Hussaini, Aga Khan IV, 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims passed away peacefully in Lisbon on 4 February 2025, aged 88, surrounded by his family. Prince Karim Aga Khan was the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network. The announcement of his designated successor will follow. Leaders and staff of the Aga Khan Development Network offer our condolences to the family of His Highness

Continued on Page 06

'Unfinished part of Pak agenda'

PM calls on India for 'meaningful, Kashmir talks'

Kashmiris' struggle intensifies despite India's military buildup, says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

NEWS DESK

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday urged India to engage in meaningful and decisive negotiations to resolve the Kashmir dispute, reiterating Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people. Addressing a special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly on Kashmir Solidarity Day, marked every year on February 5, PM Shehbaz expressed solidarity on behalf of the 240 million people of Pakistan with their Kashmiri brethren. He paid tribute to the martyrs of Kashmir's struggle, stressing that February 5 serves as a renewal of Pakistan's commitment to their cause. The premier condemned India's increasing military presence in the region, asserting that the spirit of freedom among Kashmiris continues to grow despite oppression. Play Video "We stand shoulder to shoulder with our Kashmiri brothers in this struggle and will continue to do so until they secure their right to self-determination," he said. The prime minister said that February 5 is a reminder to India that Kashmir can never be part of it. Citing Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's declaration of Kashmir as Pakistan's jugular vein, he emphasised that the region's status must be resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the will of its people.

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Letter to COAS a proof of Imran's frustration: Siddiqui

PML-N senator calls letter "charge sheet" against jailed PTI founder

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui has asserted that jailed PTI founder Imran Khan's letter to Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir was proof of the former's "despair and frustration". In a statement on Wednesday, the senator termed Imran's letter to the army chief a "charge sheet," saying that the former prime minister had also sent a letter to COAS via former president Arif Alvi in 2023. "They [PTI] did not receive a receipt or a reply to

Continued on Page 06

'Leave capital or face deportation'

UNHCR concerned about Afghan refugees relocation

SHAMIM SHAHID

ISLAMABAD: The UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and IOM, the International Organization for Migration, are concerned about recent developments requiring Afghan nationals in Pakistan to relocate from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Rawalpindi or else face deportation. The two agencies are seeking clarity over the modality and timeframe of this relocation. While UNHCR and IOM recognise that states may choose to limit freedom of movement for foreigners, including refugees, we jointly urge the Government of Pakistan to implement any relocation measures with due consideration for human rights standards, including due process, and the legal status of Proof of Registration (POR) and Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, who have resided in Pakistan for an extended period of time. The uncertain timeframe to plan for a dignified move is compounding a stressful situation, not to mention the immediate impact of

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan seeks to strengthen ties with Afghanistan

Dr. Barrister Saif hands over Imran Khan's message to Afghan envoy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, met with Afghanistan's Acting Ambassador to Pakistan, Molvi Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb. The meeting also saw the participation of senior politicians

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Nawaz Sharif sees inflation drop as sign of recovery

Inflation slowdown shows positive change in Pakistan's economy, says Nawaz Sharif

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League -Nawaz (PML-N) President and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed optimism about Pakistan's economic recovery during a meeting with Punjab Assembly members from Gujranwala, Narowal, and Sialkot. Nawaz Sharif highlighted the ongoing positive changes in the country's economy, particularly pointing to a slowdown in inflation and a rise in the stock market, which he said demonstrated increasing confidence among the business and investor communities, Express News reported. "The recent improvements in the stock exchange reflect the business community's trust in Pakistan's future," he said. Sharif also mentioned that the nation's gradual recovery from an economic slump was a sign of hope. "Seeing the economy stabilising after being driven into decline is a positive change for the country," he noted. Praising the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif acknowledged that the government's hard work was paying off. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has worked diligently at the federal level, and it's yielding positive results for Pakistan," he added. He also commended Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her leadership, saying her efforts in improving public services and infrastructure were helping uplift the province. "Maryam Nawaz has shown immense dedication to Punjab's development, embodying a spirit of service as both a mother and a daughter," he said. During the meeting, the assembly members expressed their admiration for the progress made under Maryam Nawaz's leadership, highlighting the implementation of various developmental programs such as the 'Dhee Rani Program' and the upgrade of rural health services. The assembly members praised Maryam Nawaz for her efforts to uplift every segment of society and transform Punjab's socio-economic landscape. Maryam Nawaz responded with gratitude to the members, acknowledging that their trust and guidance were integral to her success.

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خبردار!

ایل پی جی کی چوری اور کاربن ڈائی آکسائیڈ کی مکسنگ جان لیوا ہے

ایل پی جی باؤزر سے ایل پی جی سلنڈرز میں ایل پی جی کی منتقلی اور ایل پی جی میں کاربن ڈائی آکسائیڈ (CO₂) کی مکسنگ جان لیوا ہے

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CDA accelerates uplift projects across key sectors

During the briefing, it was revealed that development work in Sector C-14 is progressing on schedule, with roads, drainage, and sewage systems expected to be completed within the next two months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has reaffirmed its commitment to expediting development projects in various sectors of Islamabad, with a particular focus on completing long-delayed initiatives. This was announced during a high-level meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa at the CDA Headquarters on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by CDA board members and senior officers from relevant departments. During the briefing, it was revealed that development work in Sector C-14 is progressing on schedule, with roads, drainage, and sewage systems expected to be completed within the next two months. Chairman Randhawa expressed confidence that the sector's develop-

ment would be finalized ahead of the planned timeline. He also directed officials to ensure that possession of plots in Sector C-14 is handed over to allottees upon payment of their final installments. To enhance transparency, Chairman Randhawa emphasized the need to keep allottees informed about the progress of development work through the CDA website and other communication platforms. He further instructed officials to expedite arrangements for the provision of electricity and other essential facilities in the sector. In a forward-looking move, Randhawa also proposed the installation of state-of-the-art solar lights in Sector C-14, aligning with sustainable development goals. The meeting also addressed the long-standing delays in Sector E-12, with Chairman Randhawa directing officials to remove all obstacles hindering its development. He stressed that work in Sector E-12 should commence immediately, mirroring the progress seen in other sectors. Meanwhile, developmental work in Sector I-12 was reported to be nearing completion, with significant progress achieved in recent months. Chairman Randhawa reiterated the importance of addressing all challenges to ensure the timely completion of development projects across all sectors. To ensure effective implementation, the Chairman instructed the Member Engineering and Member Estate to conduct site visits to Sector C-14 and review the provision of civic facilities. This hands-on approach underscores the CDA's commitment to delivering high-quality infrastructure and services to residents. The meeting concluded with a renewed focus on accelerating development projects and addressing delays, reflecting the CDA's dedication to transforming Islamabad into a modern and well-planned capital city.



ISLAMABAD: CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa chairs meeting with CDA board members and senior officers from relevant departments.

Balochistan govt provides financial support to 3397 poor patients

QUETTA: Under the leadership of Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the provincial government has provided financial assistance to 3397 poor patients under Balochistan Awami Endowment Fund (BAEF) programme so far who were suffering from chronic diseases. According to the report issued by Social Welfare Department, the provincial government had expended Rs 5.13 billion as financial assistance to the poor and needy patients suffering from different chronic diseases under the BAEF initiative to get them treated in the best public and private sector hospitals across the country. The Balochistan government had ensured financial assistance to the poor patients for the treatment of open heart surgery, thalassemia, cancer, liver and kidney transplants. As many as 2,241 patients were provided treatment in various hospitals across Balochistan. Among them, 749 patients received medical assistance at the BMC Hospital in Quetta, while 1,492 patients were treated at the Cenar Hospital in Quetta. Similarly, 1,156 patients from Balochistan were sent to renowned hospitals in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and GAMBAT, where they were provided with specialized medical facilities. Under the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund, financial assistance was provided to patients for expensive treatments such as cancer, heart diseases, liver and kidney disorders, thalassemia, bone marrow transplants, neurosurgery, and other costly medical treatments. This initiative of the Balochistan government has been widely praised by the public, as it has helped poor patients in the province receive treatment for chronic disease. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Chief Secretary of Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, these reforms in the healthcare sector are not only a beacon of hope for the people of the province but will also pave the way for future healthcare projects. The Balochistan government had formed a special team of doctors who were visiting the penal hospitals across.—APP

Effective voicing at int'l forums against Indian oppression stressed

MUZAFFARABAD: Mere solidarity is not enough—strategic action is the need of the hour. This was the resounding message from speakers at a seminar titled "Kashmir's Freedom: Our Role and Commitment", organized by the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UJAK) to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, addressing the gathering, emphasized the urgency of reassessing Kashmir policies, urging Pakistan and AJK to counter India's aggression more effectively on global platforms. He warned against India's systematic demographic engineering in Kashmir, comparing it to the Israeli model of settler colonialism, and called for decisive steps to reinvigorate the freedom movement. Highlighting UJAK's commitment to the cause, he revealed that the university recently hosted a high-level meeting with vice-chancellors of all state universities, chaired by Higher Education Commission Chairman Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. It was decided that Kashmir Resource Centers would be established in all public-sector universities,

with UJAK leading the initiative. Renowned scholar, journalist, and analyst Syed Arif Bahar delivered a thought-provoking address, providing a historical overview of Kashmir Solidarity Day and urging a break from the intellectual stagnation surrounding the Kashmir discourse. He commended UJAK's efforts in fostering dialogue, conferences, and academic engagements, stressing that such platforms are vital for shaping narratives and keeping the Kashmir issue alive. Tracing the origins of the resistance movement, he noted that it was born out of an assault on Kashmiri dignity and has since evolved into a formidable struggle that India, despite decades of military, political, and diplomatic manoeuvres, has failed to suppress. Syed Arif Bahar further pointed out that the post-9/11 geopolitical shift allowed India to falsely equate Kashmir's freedom movement with terrorism, distorting global perceptions through a calculated narrative war. He also criticized the muted response from Pakistan and Azad Kashmir following

India's revocation of Occupied Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019, stating that it deeply disheartened Kashmiris. He urged Pakistani leadership to regain the trust of the Kashmiri people through proactive diplomatic and political engagement. Dr. Nazakat Hussain from the Institute of Kashmir Studies reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering diplomatic, political, and moral support for Kashmiris, while Dr. Shabnam Gul called for a more aggressive global media strategy to expose Indian propaganda and amplify the voices of the oppressed. In a powerful display of unity, UJAK's management, faculty, and staff formed a human chain at Chella Campus, standing shoulder to shoulder in a symbolic act of resistance against tyranny. Led by Vice-Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, the event was joined by Registrar Meritorious Prof. Dr. Ghulam Murtaza, deans, heads of departments, administrative officers, and staff, all reaffirming that Kashmir is not merely a territorial dispute but a humanitarian crisis demanding global attention and justice.—APP

Rival groups in Kurram submit arms surrender plan

KOHAT: In accordance with the peace agreement reached through a tribal jirga, rival groups in Kurram district have submitted a formal plan to Kohat Commissioner for handing over their weapons to the government and its implementation. According to office of the commissioner, the district administration, police, and law enforcement agencies would facilitate the surrender of weapons. The parties involved would have the right to inspect their deposited weapons at any time. Additionally, they would be allowed to keep licensed firearms for personal protection, with the government issuing legal permits for such weapons. Speaking on the matter, KP Advisor on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif confirmed that, under the Kurram Peace Agreement, both parties have provided the government with a plan for disarmament. He stated that the rival groups would surrender heavy weaponry as part of the peace process. Barrister Saif further assured that for personal safety, the government would issue legal firearm licenses to the concerned individuals. He also highlighted that the demolition of bunkers is currently underway and will be completed in full. Jirga member Munir Bangash emphasized that once the arms are handed over, the government will ensure the safety of all parties. He added that both sides are committed to achieving long-term peace in Kurram.—APP

Pakistan exporters still unaware of its import potential: Envoy

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) regional committee on food Shahid Inman Wednesday said Saudi Arabia has emerged as one of the biggest import markets in the Middle East and Pakistan must fully exploit potential to maximum extent by boosting international standards exports. Talking to a delegation of food exporters led by Mian Zahid Iqbal Arain, he said that "Pak exporters are still unaware of its import potential and we must maximize the capitalization of export potential of Saudi Arabia particularly in agriculture, textile, construction and IT sectors including Water Games, Expos and World Cup Football are scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia and Pakistanis must participate in these events to establish direct contacts with their Saudi Arabian counterparts. Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Ahmad Farooq was facilitating all desirous Pak exporters and exercising his sphere of diplomatic influence in arranging business meetings with their Saudi counterparts. He added that this was yielding a positive impact, with more and more Pakistani delegations visiting the Kingdom, he concluded.—APP

PFC lauds Maria's role at Davos summit

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said, it is an honour for Ms Maria Tauqir to be a host of the two-day Davos summit that mega event not only enhanced the visibility of Pakistan's private sector but also strengthened the potentials of Pakistani women entrepreneurs at Davos summit held recently in Switzerland. The council's spokesman told media here Wednesday that in a felicitation letter addressed to her, the PFC chief said that with the positive feedback from the recent Davos summit, it is clear that Pakistan is increasingly being recognized globally for its business potential, innovative spirit, and the resilience

of its people. Mian Kashif Ashfaq said, it is an honour for Ms Maria Tauqir to be a host of the two-day Davos summit that mega event not only enhanced the visibility of Pakistan's private sector but also strengthened the potentials of Pakistani women entrepreneurs at Davos summit held recently in Switzerland. The council's spokesman told media here Wednesday that in a felicitation letter addressed to her, the PFC chief said that with the positive feedback from the recent Davos summit, it is clear that Pakistan is increasingly being recognized globally for its business potential, innovative spirit, and the resilience

ships, and for Pakistan, it was an invaluable opportunity to present itself as an ideal destination for investment. The forum's diverse participation reinforced the importance of collaboration across borders to solve global challenges, with Pakistan positioned as an essential player in these dialogues. He concluded that Ms Maria propelled the importance of showcasing Pakistan's positive image on the global stage and reiterated the commitment to empowering women in Pakistan, creating opportunities for them to lead and succeed in the business world.—DNA

Dir people widely deplore Indian oppression against Kashmiris

DIR LOWER: Kashmir Solidarity Day was observed under the supervision of the District Administration here on Wednesday. In the light of the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, Lower Dir, Muhammad Arif Khan, a ceremony was held under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Bashir Khan at the District Secretariat, Balambat Hall to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. The program was attended by Additional Assistant Commissioner, Timergara Abdul Aziz, heads of departments, officers of the Education Department, Muslim Khan Wisal (Boys Scouts), District Youth Officer, Civil Defense, T.M.O Timergara Zahoore Khan, Majid Khan (Sports Department), officers, Civil Defense volunteers, teachers, students, human rights representatives, media representatives, civil society and the public in large numbers. Public Relations Department Media Cell, District Administration, presented a documentary on Kashmir, while school children presented songs, poems, and speeches on Kashmir. The participants observed one minute of silence to express solidarity with the Kashmiris and to protest the suppression of their right to self-determination. The chief guest of the program, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Bashir Khan, said that the United Nations and international organizations working for human rights should take immediate notice of the human rights violations in Kashmir, find a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue and grant the Kashmiris the right to self-determination. He shed detailed light on February 5, Kashmir Solidarity Day, and said that India violated international laws by illegally occupying Kashmir on October 27, 1948, against the will of the Kashmiri people. Later, the special status of Kashmir was abolished through Articles 370 and 35A. Due to this Kashmiris are still confined to their homes. The United Nations and the international community should play a fair role regarding Kashmir and ensure the implementation of their resolutions. On this occasion, the speakers said that India is openly violating international human rights in occupied Kashmir. We assure our Kashmiri brothers that the people of Pakistan stand by and will continue to stand. The purpose of celebrating Kashmir Solidarity Day is to assure Kashmiri brothers that all Pakistanis, especially the youth, will raise their voices for Kashmir at every forum. The District Administration, Sports Department and Youth Department distributed certificates and trophies among the participants and school children for presenting good speeches and national songs. In addition, the Government College of Commerce and Management Sciences, Timergara also organized a walk under the leadership of Principal Professor Bakht Munir Sahibabadi, expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri brothers.—DNA

Youth-led narrative building digital advocacy critical to keeping Kashmir cause alive

ISLAMABAD: The resilience of Kashmiris proves their struggle is far from over, and it is the responsibility of young advocates to ensure their voices are heard. This requires more than just solidarity; it demands action. The youth must spearhead digital advocacy, counter India's disinformation narratives, mobilize the public, and build a compelling, fact-based discourse that keeps the Kashmir cause alive and firmly in focus. This was discussed during a session on "Kashmir Solidarity and Voices of Youth," held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, in collaboration with Youth Forum for Kashmir (YFK), Youth Association of Pakistan (YAP), and Youth Diplomacy Forum (YDF). The session was addressed by Khalid Rahman,



chairman, IPS, Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice chairman, IPS, Abdul Qadir, chairman, YAP, and a panel of youth speakers including Alina Zafar, research officer, YDF, Musawar Tanoli, YDF, Basim Raza, research assistant, The Millennium Universal College

(TMUC), Shaheer Ahmad, research assistant, Centre for Aerospace And Security Studies (CASS), Abdul Basit, research officer, Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) AJK, Tayyaba Khurshid, research officer, CISS AJK, and Hafsa Masoodi, PhD scholar, The Centre

for International Peace & Stability (CIPS), National University of Science and Technology (NUST). The youth panel underscored the ongoing human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), highlighting the decades-long repres-

sion, enforced detentions and disappearances, digital apartheid, unauthorized surveillance, restrictions on religious, political, and social freedoms, and the disruption of lives due to Indian military occupation. These violations are enabled by Indian draconian laws, which are evident to all, they stressed. The gathering emphasized the role of digital advocacy for the Kashmir cause. They highlighted diverse ideas where youth can utilize social media platforms, develop AI-driven tools, and create independent digital spaces to counter disinformation and amplify the voices of Kashmiris. The importance of decentralized journalism and artistic expression was also highlighted as a means to circumvent censorship and project the ground realities in Kashmir.—DNA

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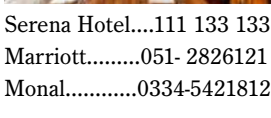
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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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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Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PNCA exhibition explores libraries as cultural sanctuaries through art

The exhibition will be open to the public at the National Art Gallery, PNCA, from 04th -11th February, 2025, Daily timings 10 am-4 pm. Art lovers, book enthusiasts, and advocates for cultural heritage are encouraged to visit and engage with these thought-provoking works

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts and OffGrid Studios proudly present Rebinding the Library: An Artistic Intervention, on the 4th of February, 2025 at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) National Art Gallery, Gallery #5 Islamabad. This compelling exhibition featuring the perspectives of 19 talented artists exploring the theme of libraries and the pursuit of knowledge. Inaugurated by esteemed artist and curator Dr. Arjumand Faisal, alongside DG PNCA, Mr. Ayoub Jamali, the exhibition marks the culmination of a three-week art residency held in October 2024, a collaborative effort between PNCA and the independent art platform OffGrid. Showcasing a diverse mix of paintings, sculptures, ceramics, collages, and video installations, the exhibition encourages viewers to reflect on the evolving role of libraries as cultural sanctuaries, spaces for learning, and symbols of intellectual heritage. The participating artists, ranging from emerging to established names, offer unique interpretations of libraries, highlighting their significance and the urgent need for their preservation. The exhibition features Akhter Iqbal's series inspired by Allama Iqbal's poetry, Khurram Babary's exploration of nature's complexity, and Faiza Gondal's evocative paintings of libraries as spaces of personal growth. Jacob Joseph's detailed paintings pay homage to historic libraries and literary figures, resonating deeply with visitors. Lubna Jehangir presents an artistic interpretation of poet Fahmida Riaz's defiant verse, blending literature and visual art into functional, thought-provoking pieces. Tanzeel Babary merges painting with textile design, while Nuzhat Khawar's collages celebrate the beauty of nature. Sidra Ashraf's illumination patterns serve as metaphors for untouched books, and Zain Shakeel's video installation captures the multifaceted nature



of written knowledge. Exploring diverse themes, Zarar Babary's work highlights the hidden treasures of libraries, Nadia Raza's paintings reflect spontaneous thoughts, and Tayyaba Aziz emphasizes the power of education for girls through bold, confident strokes. Shahzeb Ahmed's Braille art offers an interactive experience, challenging societal norms and celebrating resilience. Honoring sacred texts, Kabeer Hussain Shah's calligraphic pieces reflect the artist's deep spiritual journey. Ahsan's cubist-inspired ceramic sculptures explore nature's forms, while Geytee Ara's expressionist ceramic works address the alarming neglect of

libraries. The exhibition also highlights fresh voices in contemporary art. Young artist Khushal Khan presents philosophical explorations, while Areeba Imran revives the legacy of the Library of Alexandria and Queen Cleopatra, emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation. Rebinding the Library is more than an art exhibition—it is a call to action. It urges visitors to reconsider the role of libraries in today's society and to advocate for their preservation. Through compelling visual narratives, the artists underscore the transformative power of knowledge and the responsibility to safeguard it for future generations. The Pakistan National Council of the

Arts (PNCA), known for its dedication to preserving and promoting Pakistan's rich artistic heritage, remains committed to nurturing artistic brilliance and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Serving as a thriving center for creativity and innovation in the country, PNCA continues to push the boundaries of artistic expression and collaboration. The exhibition will be open to the public at the National Art Gallery, PNCA, from 04th -11th February, 2025, Daily timings 10 am-4 pm. Art lovers, book enthusiasts, and advocates for cultural heritage are encouraged to visit and engage with these thought-provoking works.

UN resolutions implementation on Kashmir dispute urged

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday urged the implementation of United Nations (UN) security council resolutions on the Kashmir issue. In his message on Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed today, he underlined that a lasting peace could not be achieved by subduing the candid desires of the local people. Mashhood said that Indian occupation forces have been brutalizing the Kashmiris with impunity for more than seven decades. "We continue to pay homage to the supreme sacrifices of our brothers and sisters in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). We reiterate our unflinching and complete support for their struggle. This will continue till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination." He said the government and the people of Pakistan annually observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day to renew their steadfast support for the Kashmiri people's legitimate struggle for the recognition of their right to self-determination.—APP

Int'l conference on climate change to kick-off today

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan faces looming dangers of environmental challenges, a two-day international conference on climate change will kick off in the capital on Thursday to raise awareness and stimulate action on the issue. Around 100 international experts will gather at the conference being held under the 'Breath Pakistan' initiative of Dawn Media group in partnership with United Nations Pakistan. The event will lead to shaping a sustainable future, both nationally and internationally, to make Pakistan climate-resilient by 2047. By engaging prominent figures dedicated to fighting climate change across South Asia, the conference aims to foster a meaningful collaboration between South Asian countries to come up with a strategic framework to minimise the adverse impacts of climate disasters. The conference comprises 14 sessions on topics including climate finance, climate justice, adaptation, sustainable governance, and climate action, especially in South Asia. The sessions titled 'South Asian Symposium on climate change' and 'Pakistan Symposium on Governance & Climate Change.—APP

Lok Virsa celebrates Kashmir Solidarity Day

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa hosted a vibrant series of cultural events on Wednesday to commemorate Kashmir Solidarity Day, drawing visitors from across the capital. The event highlighted the rich cultural heritage of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) while reaffirming solidarity with the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination. A key attraction was the artisan-at-work exhibition, where Kashmiri craftsmen showcased their expertise in traditional wood carving, paper mache art, and intricate embroidery. Stalls displayed beautifully handcrafted walnut wood boxes, ornate mirror frames, and exquisitely woven shawls, drawing admiration from visitors. "The

craftsmanship here is simply breathtaking. Each piece tells a story of Kashmir's deep artistic traditions," said Hina Iqbal, a visitor who purchased a hand-carved jewelry box as a souvenir. Another attendee, Ahmed Raza, who explored the embroidery section, remarked, "These Kashmiri shawls are masterpieces. The fine needlework and vibrant colors reflect the dedication of Kashmiri artisans." A photographic exhibition depicted the harrowing realities of Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir. The powerful images stirred emotions among visitors, with many stopping to discuss the plight of the Kashmiri people. "Seeing these pictures is heartbreaking. It reminds us of the sacrifices made by

Kashmiris every day," said Rafay Malik, a student attending the event. The event also featured soulful Kashmiri musical performances, where artists dressed in traditional attire performed folk songs and played classical Kashmiri instruments. A seminar was also held on Kashmiri cultural heritage which brought together scholars and activists, who discussed the importance of preserving Kashmir's identity amid ongoing oppression. Meanwhile, documentary screenings provided insights into the historical and political struggle of Kashmir, sparking thought-provoking discussions among attendees. The banners displaying slogans in favor of the Kashmir cause were placed

across the venue, reinforcing Pakistan's unwavering commitment to Kashmiri rights. Many attendees were seen taking photographs near these banners, sharing messages of support on social media. "It's crucial to keep the Kashmir issue alive in public discourse. Events like this strengthen our collective voice," said Ali Haider, a young activist at the event. The Kashmir Solidarity Day celebrations at Lok Virsa successfully blended cultural appreciation with activism, creating an impactful experience for attendees. The event not only highlighted the beauty of Kashmiri heritage but also amplified the ongoing calls for justice and self-determination.—DNA

Early cancer detection saves precious lives

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Wednesday urged regular screening and a proactive approach to combat the growing challenge of cancer in the country. They were addressing the awareness session organized by Maroof International Hospital (MIH) to mark the World Cancer Day with focus on early detection, prevention, and international cooperation in healthcare. Dr. Yasser Rehman, a USA trained Oncologist at MIH, delivered an insightful presentation on cancer prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment advancements. Dr. Mir Abdul Waheed, Medical Director of MIH, emphasized the need for continuous cancer awareness campaigns and research. He reiterated MIH's commitment to community support programs, ensuring that cancer prevention and treatment remain a top priority. Haroon Naseer, CEO of MIH, highlighted alarming statistics, revealing that Pakistan records over 185,000 new cancer cases annually, with breast cancer being the most prevalent, affecting one in nine women. He stressed that timely screening and lifestyle modifications could prevent up to 40% of cancer-related deaths. Haroon Naseer emphasized the importance of cross-border collaboration between Pakistan and Kazakhstan in healthcare. He outlined key areas for cooperation, including medical education partnerships between universities in both countries, establishing nursing schools to enhance professional training and joint cancer research initiatives to develop better treatment strategies.—DNA

Rally held to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhary Salik Hussain, has strongly condemned the violation of human rights in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Federal Minister participated in a rally held at D Chowk here to show solidarity with the Kashmiris. Chaudhary Salik Hussain reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the cause of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Federal Minister, Chaudhary Salik Hussain expressed his deep concern over the ongoing oppression and injustices faced by the Kashmiri people. He emphasized that the international community must take immediate action to address these violations and work towards a peaceful and just resolution of the Kashmir issue, said a press release. The Minister acknowledged the significant role of Hurriyat leaders in their steadfast struggle for the rights of the Kashmiri people. He praised their courage and resilience in the face of tremendous adversity, highlighting their contributions to the ongoing fight for justice and freedom in the region. Chaudhary Salik Hussain reaffirmed Pakistan's firm stance on the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.—APP

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Briefs

Call for global actions to restore Kashmiris' rights

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, the former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), urged the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other human rights organizations to step forward and restore the rights of the oppressed Kashmiris, which have been denied by the Indian government for the last seven decades. The former president made these remarks during a podcast on Radio Pakistan in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day on Wednesday. He stated that the celebration of Kashmir Solidarity Day around the world sent a message to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that they were not alone in fighting against the state terrorism of Indian forces. —APP

Ahsan vows to stand with Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Professor Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday paid tribute to the unwavering resilience of the Kashmiri people on Kashmir Solidarity Day while reaffirming Pakistan's unshakable commitment to stand in solidarity with Kashmir until it achieves liberation from India's oppressive regime. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, the minister of Planning said "Kashmir has been facing brutality for 77 years at the hands of the Indian government but Pakistan will continue to stand in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters until their last fight for freedom and self-determination". Iqbal said, "India's barbaric oppression and the unwavering patience of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters will be etched in history with golden words." —APP

Harnessing youth potential essential for national uplift

ISLAMABAD: Mrs. Farrukh Khan, Central President of the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) Women's Wing and Member of the National Assembly, emphasized that the youth are the nation's most valuable asset. She stated that by utilizing their creative abilities, determination, and courage, the country can be steered toward progress and development, said a press release yesterday. According to details, Mrs. Farrukh Khan met with a delegation led by Abid Iqbal, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, at her residence. The delegation included Colonel Ansar Iqbal, President of Jhelum, Shazia Afridi, Deputy Coordinator of Party Affairs, Dr. Ghazala Khan, GM Women Empowerment, and others. She highlighted that more than half of Pakistan's population consists of young people, whom Allah has blessed with immense potential. She noted that Pakistani youth have proven their capabilities globally and possess the full potential to lead the country toward rapid development and prosperity. —APP

J&K dispute resolution, essential for lasting peace in S Asia: Dar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that Pakistan consistently maintained that a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people, which was essential for a lasting peace in South Asia. "The United Nations must honor the commitments it had made 77 years ago and take steps for implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. For its part, Pakistan will continue to lend



ISLAMABAD: Acting High Commissioner of India Geetika Srivastava lighting candle on the occasion of Sri Lanka Independence Day reception. —DNA

Mushaal criticizes int'l community's silence on Kashmir

She denounced India's "black laws" that perpetuate oppression and violence against Kashmiris, citing the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) as examples

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Malik, wife of jailed Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik Wednesday criticized the international community's silence on the Kashmir issue, condemning India's blatant disregard for human rights and international law in occupied Kashmir. In an interview with a private news channel, Mushaal condemned India's draconian policies and blatant human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir. She denounced India's "black laws" that perpetuate oppression and violence against Kashmiris, citing the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) as exam-

ples. Mushaal also highlighted the plight of Kashmiri leaders and activists who have been imprisoned or martyred for their voices, saying "Voices are being silenced. Mushaal slammed India's state-sponsored terrorism in occupied Kashmir, where security forces have been accused of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and other human rights abuses. She urged the international community to break its silence and hold India accountable for its atrocities in Kashmir. She also warned that if the international community fails to speak out against India's atrocities in occupied Kashmir, Kashmiris will be forced to take the law into their own hands. She cautioned that India's unchecked aggres-

sion and human rights abuses have created a sense of hopelessness and desperation among Kashmiris, which may lead to a surge in resistance and militancy. Mushaal emphasized that the international community's silence is tantamount to complicity and that it is their responsibility to hold India accountable for its actions. Malik reiterated the Kashmiris' demand for their democratic right to self-determination, urging the international community to support their struggle for freedom and justice. She emphasized that Kashmiris have been denied their fundamental right to decide their future and that India's occupation has led to decades of suffering, oppression, and human rights abuses. Mushaal appealed to the global community

to recognize the Kashmiris' right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and numerous UN resolutions. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik on Wednesday reaffirmed the nation's unwavering support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their struggle for freedom from Indian forces. Addressing a Kashmir Solidarity Day Walk from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to D-Chowk, he said that Pakistan remains committed to UN resolutions on Kashmir and will stand with Kashmiris until their freedom from Indian occupation. Dr. Musadik Malik described Kashmir as a paradise on earth, stating that its natural beauty rivals

any other country's. However, he lamented that Indian forces have turned the region into a living hell through grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity, particularly targeting women and children. He further asserted that had UN resolutions on Kashmir been implemented, children in IIOJK would have received education in top global institutions, and the region would have developed into a premier tourist destination. Instead, Indian forces have turned the valley into a war zone. Criticizing India's claim of being the world's largest democracy, he said that New Delhi has continuously denied Kashmiris their right to self-determination as promised by the United Nations.

Profiteers become active before Ramadan

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Wednesday that profiteers have become active before the advent of the holy month of Ramadan to mint billions from the masses. He said the sugar, ghee, and cooking oil mafia have initiated profiteering and are getting bold due to the authorities' inaction. He said the prices of vegetables and fruits are also increasing in the market, adding to the miseries of the masses, and this must be stopped. Shahid Rashid Butt said in a statement issued here that, like every year, this year too, the profiteers want to set new records of looting during Ramadan. In this regard, the sugar, ghee, and cooking oil mafia are at the forefront, while those dealing with vegetables, fruits, pulses, etc., are also doing their best. —DNA

Jammu and Kashmir is Part of our DNA: Mushahid

MAHNOOR ANSAR

Islamabad: The Institute of Regional Studies, in collaboration with CISS (AJK), organized a seminar to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day, reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Speaking on the occasion, Senator Mushahid Husain reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for the Kashmiri cause, emphasizing that as the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had declared, "Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan." He stated, "Jammu and Kashmir is a part of our DNA, and there can be no compromise on it. Pakistan must continue supporting the Kashmir cause with focused and consistent efforts." Ambassador Jou-

har Saleem expressed optimism about the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, highlighting that conflicts of such magnitude do not follow predetermined timelines. He remarked, "We must not lose hope. The dedicated resolve of the Kashmiri people will not wane, and their quest for justice will ultimately prevail. As history has shown, perseverance leads to victory. Pakistan remains committed to standing by Kashmir until justice is served and their rightful aspirations are realized." Dr. Asma Shakir Kawaja, Executive Director of CISS AJK, shed light on the humanitarian crisis in IIOJK, lamenting that despite its severity, the dispute remains one of the least reported conflicts globally. She particularly underscored the grave impact on women, stating that women have been

used as weapons of war and nearly 10,000 women have been missing in IIOJK since 2019. Dr. Muhammad Khan stressed the importance of building a strong narrative on Jammu and Kashmir at international forums. He urged students and researchers to actively write about the issue to raise global awareness of the atrocities being committed against the Kashmiri people. Other notable speakers included General Samrez Salik and Dr. Muzamil Ayub Thakkur, who further emphasized the need for a united and strategic approach to advocate for Kashmir cause. He seminar was attended by students, researchers, and academics, all of whom reaffirmed their commitment to amplify the voices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and advocate for their right to self-determination.



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Over 1,500 cops ensure security for Kashmir Solidarity Day

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police has paid tribute to the resilience and sacrifices of the people of Kashmir on Kashmir Solidarity Day, reaffirming its support for their struggle for freedom. A public relations officer told APP that the Inspector General of Islamabad Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that the police force is ensuring fool-proof security for events and rallies organized in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. IG Rizvi said that over 1,500 officers and personnel have been deployed for security duties to maintain peace and order during the events. He said that Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Jawad Tariq is personally overseeing all security arrangements to ensure a smooth and secure environment for participants. He said that ICT Police officers are also at the forefront in expressing solidarity with oppressed Kashmiris facing Indian atrocities in the occupied Indian territory. —APP

Danyal urges world to take action against ongoing oppression in IHK

RAWALPINDI, Feb 05 (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, here on Wednesday urged the international community to take immediate action against the ongoing oppression in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK). Participating in a Kashmir Solidarity walk organized by Rawalpindi District Administration at Waqar un Nisa College, Rawalpindi, Barrister Danyal strongly condemned the atrocities being carried out by the Indian forces in Occupied Kashmir, stating, "During every protest in Occupied Kashmir, 8 to 10 innocent persons are martyred." Member National Assembly (MNA) Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, ADCG Rawalpindi Dr. Hassan Tariq and a large number of students attended the event. Addressing the participants, Barrister Danyal criticized the international community for its silence on human rights violations and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to supporting the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination. —APP

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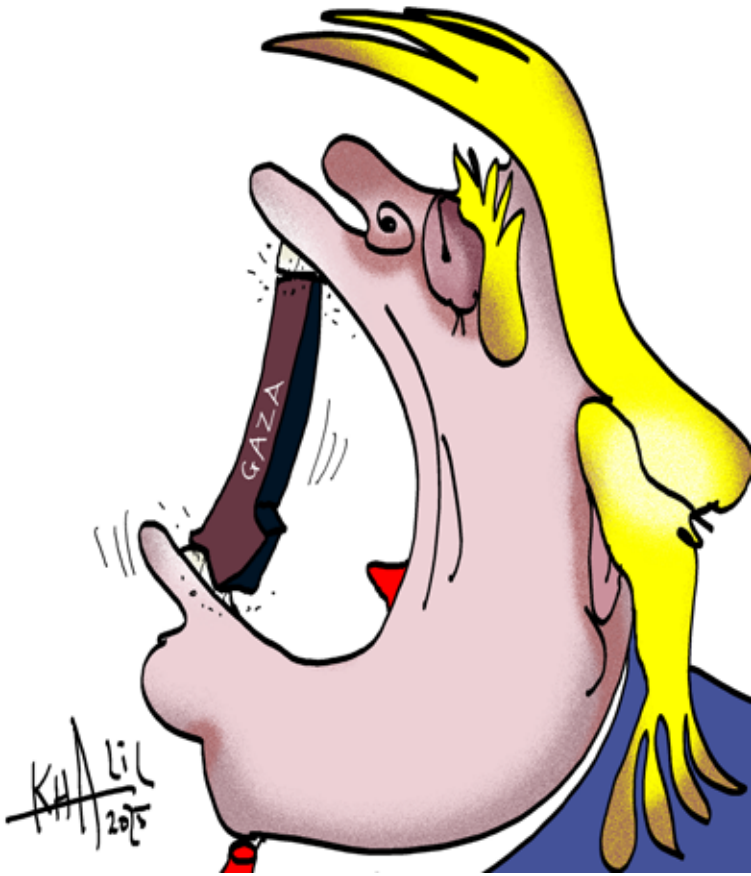
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Gaza belongs to its people

In a shocking and deeply unsettling statement, former U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed that the United States should "take over" and "own" Gaza after forcibly depopulating its Palestinian inhabitants. His remarks, made during a news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have rightly drawn widespread condemnation from human rights advocates, legal experts, and political leaders. Trump's proposal is not just inflammatory rhetoric; it is a direct endorsement of ethnic cleansing and a flagrant violation of international law. The United Nations has defined ethnic cleansing as the forced removal of a civilian population from a geographic area through violent and terrorizing means. By advocating for the total displacement of Palestinians and U.S. acquisition of Gaza, Trump is endorsing actions that would amount to crimes against humanity. The situation in Gaza is already dire. More than 15 months of relentless U.S.-backed Israeli bombardment have turned the territory into what Trump himself described as a "demolition site." Yet rather than advocating for reconstruction, humanitarian aid, or a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Trump's response is to erase Gaza's Palestinian population and claim the land for the United States. This shocking disregard for Palestinian lives underscores a troubling pattern in Trump's worldview: a willingness to disregard human rights, sovereignty, and international norms in pursuit of power and control. Beyond the immorality of his proposal, Trump's words carry profound geopolitical risks. The forced displacement of Palestinians would inflame tensions across the Middle East, further destabilizing an already volatile region. It would also reinforce the perception that the U.S. is complicit in Israel's occupation and expansionist policies, alienating key allies and exacerbating anti-American sentiment globally. Rights organizations and political leaders have been quick to reject Trump's dangerous rhetoric. Advocacy groups such as DAWN and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) have condemned his statements as blatant violations of international law, while human rights experts warn that such actions would constitute war crimes. Even within the U.S., there has been pushback, with figures like Congresswoman Rashida Taib calling on her colleagues to denounce Trump's endorsement of ethnic cleansing. This moment demands a firm and unequivocal response from the international community. The United States cannot afford to let such statements go unchallenged, especially from a former president who remains a significant political figure. Any attempt to normalize the idea of forcibly expelling Palestinians from Gaza and claiming their land must be met with strong condemnation and legal scrutiny. If world leaders and human rights organizations are serious about upholding international law, they must take action to hold accountable those who advocate for ethnic cleansing. Silence in the face of such proposals would not only embolden Trump and his supporters but also set a dangerous precedent that could encourage other leaders to disregard human rights with impunity.



Bid to retake Panama Canal

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has recently expressed interest in the US "taking back" control of the Panama Canal, a statement that raises significant legal and geopolitical questions. The Panama Canal, completed in 1914, came under US control after the signing of the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty that granted the US sovereignty over the canal zone. For nearly a century, the US oversaw this vital maritime route connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. But the 1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaties paved the way for its transfer to Panama, which was completed on December 31, 1999, in accordance with international law. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties, ratified by both nations, explicitly outline the terms of the transfer and the canal's continued neutral operation. Since 1999, Panama has held full sovereignty over the canal, which remains open to ships of all nations under international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. While the US retained certain military rights, these do not extend to control over the canal. Trump's proposal to take back control of the canal would violate the Torrijos-Carter Treaties and the fundamental principles of territorial sovereignty and self-determination. The US has no legal basis to reclaim the canal without Panama's consent. Any unilateral move is likely to face strong international opposition and erode US credibility as a treaty-abiding nation. Moreover, reversing the 1999 transfer would be impractical, as Panama has exercised full control of the canal for over two decades, and any attempt to alter this arrangement would require complex diplomatic negotiations with little likelihood of success. Given the broad international recognition of Panama's sovereignty, such an effort would also face significant diplomatic resistance, particularly from Latin American nations sensitive to issues of sovereignty and foreign influence. It would be counterproductive to US engagement in Latin America. Panama President Mulino rejects US claims of Chinese influence in Panama Canal. The Organisation of American States could issue a formal resolution reaffirming Panama's sovereign rights over the canal, emphasising the need to respect treaties and international law. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which prioritises regional autonomy and non-interference, is likely to denounce any US attempt to challenge Panama's control, framing it as a violation of Latin America's right to self-determination. Besides, finding a legal precedent is challenging, as there are no established cases that support the revocation of a treaty or reversal of sovereignty transfers. Some legal principles have been cited in international law to justify revisiting agreements under extraordinary circumstances. For instance, the Gulf of Maine case (Canada vs United States, 1984) suggested that boundary agreements could be subject to review under exceptional conditions. In theory, the broader principle of national security and self-preservation could be invoked if the US were to argue that control of the Panama Canal was critical to its strategic interests. But such a claim would be highly contentious, requiring an expansive and debated interpretation of both the treaty framework and international law.

US recognizes China as an equal power

Qamar Bashir



Regarding foreign aid, Rubio dismissed concerns that China would fill the gap left by the freezing of USAID funds, asserting that China has the right to pursue its policies as it sees fit. However, he questioned why the US should fund initiatives that do not align with its national interests. He emphasized that U.S. taxpayer money should not be spent on programs...

WHILE China has imposed retaliatory tariff from 10% to 15% on the US imports, for the first time in U.S. history, Secretary of State Marco Rubio openly acknowledged that China is a great power and is poised to provide global leadership in the near future. He recognized China as the largest trading partner of the United States and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Unlike the traditionally hawkish stance of many U.S. lawmakers, Rubio outlined a more measured and pragmatic approach to managing China's rise, focusing on strategic containment rather than outright confrontation. Rubio further emphasized that the future of the 21st century will be largely defined by the relationship between the United States and China. While acknowledging China's economic growth and global influence, he warned against allowing it to dominate entire regions or monopolize essential industries such as manufacturing, energy, critical minerals, and medicine. Dependence on China for these sectors, he argued, would weaken America's self-sufficiency and national security, making it imperative to prevent Beijing from gaining control over key industries like telecommunications and the automobile sector. Rather than suppressing China's influence, Rubio advocated for a balanced and fair global order where U.S. independence and strategic interests are not compromised. He underscored the need for economic diversification, domestic industrial strengthening, and global partnerships to counterbalance China's rising dominance. Rubio also acknowledged China's legitimate right to pursue its national interests, just as the U.S. does, signaling a shift from the confrontational rhetoric notably, while Canada and Mexico faced 25% tariffs, tariffs on China were limited to 10%, suggesting a carefully measured approach that considers China's strategic importance in global trade and economic stability. Rubio rejected the notion of taking control of Panama Canal by the USA, and adopted a conciliatory tone, by saying that he is a diplomat and believe in resolving the outstanding issues by diplomatic means and rather than using kinetic force. Though he expressed concern that Chinese-linked companies controlling key entry points could violate treaty terms and disclosed that

the Panama leadership will seriously consider withdrawal from the China's Belt and Road Initiative and would initiate legal processes required for further changes to keep the canal open, free, and free from foreign influence that could pose risks to U.S. security, but striking a diplomatic tone made it clear that while direct U.S. operational control of the canal is not the immediate goal, decisive action is necessary to prevent any foreign power from using the canal strategically against American interests. Regarding foreign aid, Rubio dismissed concerns that China would fill the gap left by the freezing of USAID funds, asserting that China has the right to pursue its policies as it sees fit. However, he questioned why the U.S. should fund initiatives that do not align with its national interests. He emphasized that U.S. taxpayer money should not be spent on programs that do not strengthen America's security, economy, or strategic standing. On trade policies, Rubio acknowledged that China acts in its national interest and, if allowed to take advantage of the U.S., would continue to do so. The U.S., he asserted, must ensure fairness in economic relations and not allow China to maintain an unfair advantage. While this stance may face criticism in political and media circles, he noted that millions of Americans recognize the logic behind ensuring economic reciprocity with China. Rubio's remarks reflected a shift from aggressive confrontation to strategic recalibration in managing U.S.-China relations. He emphasized the need for economic and strategic independence while acknowledging China's global influence. His approach suggests a nuanced policy—one that seeks to establish a balanced relationship with China while safeguarding American interests through economic diversification, fair trade practices, and strategic policy adjustments. The U.S. approach to tariffs on China, imposed on February 4, 2025, was notably cautious compared to what many observers had anticipated. While a 10% tariff was applied to all Chinese imports, amounting to \$427 billion in goods and generating an estimated \$42.7 billion in duties, this was significantly lower than the straight 25% tariff imposed on imports from Canada and Mexico. The disparity in tariff rates suggests a measured approach toward China, likely aimed at maintaining economic stability and avoiding excessive disruption to global trade. In retaliation, China imposed tariffs on U.S. exports valued at ap-

proximately \$20 billion, which appeared more symbolic than economically damaging. These measures included a 15% tariff on U.S. coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG) and a 10% tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery, and vehicles. While these tariffs target key U.S. industries, they remain limited in scope compared to the broader U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods. This exchange of tariffs reflects a strategic balancing act, where both nations are asserting their economic positions while avoiding full-scale trade escalation. The approach adopted by Secretary of State Marco Rubio is both commendable and strategically sound. Following President Trump's return to office, there were widespread concerns that the U.S. would adopt an aggressively confrontational stance toward China, potentially escalating global tensions. However, Rubio's measured and pragmatic approach has reassured the international community, signaling that the U.S. is opting for strategic engagement rather than outright hostility. If Rubio's statements accurately reflect the stance of President Trump, it suggests a significant shift in U.S. policy—one that acknowledges China as an equal partner, respects its economic and military strength, and moves away from a policy of obstruction toward one of competitive coexistence. This approach is not a sign of weakness but rather a recognition of geopolitical realities. The U.S. is asserting its national interests while allowing China to do the same, a principle fundamental to global diplomacy. By refraining from aggressively opposing China's rapid rise and instead focusing on maintaining a fair and balanced global order, the U.S. is fostering an environment conducive to economic progress and stability. This shift has the potential to accelerate global development, benefiting not only the U.S. and China but also the rest of the world. If this pragmatic policy is consistently applied, it could mark the beginning of a new era of economic cooperation and strategic competition—one that prioritizes national interests without undermining global peace and progress.

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

False promise of prosperity: Trump's plan of forced displacement of Gazans

Khayam Abbasi



Trump's proposal to forcibly displace Palestinians from Gaza and have the U.S. "take over" the enclave blatantly violates international law, including the UN Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and numerous United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions. The forced transfer of a civilian population constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and is classified as ethnic cleansing under international law

THROUGHOUT history, colonial powers have justified dispossession and displacement through the language of economic progress. The Zionist movement, supported by Western allies, has long propagated the myth that its presence in Palestine would bring prosperity and modernization. Today, this narrative persists in the rhetoric of political leaders such as U.S. President Donald Trump. In an unprecedented announcement, Trump, during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister and wanted war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu, declared that the United States would "take over" and "own" Gaza after forcibly displacing its Palestinian population. He suggested that Palestinians in Gaza should be forcibly removed and resettled elsewhere under the guise of humanitarian aid and development. Trump's statements—framing Gaza as "uninhabitable" and suggesting its people "have no choice but to leave"—echo the same colonial justification that has been used for over a century. His proposal to "clean out" Gaza and turn it into the "Riviera of the Middle East" reflects the persistent use of economic promises to whitewash ethnic cleansing. However, history has shown that these promises are nothing more than a tool for justifying displacement and reinforcing domination. The myth of Zionist prosperity began in the early 20th century, when leaders of the movement claimed that Jewish settlement would uplift Palestine's economy. They argued that Jewish immigration, foreign investment, and agricultural modernization would benefit all inhabitants of the land. However, as historian Rashid Khalidi explains in *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*, these economic promises were designed to secure Jewish control, not to integrate or uplift the indigenous Palestinian population. Zionist institutions such as the Jewish National Fund (JNF) systematically acquired land and prohibited its use by non-Jews, while the Histadrut labor federation worked to replace Palestinian workers with Jewish laborers. Palestinians were gradually excluded from economic development, their lands confiscated, and their livelihoods undermined. Instead of prosperity, Zionist policies led to growing Palestinian dispossession, culminating in the Nakba of 1948, when more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes. Trump's recent comments reveal a similar logic. By portraying Gaza as a "pile of rubble" and arguing that Palestinians should be relocated to a "fresh, beautiful piece of land," he attempts to frame forced displacement as an act of benevolence. This mirrors the language of past colonial projects, where indigenous peoples were told they would benefit from their own removal. Furthermore, Trump's call for neighboring Arab countries to absorb Palestinians reflects long-standing Zionist and Western attempts to erase Palestinian identity and political rights. The idea that Palestinians should simply "leave" and be replaced by luxury real estate developments—what Jared Kushner calls Gaza's "valuable waterfront property"—demonstrates how economic incentives are being used to justify ethnic cleansing. Trump presented an extraordinary redevelopment plan, claiming that once Palest-

inians were removed, Gaza could be transformed into "the Riviera of the Middle East". He stated that his administration would lead reconstruction efforts in the enclave to "supply unlimited numbers of jobs and housing for the people of the area." "The US will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it, too. We'll own it," Trump said at the White House after his meeting with Netanyahu. He added that the US would assume responsibility for clearing destroyed buildings and dismantling unexploded bombs and other weapons. This statement marks a dangerous escalation, as it not only endorses forced displacement but also positions the US as a colonial administrator of Palestinian land, disregarding Palestinian sovereignty and self-determination. Trump's proposal to forcibly displace Palestinians from Gaza and have the U.S. "take over" the enclave blatantly violates international law, including the UN Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and numerous United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions. The forced transfer of a civilian population constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and is classified as ethnic cleansing under international law. Additionally, UNSC resolutions, including Resolutions 242, 338, and 2334, explicitly affirm the illegality of Israel's occupation and settlements, calling for a just and lasting solution that ensures Palestinian sovereignty. The UNGA has repeatedly condemned forced displacement and reaffirmed Palestinians' right to self-determination. Trump's statements, which frame ethnic cleansing as a path to "redevelopment," not only violate these binding international commitments but also embolden Israel's ongoing war crimes. His plan mirrors historical colonial tactics where indigenous populations were expelled under the guise of "progress," reinforcing the need for urgent global action to hold those responsible accountable. Trump's comments were met with strong opposition from Palestinian leaders and officials, who condemned his proposal as an outright call for ethnic cleansing. Hamas swiftly condemned the proposal as a "recipe for creating chaos and tension in the region." The group stated, "Our people in the Gaza Strip will not allow these plans to pass." Hamas further emphasized that "what is required is an end to the occupation and aggression against our people, not their expulsion from their land. Our people in Gaza have thwarted displacement and deportation plans under bombardment for more than 15 months." Hamas senior official Izzat El-Reshqi called the proposal "dangerous," arguing that it demonstrated deep ignorance about Palestine and the region. He emphasized that Gaza is not a commodity to be bought and sold and called for an urgent Arab-Islamic summit to address the threat. Hamas spokesman Abdel Latif al-Qanun criticized Trump's stance as aligning with the Israeli far-right's efforts to displace Palestinians and erase their national cause. Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Secretary-General Hussein al-Sheikh firmly rejected all calls for the forced displacement of Palestinians, reiterating that the two-state solution based on

international law is the only path to peace. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas strongly opposed any plans to remove Palestinians from Gaza, vowing to protect their rights, which have been fought for through decades of struggle and sacrifice. These reactions reflect a broader Palestinian consensus that forced displacement is not only unacceptable but also a continuation of a long history of colonization and ethnic cleansing. Trump and Netanyahu's vision of Gaza's future is not about economic development for Palestinians—it is about profit and control. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories has long been accompanied by economic policies that exploit Palestinian resources while restricting their ability to develop independently. The blockade of Gaza has devastated its economy, with unemployment rates among the highest in the world. Israeli policies have ensured that Gaza remains dependent on external aid while preventing meaningful economic growth. Even when economic deals have been promoted as a path to peace—such as Trump's so-called "Peace to Prosperity" plan in 2020—these initiatives have ignored the fundamental issue of Palestinian self-determination. They treat Palestinians as an economic problem to be managed rather than a people with rights, history, and sovereignty. Trump's argument that Gaza is "uninhabitable" deliberately ignores the fact that Israel's relentless bombardment and blockade have caused this crisis. Before the latest war, Gaza was home to a resilient population, artists, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs who built a thriving, though restricted, society. The destruction of Gaza is not a natural disaster—it is a deliberate policy of war and blockade aimed at making life unbearable for its residents. To now suggest that Palestinians must leave because their land has been destroyed is the height of hypocrisy. It is akin to a colonial power bombing a city to ruins and then claiming that its residents should leave because it is no longer livable. This is not a plan for economic prosperity—it is a blueprint for ethnic cleansing. Trump's vision for Gaza follows the same pattern that Zionist and Western leaders have used for over a century: framing displacement as development, destruction as opportunity, and ethnic cleansing as humanitarian aid. But Palestinians have consistently resisted these narratives, recognizing them for what they are—attempts to erase their presence from their homeland. Palestinian prosperity cannot come through forced removal or economic projects that serve only the occupiers. True prosperity can only exist when Palestinians have the right to live freely on their land, rebuild their communities on their terms, and determine their own economic future without foreign-imposed solutions. The international community must reject Trump's rhetoric for what it is—an attempt to justify a crime under the cover of economic promises—and instead support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, justice, and return. *The writer is the Sub-editor of Daily Islamabad Post*
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Briefs

PM calls on India for 'meaningful, Kashmir talks'

FROM PAGE 01

The prime minister urged New Delhi to abandon its August 5, 2019 mindset, referring to the revocation of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir's special status. He warned that India must realise that spilling the blood of Kashmiris will not resolve the issue and that history remembers those responsible for oppression. PM Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's status as a nuclear-armed nation and vowed to continue advocating for Kashmiris on all international platforms, including the UN and OIC. Pakistan is observing Kashmir Solidarity Day today to express unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination as promised in the United Nations' resolutions. Posters and billboards highlighting the plight of Kashmiris have been placed at key locations, including airports and railway stations. Human chains will be formed at Mangla, Kohala, Barakot, Azad Pattan, and Holar, symbolising unity between Pakistan and AJK. A special function will take place at Mangla Bridge in Mirpur, with similar events planned in Kotli and Bhimber districts.

Letter to COAS ...

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the previous letter, and will not receive this time as well," Siddiqui added. Two days earlier, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and lawyer Faisal Chaudhry confirmed that Imran, who is incarcerated in Adiala jail, penned a six-point letter to the army chief urging for review of policies while explaining the reasons for what he called the widening gulf between public and the army. He clarified that writing a letter by the party founder to the army chief was not a policy shift and that the jailed party founder wrote the letter as a former prime minister.

Pak, China vow to...

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calling it a manifestation of the vision of the Chinese leadership and the dynamism of the Chinese people. He also paid rich tribute to President Xi for China's profound contributions to global development under the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). He termed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a "shining model of the BRI's visionary concept of win-win cooperation". Both sides also discussed the high-quality development of CPEC 2.0 and its vital role in promoting regional connectivity, shared benefits and common prosperity, including through partnerships with other countries.

Pakistan, China...

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Dr Asim Hussain. The interaction between Naqvi and his Chinese counterpart lasted two hours and came in the backdrop of attacks on Chinese personnel working in Pakistan that have angered China, which has pushed the federal government to begin formal negotiations for a joint security management system. Pakistan's ongoing counter-terrorism efforts remain a key topic of discussion between the two countries due to the rising frequency of attacks targeting Chinese nationals working in Pakistan.

Nawaz sees inflation...

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"I carry the responsibility of my father, Nawaz Sharif, and my mentor, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and work towards fulfilling our vision for the country's prosperity," she said. Nawaz Sharif concluded by stressing that the PML-N's track record of public service and commitment to national growth would continue. "The people's trust and faith in us fuel our determination to work for Pakistan's brighter future," he said.

ICC to take control of CT venues after tri-nation series

The eight-team tournament is set to commence on February 19

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The International Cricket Council (ICC) will take control of the Men's Champions Trophy 2025 venues following the conclusion of the tri-nation ODI series, involving hosts Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa. According to the sources, the newly-renovated Gaddafi Stadium here, which is set to host two matches of the upcoming series on February 8 and 10, will be handed over to the apex cricketing body on February 11. The remaining two matches of the all-important tri-nation series will be held on February 12 and 14 at Karachi's National Bank Stadium, which will subsequently be acquired by the ICC on the next day. Sources further revealed that after taking control of the venues, the ICC will wind up its affairs related to the eight-team tournament. Notably, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) did not request the apex body for an extension in handing over the venues as all the matters related to the stadiums are as per the fixed schedule.

Cummins 'unlikely' to feature in Champions Trophy

Cummins is recovering from an ankle injury he sustained during Test series against India

SYDNEY: Australia's longer formats captain Pat Cummins will likely miss the highly-anticipated ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled to be hosted by Pakistan from February 19 to March 9. The right-arm pacer, who skipped Australia's ongoing Test tour of Sri Lanka due to the birth of his second child, is also nursing an ankle injury, which he sustained in the recent five-match home Test series against India. Australia's Champions Trophy-bound players, who are not featuring in the ongoing red-ball series, are expected to depart for Sri Lanka on Thursday. But, their head coach Andrew McDonald shared on Wednesday that skipper Cummins is unlikely to accompany them. McDonald further revealed Steve Smith and Travis Head as the frontrunners to replace Cummins in the leadership role for the eight-team tournament if the 31-year-old gets ruled out. "Pat Cummins hasn't been able to resume any type of bowling so he's heavily unlikely, so that would mean that we do need a captain," McDonald told SEN. "Steve Smith and Travis Head are the two that we've been having conversations with while we've been building out that Champions Trophy team along with Pat back home. They'll be the two that we look at for that leadership post. - Agencies

As a result, the ICC did not raise any objection regarding the stadiums as it is understood that the host nations usually play matches at the same venues before an ICC tournament. The tri-nation series, featuring New Zealand and South Africa, will be hosted by Pakistan as part of their preparations for the Champions Trophy 2025. This series will be crucial for Pakistan's ODI team as they aim to defend their title in the upcoming mega event. The series will kick off on February 8, with Pakistan facing New Zealand at the Gaddafi Stadium here. The team is set to begin preparations on February 4, with New Zealand and South Africa arriving in Lahore on February 5 and February 7, respectively. The tri-series will follow a single-league format, and the final is scheduled for February 14 in Karachi. After the tri-series, the Champions Trophy 2025 will kick off on February 19 and will run until March 9. Matches will be held across three venues in Pakistan - Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi - and in Dubai, featuring 15 thrilling encounters between the eight participating teams.

Former world No. 1 Romania's Halep announces retirement

Before her ban, though, Halep enjoyed a successful career which included 24 WTA singles titles and 64 weeks as the women's world No. 1. She won her first grand slam at the French Open in 2018, before securing her second at Wimbledon in 2019

WEB DESK

BUCHAREST: Two-time grand slam champion and former world No. 1 Simona Halep has retired from tennis. The Romanian announced her decision at the Transylvania Open in Cluj, Romania on Tuesday after losing her first-round match against Lucia Bronzetti 6-1, 6-1. "It's very hard to reach that level, and I know what it takes to get there," Halep said while addressing supporters after her defeat, per AP. "That's why I wanted to be here today, in Cluj, to play in front of you and say goodbye on the tennis court, even if my performance wasn't great." Halep has struggled with injuries since returning to the court last year after serving a doping ban. The 33-year-old was handed a four-year ban in September 2023 after testing positive for the banned substance Roxadustat at the 2022 US Open. Halep maintained the anti-doping violations were not intentional and, in March last year, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) agreed and reduced the backdated ban to nine months, clearing the two-time grand slam champion to return to the sport. At the same time Halep was handed her ban, the International Tennis Integrity Agency also announced she was being charged with having irregularities in her Athlete Bio-



logical Passport (ABP), which is designed to monitor an athlete's selected biological variables over time. CAS dismissed that charge.

Before her ban, though, Halep enjoyed a successful career which included 24 WTA singles titles and 64 weeks as the women's world No. 1.

ICC announces match officials for Champions Trophy 2025

Pakistan's Ahsan is a part of the 12-member umpiring panel for the tournament

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday, announced match officials for the upcoming men's Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled to be hosted by Pakistan from February 19 to March 9. The umpiring panel, comprised of 12 umpires, including Pakistan's Ahsan Raza, will officiate the enthralling 15 matches of the eight-team tournament. Veteran Richard Kettleborough, who officiated the final of the previous edition of the tournament in 2017, is one of the six umpires who return for the Champions Trophy 2025. The other umpires, who had also featured in the previous edition, are Chris Gaffaney, Kumar Dharmasena, Richard Illingworth, Paul Reiffel and Rod Tucker - all part of the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires. Meanwhile, David Boon, Ranjan Madugalle and Andrew Pycroft form the three-member team of the match referees for the upcoming tournament. Match officials for ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 Umpires: Kumar Dharmasena, Chris Gaffaney, Michael Gough, Adrian Holdstock, Richard Illingworth, Richard Kettleborough, Ahsan Raza, Paul Reiffel, Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, Rodney Tucker, Alex Wharf, Joel Wilson. Match Referees: David Boon, Ranjan Madugalle, Andrew Pycroft. The eight-team tournament, comprised of 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9, across three venues - Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi - in Pakistan and Dubai. The eight teams are divided into two groups. Group A features Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Bangladesh, while Group B is comprised of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia. Hosts Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the curtain raiser on February 19 in Karachi, while the blockbuster clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India is scheduled for February 23 in Dubai. Pakistan will host a total of 10 matches in their country, while four matches, including all three of India's group-stage matches and the first semi-final, will be played in Dubai. - Agencies

Rashid becomes leading wicket-taker in T20s

Rashid achieves the milestone in the Qualifier 1 of SA20

DUBAI: Afghanistan's star spinner Rashid Khan on Tuesday, rose to a pinnacle as he became the leading wicket-taker in the history of men's T20s, surpassing West Indies' legendary all-rounder Dwayne Bravo. Rashid achieved the milestone while representing MI Cape Town in the Qualifier 1 of SA20 against Paarl Royals, where he picked up two wickets for 33 runs in his four overs. He was level with Bravo at the commencement of the aforementioned fixture and soon moved ahead by dismissing Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage in the 10th over of the Royals' innings. Rashid further solidified his lead by sending India's wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik packing in the 17th over. The leg-spinner has now taken 633 wickets in 457 innings, two ahead of Bravo's tally of 631 dismissals, for which he conceded 546 innings.

Most wickets in Men's T20s

- Rashid Khan: 633 wickets
- Dwayne Bravo: 631 wickets
- Sunil Narine: 574 wickets
- Imran Tahir: 531 wickets
- Shakib Al Hasan: 492 wickets

Joe Root returns as England name XI for first India ODI

WEB DESK

LONDON: Joe Root will play his first one-day international since the 2023 World Cup in the opening match of England's series against India on Thursday in Nagpur. The 34-year-old has been named at number three in England's XI, behind openers Phil Salt and Ben Duckett. Jacob Bethell has been preferred to Jamie Overton at number seven with Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer and Saqib Mahmood the three-man pace attack. Wicketkeeper Jamie Smith is out with a calf injury. England XI to play India: Phil Salt (wk), Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jos Buttler (capt), Liam Livingstone, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer, Adil Rashid, Saqib Mahmood. The three-match series, which begins at 08:00 GMT, acts as England's preparation for the Champions Trophy next month. England have lost their past three ODI series but this contest is their first in the 50-over format with Brendon McCullum as their white-ball coach. They lost 4-1 to India in the preceding T20s. Root's last ODI was the final match of their dismal World Cup defence against Pakistan in Kolkata on 11 November 2023. This series and the Champions Trophy that follows mark the start of the journey towards the 2027 World

Cup in South Africa in 50-over cricket. Root was a key part of England's 2019 World Cup win but has struggled for form in the format since, with his options limited because of clashes in the schedule between England's red and white-ball teams. He averages 28.95 in 28 matches since the 2019 World Cup and has not scored an ODI century since his 100 not out against West Indies in the group stage of that competition. "He is one of the great players of the game in all of the formats," captain Jos Buttler said. "I am excited to see him in phase of his career. Look what he has done in Test stuff when he has not had the captaincy and is back with that cheeky smile on his face."



UNHCR concerned about...

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such a move on livelihoods and the education of children. Since 1 January 2025, an uptick in arrests of Afghan nationals in the ICT and Rawalpindi has caused significant distress, with reports of Afghan nationals of various documentation status being rounded up. More than 800 Afghan nationals, among them women and children, have been deported so far this year from Islamabad and Rawalpindi alone. This latest relocation directive has increased fears of imminent deportation among Afghans in the capital region. A UNHCR-issued non-return advisory has been in place since 2021, calling for a suspension of forced returns of Afghan nationals from any country regardless of their status. UNHCR and IOM are especially concerned for Afghan nationals who may face a risk of harm upon return, such as ethnic and religious minorities, women and girls, journalists, human rights activists, and members of artistic professions like musicians and others. "Pakistan has a proud tradition of hosting refugees, saving millions of lives. This generosity is greatly appreciated," noted UNHCR Representative Philippa Candler. "Forced return to Afghanistan could place some people at increased risk. We urge Pakistan to continue to provide safety to Afghans at risk, irrespective of their documentation status."

Pakistan seeks to streng...

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Muhammad Ali Durrani and Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khali. During the meeting, Barrister Dr. Saif handed over a special message from the founding leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, for the Afghan leadership. The message expressed Imran Khan's best wishes and brotherly goodwill for the people of Afghanistan. Dr. Saif emphasized that the message from Imran Khan conveyed Pakistan's unwavering support and goodwill towards Afghanistan. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering bilateral ties based on mutual trust and cooperation. Both parties agreed on enhancing the relationship between the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan through greater interaction and mutual understanding. Barrister Dr. Saif shared his vision of organizing a delegation of tribal and political leaders, as well as scholars, to visit Afghanistan in an effort to strengthen cultural and political ties between the two nations.

Some PTI lawmakers to write...

FROM PAGE 01

According to sources, the members allege that Barrister Gohar opposed the party member's bill. Dr. Amjad tried to get the resolution passed in the Punjab and KP assemblies. According to sources, Dr. Amjad had also contacted Aseefa Bhatti Zardari and the PML-N leadership on the bill. Dr. Amjad Khan alleged that my bill was prepared but the party chairman raised his voice against the bill. According to sources, Chingiz Khan Kakar also expressed reservations about Barrister Gohar Khan. Chingiz Khan Kakar alleged that I had a bill for the High Court in Faisalabad that my own chairman opposed. He said that party members bring bills and Barrister Gohar opposes it. According to sources, the founder of PTI will be informed in the letter for not consulting Barrister Gohar's parliamentary leaders.

Prince Karim Aga Khan passes away

FROM PAGE 01

and to the Ismaili community worldwide. As we honour the legacy of our founder, Prince Karim Aga Khan, we continue to work with our partners to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities across the world, as he wished, irrespective of their religious affiliations or origins.

The dark side of digital Pakistan



AMSAL FATIMA

PAKISTAN, with nearly 49% of the women's population, has the prevalence of gender disparity and patriarchal values. Deep-rooted complex beliefs and making them limited to women only, such as honor, cultural norms, and Parda, are the finest examples of gender disparity in Pakistan. Gender disparity plays a pivotal role in contributing to harassment against women by objectifying them as sexual objects and giving power to men. This harassment is not

limited only in workplaces, educational institutions, and public places but also online. Pakistani women face harassment due to outdated beliefs and deep-rooted patriarchal values. Over time, with a growing digital landscape in Pakistan, 3G and 4G connectivity has made social media access a norm. However, a significant rise has been seen in online harassment against women. According to DataReportal's 2023 report, 82.1% of Pakistanis use at least one social media platform, and with notable gender disparity, only 28% of users are female, while males make up to 72 percent. Pakistan, a third-world country where women's participation on social media is already low compared to men. This behavior makes it more difficult for women to have a social media presence. According

to the Digital Rights Foundation 2020 in Pakistan, there are only 35% female Instagram users and 65% are males. As per the United Nations, "an increasing number of Pakistani women and girls are facing cyber harassment online." The online harassment also has far-reaching and devastating effects offline as well, which can be easily understood by this case. In 2012, one of the first cases of the negative side of digital technology and cybercrime was reported in Kohistan. In this incident, a private video of a family gathering was leaked showing four women dancing in the presence of three men. Their family members in the name of honor killed all the individuals shown in that video. While supreme court of Pakistan took its Sou Moto jurisdiction but this case was sidelined when

the team of facts researchers were actively misled by the locals of that area and it was concluded that those women are still alive. However, it was discovered later that the women that were shown to the research team were different. Eventually, that case was opened again in 2016 due to the doubts raised by the commission. This case shows violence against women caused by cybercrimes. An epidemic of private video leaks has taken place in Pakistan from the last decade that caused a significant rise in honor killings and suicide. On May 20, 2020, two teenage girls were killed over phone video footage in northwest Pakistan. They are said to be killed by their family members. Activists believe about 1000 "honor killing" murders are carried out every year across the country. The concept

of honor killing in Pakistan is common and limits women's freedom to live. Most Pakistani women feel uncomfortable posting their photos online due to the fear of misuse. This continuous fear makes it difficult for women to have an effective social media presence. From the last 4-5 years, leaking of private videos of women has reached an alarming level, and it seems that law-regulating authorities and FIA have terribly failed to mitigate it. Many cases of online harassment and leaked private videos go unreported due to the burden of the reputation of family. Women are not able to take steps to seek justice because they fear they will be killed in the name of honor. The rise has been seen in revenge porn. Revenge porn refers to non-consensual pornography where an ex-partner

shares illicit video with the motive to defame another partner. This has detrimental consequences, especially for women in Pakistan, by causing severe mental distress. As per the official estimates, revenge porn increased by 50% in Pakistan between 2020 and 2022. Not only is this, but the misuse of AI to create defamatory content, particularly targeting women, is a growing concern. It has devastating impacts on women, damaging their reputations and causing them emotional trauma. The alarming rise in revenge pornography and deepfake videos requires immediate attention; otherwise, this poses serious threats to the lives and security of women in Pakistan. - The writer is Student of LLB (Bachelor of Laws) Punjab University.

Briefs

Gold prices
up by Rs5,300
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.5,300 and was sold at Rs 299,600 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 294,300 on previous trading day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.4,158 to Rs.256,859 from Rs. 252,314 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs.235,454 from Rs.231,296. The prices of per tola silver also increased by Rs.36 to Rs.3,350 whereas that of ten gram rose by Rs.31.08 to Rs.2,872.08. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$53 to \$2,868 from \$2,815, the Association reported.—APP

Leaders 'should respect' wishes of Palestinians to stay in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS, United States: World leaders and people should respect Palestinians' desire to remain in Gaza, the Palestinian envoy to the United Nations said Tuesday, after US President Donald Trump said he believed people from the territory should be resettled elsewhere "permanently." "Our homeland is our homeland, if part of it is destroyed, the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian people selected the choice to return to it," said Riyad Mansour. "And I think that leaders and people should respect the wishes of the Palestinian people." On Tuesday, Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, with the US leader saying he believed Palestinians should leave Gaza after an Israeli offensive that has devastated the territory and left most of it reduced to rubble. Speaking ahead of the meeting, Trump said he wanted a solution that saw "a beautiful area to resettle people permanently in nice homes where they can be happy." At the United Nations, Mansour did not name Trump but appeared to reject the US president's proposal. "Our country and our home is" the Gaza Strip, "it's part of Palestine," he said. "We have no home. For those who want to send them to a happy, nice place, let them go back to their original homes inside Israel, there are nice places there, and they will be happy to return to these places.—APP

Belgian police hunting two suspects after Brussels metro shooting

BRUSSELS: Belgian police were hunting two suspects on Wednesday after a shooting near the Brussels South international railway station, the city's prosecutor's office said. Nobody was injured in the shooting, which happened around 6:00 am (0500 GMT), at the Clemenceau metro station in central Brussels, prosecutors said, adding there were no indications of a terrorist motive in the incident. Police initially launched a manhunt in the tunnels of the metro system, which was partially closed after two men carrying machine guns were seen fleeing into the Clemenceau station. Broadcaster VRT said the shooting was probably drug-related and said the shooters had aimed at one person but had missed. VRT showed on its website images of two people walking into Clemenceau metro station in central Brussels and opening fire with automatic weapons. The station along with several others around the station were shut for hours after the incident. Another video showed a large group of heavily armed police assembling at the Clemenceau station, as a massive search for the suspects got underway. The incident crippled traffic on the heavily used metro system in Brussels, which hosts many European Union institutions and NATO's headquarters. By 2 p.m. (1300 GMT) the whole city metro system had reopened, including the stations around the Gare du Midi international train station, the arrival point for Eurostar trains from Paris and London.—Agencies

President Zardari, Zhao underscore time tested Pak-China ties

The two sides discussed the opportunities to strengthen institutional linkages, including through parliamentary exchanges and participation in the CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism, to further solidify the bilateral cooperation

DNA

BEIJING: President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress, Zhao Leji on Wednesday underscored the time-tested and all-weather friendship between the two countries, which continued to grow in depth and scope over the decades. The president met with Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Zhao Leji, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. They also underlined strategic mutual trust as the cornerstone of the China-Pakistan relationship and emphasized the importance of continued high-level exchanges to



further deepen the ongoing practical cooperation. The two sides also discussed the high-quality development of CPEC 2.0, with a particular emphasis on promoting cooperation in science & technology, renewable energy, infrastructure and agriculture sectors. They described CPEC as a shining example of people-centric development, with its focus on win-win cooperation, shared benefits and common prosperity. The two sides discussed the opportunities to strengthen institutional linkages, including through parliamentary exchanges and participation in the CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism, to further solidify the bilateral cooperation.

Four Asian countries' leaders visit China as 'Year of Snake' begins

BEIJING: As China enters the 'Year of the Snake', the country is welcoming leaders from four Asian states, including Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Brunei and Thailand, reflecting China's efforts to advance its diplomatic agenda, as well as China's determination to cooperate with its neighbours for common development, striving to build a peaceful and prosperous Asia, an expert said. On Sunday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov will pay a state visit from Tuesday to Friday. On Monday, the ministry announced a state visit by President Asif Ali Zardari from February 4 to February 8. Separately, Sultan of Brunei Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah will pay a state visit to China from Wednesday to Friday. The ministry also announced that at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Thailand Paetongtarn Shinawatra will pay an official visit to China from Wednesday to Saturday. As the Spring Festival holidays came to an end on Tuesday, the invitation of leaders from multiple countries to China highlights China's efforts to advance its diplomatic agenda and flexibly respond to various situations. In addition, the invited leaders are all from neighbouring countries, which demonstrates China's determination to unite and cooperate with its neighbours for common development, striving to build a peaceful and prosperous Asia. This is also beneficial for China to further consolidate its strategic initiative during this period of evolution in the international order, Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, told the Global Times. The visits of leaders coincide with the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, which was described by the Chinese Foreign Ministry as "another major comprehensive international winter sports event held by China after the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics." Following the official meetings in Beijing, President Zardari will travel to Harbin to attend the opening ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games. The invited foreign leaders each have their own focused topics, Qian noted. For example, multiple cases of telecom fraud have drawn the attention of both China and Thailand, with both sides expressing a positive attitude toward strengthening cooperation to resolve the issue, while the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway launched in 2024 could be a priority for discussions between Kyrgyzstan and China, the expert said. Kyrgyzstan hopes to strengthen cooperation with China, especially in attracting

Drone attack sparks blaze at oil depot in Russia's Krasnodar

Krasnodar : A Ukrainian drone attack overnight sparked a fire at an oil depot in Russia's southern region of Krasnodar on Wednesday. A series of drone attacks by Ukraine on Russia's energy facilities have sparked fires in recent days at a major oil refinery in the Volgograd region, as well as at the Astrakhan gas processing plant. "The fire in a tank with oil product residues in the village of Novominskaya in the Kanevsky District was fully extinguished," the region's operational authorities said on the Telegram messaging app. Earlier, Veniamin Kondratyev, governor of the Krasnodar region, said that there were no injuries in the fire that was caused by a falling drone debris. A team of 19 people wielding 19 items of equipment were fighting the flames, he said. Kondratyev did not say which depot was on fire or detail the extent of damage. The Russian defense ministry said that four Ukrainian drones were destroyed over the Russian territory overnight, but did not mention the Krasnodar region in a statement on the Telegram messaging app. The ministry only reports drones that its air defense systems destroy, not how many were launched. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine. Kyiv says that its attacks inside Russia are aimed at destroying infrastructure key to Moscow's war in Ukraine and are in response to Russian continued bombing of Ukraine.

Iraq restoration work brought back Mosul's 'identity': UNESCO

MOSUL: The director-general of United Nations heritage body UNESCO hailed the completion of their restoration work in the Iraqi city of Mosul, saying on Wednesday it had allowed it to recover its "identity" after destruction inflicted by the Daesh group. Mosul's historic Al-Nuri Mosque with its famed leaning minaret, nicknamed Al-Hadba or "hunchback," has been restored using its original brickwork, years after it was reduced to rubble under Daesh group rule. "I am very happy to stand before you and before the minaret over 850 years old... and the fact to have it here behind me in front of you is like history coming back... is like the identity of the city coming back," Audrey Azoulay said. The mosque and minaret were destroyed in June 2017 during the battle to oust IS from Mosul, and Iraq's authorities accused the jihadists of planting explosives before their withdrawal.—DNA

Egypt wants Palestinian authority to 'assume its duties' in Gaza: FM

CAIRO: Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty said on Wednesday for the Palestinian Authority to govern the Gaza Strip, hours after President Donald Trump announced a proposal for the United States to take over the territory. In a meeting with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa, Abdelaty said Egypt was eager for the Palestinian Authority to "assume its duties in the Gaza Strip as part of the occupied Palestinian territories," according to a foreign ministry statement. Abdelaty called for swift reconstruction of Gaza without the displacement of Palestinians from the territory after Trump's proposal to take it over. The two men agreed on "the importance of moving forward with early recovery projects... at an accelerated pace... without the Palestinians leaving the Gaza Strip, especially with their commitment to their land and refusal to leave it," the Egyptian foreign ministry said.—APP

Libya's UN Mission forms panel to propose ways to solve election impasse

TRIPOLI: The UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced on Tuesday it had formed a committee to propose ways to resolve contentious issues hindering the holding of long-awaited national elections. A political process to resolve more than a decade of conflict in Libya has been stalled since an election scheduled for December 2021 collapsed amid disputes over the eligibility of the main candidates. Libya has had little peace since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising, and it split in 2014 between eastern and western factions, with rival administrations governing in each area. An UNSMIL statement named the advisory committee's 13 men and seven women members and said they would meet for the first time next week in Tripoli. "The role of the Advisory Committee will be developing technically sound and politically viable proposals for resolving outstanding contentious issues to enable the holding of elections," said UNSMIL. UNSMIL said that the committee's proposals would be submitted to the Mission "for consideration for the subsequent phase of the political process." "The Advisory Committee is not a decision-making body or a dialogue forum. It is time-bound and is expected to conclude its work in a short time frame," the Mission explained. UNSMIL said members were chosen for professionalism, expertise in legal, constitutional and/or electoral issues; an ability to build compromise and an understanding of Libya's political challenges.—Agencies

US flights carrying detained migrants to Guantanamo 'underway'

WASHINGTON: The first US flights carrying detained migrants to America's notorious Guantanamo military base in Cuba were underway Tuesday as President Donald Trump's administration cracks down on illegal migration, the White House said. Guantanamo is primarily known as a detention center for suspects accused of terrorism-related offenses, but the base also has a history of being used to hold migrants, and Trump last week ordered the preparation of a 30,000-person "migrant facility" there. "Today, the first flights from the United States to Guantanamo Bay with illegal migrants are underway," Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Fox Business. Trump has launched what his second administration is casting as a major effort to combat illegal migration, trumpeting immigration raids, arrests and deportations on military aircraft. The president has made the issue a priority on the international stage as well, threatening Colombia with sanctions and massive tariffs for turning back two plane-loads of deportees. The Guantanamo prison was opened in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and has been used to indefinitely hold detainees seized during the wars and other operations that followed. The conditions there have prompted consistent outcry from rights groups, and UN experts have condemned it as a site of "unparalleled notoriety." Democratic presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden both sought to close the facility, but Congress has opposed efforts to shutter Guantanamo and it remains open to this day. It still holds 15 people incarcerated for militant activity or terrorism-related offenses, among them several accused plotters of the 9/11 attacks, including self-proclaimed mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. But migrants will be detained in a separate part of the base. According to US Southern Command, there are some 300 American military personnel at Guantanamo supporting "illegal alien holding operations.—APP

Abbas rejects displacement, calls for Palestinian sovereignty

Jordan Reaffirms Support for Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as Capital

RAMALLAH: The President of the State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas met in the capital of Jordan, Amman, with Jordan's King Abdullah II, in the presence of Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II. During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, where the President appreciated Jordan's firm positions in supporting the Palestinian people to remain and stand firm in their land and reject calls for displacement and seizure of any part of the land of the State of Palestine. The President said, "We affirmed our commitment to international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative as a basic path to resolving the Palestinian issue, leading to ending the occupation and embodying the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital on the 1967 borders." The President added, "We reiterated our complete re-

jection of any calls or plans aimed at displacing the Palestinian people from their homeland, whether in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, or East Jerusalem, our eternal capital, which violates international legitimacy resolutions and international law." The President continued, the Gaza Strip is an integral and indivisible part of the State of Palestine, which has political and legal jurisdiction over it like the rest of the Palestinian land, and we have developed the necessary plans to begin providing basic services for the return of our people to their places of residence, in preparation for reconstruction with the contribution of our brothers and friends in the world. He further stressed that the priority is to consolidate the ceasefire, provide aid, withdraw the occupation forces completely, and assume the Palestinian Authority's full responsibilities in the Gaza Strip, stop all unilateral actions, stop settlements, and attempts to annex Palestinian land in the West

Bank, and preserve the historical and legal status of Islamic and Christian holy sites under Hashemite guardianship. The President stressed the need for the international community, primarily the United Nations and the Security Council, to assume its responsibilities to compel the occupying state to stop its ongoing aggression against our people, our land and our holy sites, and to stop the colony, annexation and racist expansion projects, with which the occupying state challenges the will of international legitimacy and international law. — Agencies



Rwanda's tourism policy give vision for innovative travel market: Envoy

The envoy said that the country is blessed with extraordinary biodiversity, with incredible wildlife living throughout its volcanoes, montane rainforest and sweeping plains

DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana said this while addressing the 4th annual edition of 'The Sustainable Destination Forum, organized by Pakistan Travel Mart. "Rwanda is now on top in the African region, in Information Technology (IT) and internet access and its youth is an asset for promoting the international and domestic travel market, which will play a significant role in the development of this industry in the future. She said that known as the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda's stunning scenery and warm, friendly people offer unique experiences in one of the most remarkable countries in the world. The envoy said that the coun-

try is blessed with extraordinary biodiversity, with incredible wildlife living throughout its volcanoes, montane rainforest and sweeping plains. Rwanda's tourism policy give vision for innovative travel market. Rwanda envoy She said that foreign travellers come from far and wide to catch a glimpse of the magnificent gorillas, yet there is so much more to see and experience. Meanwhile highlighting the 'Visit Rwanda' campaign by the government of Rwanda, she said that 'Visit Rwanda' campaign 'as a brand has established a positive reputation with millions of people from across the globe that are associating with it and has provided a platform for Rwanda to showcase its tourism attractions, cultural heritage, and

investment opportunities to the whole world. She noted that through the 'Visit Rwanda' campaign, the country entered into a partnership with the Arsenal football club as well as France's Paris Saint-Germain. She said that these partnerships have returned impressive dividends. Fatou Harerimana said that through this campaign, investors from across the globe opt to invest in the travel market in the country which is a positive sign of continued investor confidence in the promotion of the travel market in the country. Fatou Harerimana said that this campaign has been successful in promoting Rwanda's unique attractions, such as mountain gorillas, stunning natural scenery, and cul-

tural heritage. She said that visiting Rwanda provides a great opportunity to explore the country's natural beauty in all corners of the country. The High Commissioner said that Rwanda's first tourism strategy, approved two decades ago, set out a sector vision based on high-end tourism, focussing on Rwanda's unique attraction: the mountain gorillas. The rapid growth of gorilla tourism was enabled by coordinated public interventions in park management, conservation, infrastructure, promotion, and training. In her concluding remarks, she called for all participants to sensitize the people to visit Rwanda as they can get the visa on arrival, and also they can reach Kigali by beautiful plane "Rwandair".

Briefs

Karzai pays tributes to Karim Agha Khan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai while showing concern over sad demise of Prince Karim Agha Khan, termed it a great loss to people from all over third world countries especially Afghanistan. Through a condolence message on Wednesday, Hamid Karzai States, "The death of His Highness Prince Karim Agha Khan; the religious Imam of the Ismailian of the world is considered a great loss, I express my deepest condolences and sympathy to his family, relatives and followers." He further states, "we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. The people of Afghanistan will remember the valuable services and role of His Highness Prince Karim Agha Khan in providing public services and rebuilding the country, repairing historical buildings and building service and cultural facilities. " May God have mercy on the deceased and go to heaven, and I pray for patience and reward for their survivors."

Hamas ready for talks with Trump admin

GAZA CITY: The Palestinian Hamas movement is ready to establish contact and hold talks with the administration of US President Donald Trump, Russia's RIA state news agency cited a senior Hamas official as saying in remarks published early on Wednesday. "We are ready for contact and talks with the Trump administration," RIA cited senior Hamas Politburo member Mousa Abu Marzouk as saying. "In the past, we did not object to contacts with the administration of (former US President Joe) Biden, Trump or any other US administration, and we are open to talks with all international parties." It was not clear when RIA interviewed Marzouk, who was visiting Moscow on Monday for talks with the Russian foreign ministry. Trump vowed on Tuesday that the US would take over the war-shattered Gaza Strip after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere and develop it economically. - Agencies

No act of aggression to go unanswered, says COAS

Indian atrocities strengthen Kashmiris' resolve in their quest for self-determination, says Gen Munir

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday vowed that no act of aggression would go unanswered and underscored Pakistan Army's commitment to defend the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity with full resolve. The army chief's remarks came as he visited Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) capital Muzaffarabad, where he paid homage to the sacrifices of the martyrs, a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. Upon arrival at the Jammu and Kashmir Monument, the ISPR mentioned, he laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Monument and offered rich tributes to the unparalleled sacrifices of the Shuhada. While paying homage to the martyrs of Kashmir, the COAS also commended the unwavering dedication, professional excellence, and



combat readiness of the deployed officers and soldiers in the face of challenging operational conditions in Kashmir.

He lauded their high morale and vigilance, emphasising the importance of maintaining peak operational preparedness to deter and

counter any hostile provocations. The army chief also expressed complete confidence in the battle readiness of the armed forces. Later during the visit, the COAS interacted with the notables and veterans of Kashmir and reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). COAS said that Indian atrocities and rising Hindutva extremism only strengthen the resolve of the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination. He reaffirmed that Pakistan will always stand by them in their just and legitimate cause against state-sponsored repression and oppression. He remarked: "Without any doubt, Kashmir will be free one day and part of Pakistan as per the free will and destiny of the people of Kashmir". His visit came on February 5, when the nation marks Kashmir Solidarity Day, reiterating Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people.

Pak public debt surges by Rs8.3tr

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Despite making progress in reducing the debt trajectory, the government has failed to meet the overall public debt reduction targets outlined in the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act, which was approved by parliament. Although the government has fallen short of its commitment to parliament in curbing public debt, primarily due to fiscal imbalances, it remains to be seen whether parliament will assert its authority by raising questions to ascertain reasons behind this perpetual failure in achieving its envisaged limits to curtail the debt burden. The debt report of the Ministry of Finance shows that total public debt of the country stood at Rs71.2 trillion in FY2024 against Rs62.8 trillion in FY2023, going up by Rs8.34 trillion in a one-year period. During FY2024, total public debt increased by 13% to stand at Rs71.24 trillion in June 2024, out of which domestic debt was Rs47.16 trillion and external debt in rupee terms was hovering around Rs24.08 trillion. During Q1 FY2025, there was a marginal increase of 1.3% in public debt to stand at Rs72.13 trillion. In terms of debt-to-GDP ratio, total public debt showed a decrease of 7.7%, to stand at 67.2% at end-June 2024 against 74.9% of gross domestic product (GDP) in FY2023.

KSA rejects Donald Trump's Gaza 'take over' plan

No ties with Israel without Palestinian state

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday affirmed that the Kingdom's position on the establishment of a Palestinian state is firm and unwavering. The ministry, in a statement, said Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, clearly and unequivocally has reaffirmed this stance during his speech at the opening of the first session of the ninth term of the Shura Council on September 18, 2024. He emphasized that Saudi Arabia will continue its relentless efforts to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and will not

'Fuel to fire' Hamas condemns Trump remarks

DOHA: The Gaza Strip-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has strongly condemned an incendiary US President Donald Trump's remarks concerning Washington's plan to "own" Gaza. "These remarks are hostile to our people and our cause," the group said in a statement on Wednesday, referring to the Palestinian cause of liberation from Israeli occupation and aggression. Such comments "will not serve stability in the region, and will only add fuel to the fire." - Agencies

establish diplomatic relations with Israel without that. The crown prince also reiterated this firm position during the extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit held in Riyadh on November 11, 2024. He stressed the continuation of efforts to establish a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. He also urged more peace-loving countries to recognize the State of Palestine, and emphasized the importance of mobilizing the international community to support the Palestinian people's rights, as expressed in United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolutions, recognizing Palestine's eligibility for full UN membership.

MPA might face legal action under PECA

The incident, which is being investigated by the FIA's Cyber Crime Wing, has led to a request for a formal case to be filed against Sonia Ashir under the PECA amendment bill for spreading false information

DNA

LAHORE: A case under the PECA amendment bill has been looming on the Pakistan Muslim League's (PMLN) Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Sonia Ashir after alleged spread of fake news. According to reports, Sonia Ashir parliamentary secretary for Human Rights and Minority Affairs in Punjab, has come under fire after her social media post was flagged as fake news. The post, shared on February 2, claimed that the accused in a criminal case had already been convicted and sentenced, a claim that turned out to be false. The post also falsely credited Punjab Chief Minister, Maryam Nawaz with the punishment of the alleged criminals. The complaint, filed by the mother of a minor girl who was abducted and sexually assaulted, alleges that the fake news has negatively impacted the ongoing legal proceedings of the case, where the accused are currently in custody. The complaint points out that the post had the potential to influence the judicial process and undermine the credibility of the case. The complainant, whose daughter was the victim of the crime in October of last year, expressed that the misinformation spread by PMLN's Sonia Ashir is a clear violation of the PECA (Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act) Amendment Bill. The PECA amendment bill aims to address the spread of fake news and misinformation online, and Ashir's post is now being examined under its provisions. The incident, which is being investigated by the FIA's Cyber Crime Wing, has led to a request for a formal case to be filed against Sonia Ashir under the PECA amendment bill for spreading false information. The case has also been referred to the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a letter sent by the victim's mother, urging swift action.

Russia says captured two more villages

MOSCOW: Russia on Wednesday said its forces have taken two more villages in east and northeast Ukraine as the conflict between the two countries nears its third anniversary and both sides try to press a ground advantage ahead of possible peace talks. Kyiv has struggled to hold back larger Russian forces, which have been making steady advances in the embattled east of Ukraine for months. Moscow's defence ministry said troops took the village of Novomylnsk in the northeastern Kharkiv region, where Russian forces have crossed the Oskil river that had previously separated the two armies. Village lies in the east of the Kharkiv region on the Oskil river, which had marked the frontlines in parts of the region and where in recent weeks Russian forces have established a bridgehead and gained ground. - APP

US plane carrying deported Indians lands in Punjab

NEW DELHI: A US deportation flight carrying about 100 Indian nationals accused of entering the country illegally has landed in the state of Punjab. The military aircraft, which left Texas late on Tuesday, is now in the city of Amritsar where authorities say they have put measures in place to process the deportees. President Donald Trump has made the mass deportation of undocumented foreign nationals a key policy. The US is said to have identified about 18,000 Indian nationals it believes entered illegally. Trump has said India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured him that the coun-

try would "do what's right" in accepting US deportations. Authorities in Punjab say they have set up special counters to receive the deportees, adding the individuals would be treated in a "friendly" manner. Journalists have gathered outside police barricades near an Indian Air Force building in Amritsar. There are 104 Indian deportees on the flight and they will be processed separately from regular passengers before boarding buses to their home states, including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Trump is increasingly using US military planes to return individuals to their home countries. However, deportation flights to India are not new. In the US fiscal year 2024, which ended in September, more than 1,000 Indian nationals had been repatriated by charter and commercial flights. In October, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported more than 100 Indian nationals who lacked legal grounds to stay in the US on a chartered flight, part of a rising trend in removals to India. - Agencies

Swedish police say school killing spree gunman likely shot himself

ÖREBRO: Swedish police indicated Wednesday that a gunman who slaughtered 10 people at an adult education centre shot himself as the country mourned its worst mass killing. Candles were lit and flowers were laid out in front of the cordoned off Campus Risberg-ska - a school for young adults in Örebro - as people passed by to pay their respect to the victims. King Carl XVI Gustaf was to visit the town, the royal court announced as the country struggled to understand events. Police did not immediately give details on the gunman or his motive. But they confirmed that 11 people, "including the killer", had died in Tuesday's shooting spree in the town west of Stockholm. Asked about reports that the gunman turned his gun on himself, Örebro police chief Roberto Eid Forest told reporters that "there is a lot to indicate that". Forest told a press conference the suspect was dead when police reached him. Police were working to establish the reason for the killing spree and had not seen an indication of an "ideological motive," he added. The suspect was not previously known to police. "I can't say more about the suspected perpetrator, other than that he was obviously motivated and had access to firearms," Lars Wiren, area police chief, told AFP. "When the first police officers entered the building shots were fired, likely at the police, but no one of our staff is injured," Wiren added, said not all the victims had been fully identified and have not disclosed any information about them, even whether they were students or teachers at the school. - APP

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