



Islamabad POST

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Irresponsible, provocative

Pakistan condemns Israeli PM's remarks about Palestinian state

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Dar said Pakistan firmly believes that the Palestinian people have an inalienable right to establish an independent and sovereign state

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns in unequivocal terms the recent statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggesting that the Palestinian people should establish a state in Saudi Arabia. Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar stated that the Israeli remark is irresponsible, provocative and thoughtless, which is not only deeply offensive but also undermines and disregards the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent State on their own historical and legitimate territory. Senator Dar said that Pakistan stands in solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and commends its steadfast support for the Palestinian people and their just cause. Any attempt to undermine Saudi Arabia's unwavering position and misrepresentation of its commitment to the Palestinian cause are deeply regrettable. Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Dar said Pakistan firmly believes that the Palestinian people have an inalienable right to establish an independent and sovereign state based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital. Any proposal that seeks to displace or relocate the Palestinian people from their ancestral homeland is unacceptable and constitutes a blatant violation of international law, United Nations resolutions and the principles of justice and fairness. He said that the Government of Pakistan reiterates its unflinching support for the Palestinian cause and will continue to work closely with Saudi Arabia and other members of the international community to advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people and to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue. Pakistan urges the international community to denounce this provocative remark and hold Israel accountable for its continued attempts to undermine the peace process.

Pakistan engages Egypt, Türkiye on Gaza crisis

Pakistan continues to play an active role in mobilizing international and regional support

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, held separate telephone conversations with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Türkiye to discuss the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. In his call with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Senator Dar reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and expressed solidarity with Egypt in its efforts to address the crisis. Both leaders emphasized the need for urgent international intervention and agreed to maintain close coordination on the evolving situation. Similarly, in his conversation with Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Senator Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment to the Palestinian cause, advocating for a sovereign and independent Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz watch the Horse and Cattle Show in Lahore on February 9, 2025. - DNA

PM Shehbaz to participate in world govts summit in UAE

FO says premier will hold bilateral meetings with UAE leadership during two-day visit from Feb 10-11

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will undertake a two-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from February 10-11 to participate in the World Governments Summit (WGS) in Dubai. "The Summit will bring together a large number of Heads of State/Government, global policymakers, and leading private sector figures to discuss the future of governance, innovation and international cooperation," a Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. This marks PM Shehbaz's second visit to the UAE since assuming office in March 2024.

Continued on Page 06

After SC judges

Zafar urges CJP to postpone JCP today's meeting

Matter related to IHC judges' seniority be resolved before the JCP meeting, says lawmaker in letter to CJP

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Amid growing dissident voices from within the judiciary, PTI Senator Barrister Ali Zafar has urged Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi to postpone the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) meeting until the controversy surrounding the seniority of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges is settled. In a letter to the CJP, the lawmaker, who is also a member of the judicial commission, on Sunday expressed concerns over the controversy surrounding the seniority of the IHC judges. "Accordingly this is to request for postponing the meeting of the JCP scheduled to be held today 10th February 2025," read the letter. He was of the view that it was deeply concerning that serious objections in writing

Continued on Page 06

'Only Parliament or SC can repeal 26th amendment'

Justice Mazhar supported the withdrawal of previous orders issued by a two-member bench

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar has stated that the 26th amendment could only be repealed by a parliamentary decision or a Supreme Court ruling. In a 20-page note issued in the bench powers case,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

President departs for Lisbon

President will condole the death of Prince Karim Agha Khan

DNA

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari has left for Lisbon, Portugal, today. The President will meet His Highness Prince Rahim Agha Khan to extend his condolences on the passing away of late Prince Karim Agha Khan IV. During the visit, the President will also meet H.E Mr Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa President of Portugal.

Tarar lauds PML-N workers

Political parties survive due to efforts of their workers: Attaullah Tarar

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has lauded the workers of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz for their efforts and sacrifices to keep the party united. Speaking at a ceremony in Lahore on Sunday, he said an organizing committee is being constituted to bring sincere workers on the front and acknowledge their sacrifices during difficult time. The information minister said that political parties survive due to passion and efforts of their workers. He said that resolving workers' issues is the party's top priority. Attaullah Tarar said that PML-N leaders have made great sacrifices for democracy. He said that during difficult time, these workers stood steadfast in police stations and legal battles. Attaullah Tarar said that everyone witnessed the arrests of Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz during the Musharraf era and the past four years.

Continued on Page 06

Ministry clears the air

IMF mission to assess corruption in Pakistan

IMF's governance and corruption diagnostic assessment report to assist govt in bringing reforms, says ministry

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to clear the air surrounding the visit of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) mission to Pakistan, the Ministry of Finance and Revenue on Sunday clarified that the trip aimed at conducting a governance and corruption diagnostic assessment. In a statement, a spokesperson for the finance ministry said that the IMF has long been providing advice and technical assistance that has helped to foster good governance, such as promoting public sector transparency and accountability. Traditionally the IMF's main focus has been on encouraging countries to correct macroeconomic imbalances, reduce inflation, and undertake key trade, exchange, and other market reforms needed to improve efficiency and support sustained economic growth, clarified the spokesperson. The ministry added that the IMF identified that promoting good governance in all its aspects, including ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption are essential

Continued on Page 06

PM approves abolishing jobs on son quota

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif approved abolishing the son quota for recruiting a family member of an employee who passed away while in service. PM Shehbaz approved changes to the job policy under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package, the sources said, and added that the policy previously allowed a family member of a deceased government employee to be offered a government job. The Prime Minister has now approved changes to this policy, effectively barring the children of deceased government employees from receiving government jobs. This policy change is reportedly in

Continued on Page 06

Trump calls Putin, discuss ending the Ukraine war

Putin sent thousands of troops to Ukraine in 2022, calling it a "special military operation"

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: US President Donald Trump said he has spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone about ending the war in Ukraine, an American newspaper reported, the first known direct conversation between Putin and a US president since early 2022. Trump, who has promised to end the war in Ukraine but not yet set out in public how he would do so, said last week that "some very good talks." In an interview aboard Air Force One on Friday Trump told the New York Post that he had "better not say," when asked how many times he and Putin had spoken. "He (Putin) wants to see people stop dying," Trump told the New York Post. The White House did not respond to a request for comment outside normal business hours. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the TASS state news agency that "many different communications are emerging."

Continued on Page 06

Israeli forces withdraw from key Gaza corridor

AGENCIES

TEL AVIV: An Israeli official said Sunday that Israeli forces have begun withdrawing from a key Gaza corridor, part of a ceasefire deal with Hamas that is moving ahead. Israel agreed as part of the truce to remove its forces from the Netzarim corridor, a strip of land that bisects northern Gaza from the south. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss troop movement with the media. At the start of the ceasefire, Israel began allowing Palestinians to cross Netzarim to head to their homes in the war-battered north and the

Continued on Page 06

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'Dhi Rani' phase 2 programme begins

LAHORE Under Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's leadership, the 'Punjab Dhi Rani' programme has reached a major milestone with the successful completion of its first phase, organising 1,500 collective weddings. On Sunday, CM Maryam Nawaz expressed her affection for every daughter in Punjab, stating that she feels immense joy whenever a daughter's home is established. The second phase of the programme has now begun, with applications open for another 1,500 collective weddings. Interested applicants can apply online through cm.punjab.gov.pk or submit applications at the Deputy Director Social Welfare's district office. To facilitate applicants, a dedicated helpline (1312) has been established for program-related information. Beyond the wedding ceremonies, the Punjab government will provide a meal for the bride, groom, and close relatives. Newlyweds will also receive a marriage gift of Rs. 100,000 via ATM from CM Punjab, along with essential household items, including furniture and clothing, to help them start their new lives. CM Maryam Nawaz said that the 'Punjab Dhi Rani' programme reflected her deep love for her province's daughters. 'Every daughter is dear to us, and it is a joy to see them start their families,' she stated. The initiative primarily aims to support underprivileged and marginalised communities, reinforcing the government's commitment to social welfare. She said that caring for daughters and offering them support is a cherished tradition in Punjab. 'This is both a cultural and social responsibility that we hold dear,' she added. The Punjab government remains dedicated to improving the lives of women and marginalised communities, empowering families, and ensuring every daughter has the opportunity to build a bright future.—APP

KP to raise awareness on AI among students

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has decided to create awareness about artificial intelligence (AI) among its students. The Higher Education Department of KP has formed a four-member committee to develop an awareness plan, and an official notification has been issued in this regard. Official sources informed on Sunday, the committee will formulate a plan to raise awareness about AI in both public and private universities and colleges. The convener of the committee will be Professor Dr. Shafiq Ur Rehman, Advisor to the Quality Assurance Cell of the Higher Education Department. Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, stated that AI is now being utilized in various fields worldwide, making it essential for students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to be aware of its significance. He further emphasized that the committee must submit its recommendations and awareness plan within a week, after which an implementation strategy will be devised based on their suggestions.—APP

British Council's WOW festival concludes with resounding success

The two-day festival, free and open to the public, attracted an impressive audience of over 12,000 attendees, marking another milestone in Pakistan's journey towards gender equality and empowerment

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE : The 8th edition of the British Council's Women of the World Festival (WOW) held in collaboration with the WOW Foundation, UNFPA, and the Entrepreneurship and Community Development Institute (ECDI), concluded successfully at the Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore. The two-day festival, free and open to the public, attracted an impressive audience of over 12,000 attendees, marking another milestone in Pakistan's journey towards gender equality and empowerment. This year's festival marked the second consecutive WOW Festival in Lahore, following its successful expansion from Karachi and Hunza in previous years. The programme featured an engaging blend of panel discussions, workshops, film screenings, immersive performances, a dynamic marketplace, and children's activities. Attendees were enthralled by a female qawwali curated by Ariebe Azhar, a musical tribute to Haniya Aslam by Rakae Jamil, and an electrifying dance performance by Suhai Abro. Literary enthusiasts enjoyed readings by Attiya Dawood and Zambeel, while families were delighted by an interactive pop-up session



with Khaled Anam. Adding to the visual spectacle, the festival showcased a public mural featuring impactful women, created by Summaiya Jillani, and premiered a film on women in the arts by Destination Media, further cementing WOW's role as a powerful platform for celebrating and amplifying women's contributions in Pakistan and beyond. Maarya Rehman, Deputy Director, British Council Pakistan, emphasized the

festival's role in tackling crucial gender issues. She expressed, 'The WOW Festival continues to be a platform for addressing some of the most critical gender issues of our time. It has been inspiring to witness the courage and resilience of women in Pakistan who are leading the charge for change. Empowering women is not just a women's issue—it is everyone's issue, and together we can create a more equitable and inclusive world.' Laila

Jamil, Director Arts, British Council Pakistan, highlighted the festival's mission said 'WOW Pakistan celebrates the resilience, talent, and potential of women while offering a powerful platform for dialogue and action. This year's theme, 'Surkhaab,' is a tribute to women's intrinsic worth and a reminder of the value they bring to our communities, families, and societies. It was great to see such a huge turnout for the festival in

Lahore. The British Council remains committed to fostering inclusivity, gender empowerment, and providing platforms for every Pakistani to raise their voice for a better tomorrow.' The festival hosted thought-provoking discussions on pressing topics including mental health, climate change, education, women in public spaces, the digital divide, patriarchy, and disability, reflecting the multifaceted challenges women face today. WOW Pakistan is a vital part of the British Council's long-standing commitment to gender equality, fostering collaboration between civil society, women's rights organizations, academics, artists, and community leaders to create lasting impact. The 2025 programme was shaped through extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity and representation across different sectors of society. As the curtains close on another successful edition of the WOW Festival, the impact of these conversations, performances, and collaborations will continue to inspire and shape the future. With unwavering dedication, the British Council and its partners remain committed to breaking barriers, creating opportunities, and ensuring a more inclusive world for women and girls in Pakistan and beyond.

Beggars free Peshawar drive shows encouraging results

PESHAWAR: The 'Beggar Free Peshawar' initiative, launched under the directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur and led by Minister for Social Welfare & Special Education, Qasim Ali Khan was showing much encouraging results with dozens of beggars rescued and rehabilitated. The initiative, supervised by Rafique Mohmand, Director of the Social Welfare Department which aimed at curbing begging in Peshawar by identifying, rescuing, and rehabilitating individuals engaged in street begging, particularly vulnerable groups such as juveniles and women. Official sources on Sunday said that a significant portion of the rescued individuals were juveniles, with 20 males and 13 females. The presence of a high number of minors engaged in begging highlights concerns related to child exploitation and forced begging networks. Special arrangements are being made for their rehabilitation, including reintroduction into families or placement in government-run shelters.—APP

Peace Pasyon Jirga in Karak demands steps to ensure peace

PESHAWAR: A Peace Pasyon (Rise Peace) Jirga was held in district Karak to address the worsening law and order situation. The jirga took place in Takhte Nasrati the other day and witnessed active participation from leaders and workers of various political parties, district administration and police. According to the organizers, the jirga was convened by the locals, with elders running a campaign for several days to ensure its success. They emphasized that the purpose of the Peace Pasyon Jirga is to propose and implement measures for maintaining peace in the region. The organizers further highlighted that, in the past six months, the district has witnessed attacks on the Bahadur Khel police checkpoint and polio teams, while more than ten people have been killed in just fifteen days. The participants of the jirga shared their suggestions and concerns regarding the prevailing security situation in Karak and means to address the situation.—APP

Kundi invites investors to explore business opportunities in KP

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday extended a warm invitation to investors and businessmen, urging them to explore and establish ventures in the province. Governor Kundi highlighted the untapped potential of KP's diverse sectors, emphasizing commitment to creating a conducive environment for business growth and economic development. He said that the call aims to boost investment, generate employment and enhance the province's overall economic standing. In his address at the annual event of a private medical IT company, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the significant role of youth in the future of Paki-

stan. He said, 'Our youth are the future of our country. Pakistani youth, through their hard work and abilities, are second to none in the world. We have great expectations from them.' Governor Kundi also extended an invitation to BellMedEx, a private medical IT company, to open its offices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stressed, 'We wish to provide employment opportunities for the youth of our province. I encourage you to establish your offices in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. We will fully support your efforts.' Highlighting the province's welcoming environment for investors, Kundi assured, 'The doors of the Governor's House are always open to investors, and we are com-

mitted to promoting investment in the province.' He further added, 'The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are known for their hospitality and open hearts. The Governor's office will warmly welcome all investors looking to contribute to the development of the province.' Governor Kundi also praised BellMedEx for offering excellent employment opportunities to young Pakistanis. He emphasized that, in order to transform Pakistan into a developed nation, it is essential to equip the youth with quality and modern education and training. Moreover, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has underlined the need

of collective efforts for the socio-economic development of the province. He expressed these views during a marriage ceremony of renowned businessman Faizan Khan Kundi, held here on Sunday. The event was also attended by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's parliamentary leader in the Provincial Assembly, Maulana Lutufur Rehman, former Federal Minister Maulana Asad Mehmood, renowned political and social figure Haji Nisar Khan Dabarrar, former MPA Mahmood Khan Bettani and others. On this occasion, the governor discussed political situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the country as well. On this occasion, the Governor mingled with the people.—DNA

ANP to exhibit political strength on Bacha Khan's death anniversary

DIR LOWER: The Awami National Party Dir Lower has announced to demonstrate its political strength on the occasion of the death anniversary of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Khan Abdul Wali Khan in Timergara on February 15. An ANP statement on Sunday said that provincial leaders will address the anniversary gathering. In this regard, an ANP meeting was held at the residence of ANP Senior Vice President and former candidate for the Provincial Assembly Malik Sajjad Khan Yousafzai in Malikabad, wherein large number of officials, fellow lawyers, students and workers of the Pashtun Students Federation from across the district participated. The meeting reviewed the preparations for the death anniversary of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Khan Abdul Wali Khan in Timergara on February 15. The organization was also discussed and it was

decided to complete the party organization at the tehsil, union council and village council levels soon. The meeting was attended by ANP Provincial General Secretary Hussain Shah Yousafzai, District President Haji Bahadur Khan, Senior Vice President and former candidate for the Provincial Assembly Malik Sajjad Khan Yousafzai, Election Chairman Haider Khan, Tehsil Adinazai President Latif Bacha, Bakht Baida Rajan, Shah Faisal Advocate of Malgari Lawyers, and others. The meeting decided to hold the death anniversary of ANP leaders with devotion and respect. The participants said the ANP is the spokesperson for the rights of Pashtuns, which made sacrifices for the rights of Pashtuns. They said that the KP government has totally failed to deliver adding that if voted ANP will eliminate the sense of deprivation among KP people.—APP

Beekeeping becomes a lucrative business in rural areas

PESHAWAR: Fixing steel-nail in wooden bee-boxes under a bare tree on a bank of River Kabul, Hussain Khan — a progressive beekeeper is making determined efforts to prepare it before an onset of spring season. As the sun rays bath the house of 35-year-old beekeeper, Hussain Khan start his Alto Car to reach his farmhouse constructed at Pashtoon Ghari village in Nowshera district where he along with co-beekeepers began fixing steel-nail in order to prepare 500 bee-boxes to take advantage of blossom of bee-flora plants and flowers buds. 'Following the untimely death of my parents, life was a nightmare for me as my relatives were pressing for huge amount borrowed for treatment of my Abu and Ammi, forcing me to leave my education incomplete and joined the pain-sticking beekeeping business,' said Hussain with sobbing eyes while talking to APP. 'Initially, I purchased 50 bee-boxes in 2020 and by the grace of Allah Almighty, it increased to 500 boxes within four years due to my hard work and commitment to the job, enabling me to return all the borrowed amount as well as established a beekeeping farm house here,' he said. Hussain said that beekeeping was a cost-efficient profession and any person making Rs 500,000 investment can earn upto Rs100,000 per month.—APP

RCCI calls for strengthening industry-academia linkages

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) has emphasized the need to strengthen industry-academia linkages to effectively utilize academic and research activities for resolving industrial challenges and driving industrial growth. This was highlighted by RCCI President Usman Shaukat during a meeting with Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women's University (FJWU), Dr. Bushra Mirza. He stressed that economic growth is directly linked to the promotion of a knowledge-based economy, and all relevant institutions must work collectively to help Pakistan enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution with dignity and pride. The meeting was also attended by former RCCI President Dr. Shimail Daud, Secretary General Irfan Manan Khan, and faculty members. During the discussions, Usman Shaukat outlined key initiatives to foster stronger academia-industry partnerships, including: Formation of Corporate Advisory Boards with Chamber representation, Internship & Training Programs to equip students with industry-relevant skills, Faculty Fellowships to bridge academia and industry, Joint Research Initiatives for innovation and industrial solutions and Development of New Academic Programs & funding collaborations. Dr. Bushra Mirza assured full support and assistance in promoting these initiatives. This collaboration marks a significant step towards aligning academic expertise with industrial needs, fostering research-driven solutions for sustainable economic growth. RCCI remains committed to bridging the gap between academia and industry for a prosperous future.—DNA

Pak-Romania Business Council (PRBC) and (SPBF) sign MoU

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan-Romania Business Council (PRBC) and the Sri Lanka Pakistan Business Forum (SPBF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation between Pakistan, Romania, and Sri Lanka. The MoU was signed by Mr. Yasin Joiya, Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Lahore, and Mr. Sohail Shamim Firpo, Chairman of PRBC. This significant agree-



ment aims to foster greater economic ties and mutual benefits for all three nations. Atif Farooqi, Advisor and Chief Operating Officer of PRBC, stated, 'This partnership will serve as a catalyst for fostering economic cooperation between Romania and Sri Lanka, leveraging Pakistan's strategic location as a bridge between the two nations. We envision this collaboration to unlock new opportunities for trade, investment, and growth, ultimately strengthening regional economic ties.'

Advertisement for Pakistan Investment Board (PIB) featuring the text: 'پاکستان انویسٹمنٹ بورڈ', 'صوبہ بلوچستان کے مختلف اضلاع میں کیبل ٹی وی انٹرنس کے اجراء کیلئے درخواستوں کی وصولی', and contact information for PIB.

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
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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
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Polyclinic.....9218300-09
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RDA.....5555864
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First Mini Marathon race held in Rawalpindi

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Dr. Hassan Tariq inaugurated the race whereas CEO Education Amanullah Khan, Deputy Director Information Tabinda Saleem, District Officer Education Ijazul Haq, District Sports Officer Muhammad Shams and a large number of spectators were present on the occasion

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The First Mini Marathon Race was held from Liaqat Bagh Sports Complex to Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex here on Sunday in which around 4000 athletes participated. Muhammad Qasim won the first while Muhammad Usman and Babar Ali secured the second and third positions, respectively. The race was organized under the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

According to the details, the marathon started at 9:00 am in which the participants were given a target of one and half an hour to the finishing line at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Dr. Hassan Tariq inaugurated the race whereas CEO Education Amanullah Khan, Deputy Director Information Tabinda Saleem, District Officer Education Ijazul Haq, District Sports Officer Muhammad Shams and a large number of spectators were present on the occasion. Sports shirts were distributed among all the athletes



on behalf of the Chief Minister.

The prize distribution ceremony was held at the Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, with Chairman CM Inspection Team, Raja Muhammad Hanif MPA as the chief

guest. He encouraged all the athletes participating in the marathon and said that there was no dearth of talent in Punjab. "Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is striving to promote sports in

Punjab", he said and added that the new talent would emerge with the promotion of cultural and healthy activities in Punjab. The chief guest gave a cash prize of Rs.50,000 to athlete Muhammad

Qasim who won the first position in the race, while Rs.40,000 and Rs.30,000.0 to Muhammad Usman and Babar Ali who stood second and third positions, respectively.

PIA's return to Europe key to tourism revival

ISLAMABAD: The revival of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on its once-popular European routes is a major milestone for Pakistan's aviation and tourism sectors. This move presents a golden opportunity to improve the country's global image, with the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) working closely to ensure that the benefits extend beyond air travel. Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC, in an exclusive interview with APP expressed optimism about how the restoration of PIA's European flights will contribute to Pakistan's broader tourism goals. "This revival is part of a larger strategy to promote the country's tourism potential," Rana said on Sunday. "Increased connectivity will help showcase Pakistan's hidden treasures to the world, attracting not just tourists, but also investors and cultural ambassadors," he said. Rana emphasized that PTDC aims to foster a favourable perception of Pakistan internationally, with PIA's return serving as a direct boost to the tourism sector. "PIA's European routes will connect travelers to the beauty and culture of Pakistan, making it an attractive destination," he explained. The revival of PIA and the resurgence of tourism are intricately linked. PTDC has been working to shift Pakistan's image from one of negative stereotypes to a country with rich landscapes, diverse cultures, and deep history. Initiatives like the online visa policy for 126 countries, offering fast processing, are crucial to this transformation. These efforts align with the broader goal of turning tourism into a sustainable industry. PTDC's statistics show that international arrivals reached 2.21 million in 2023, with a projected 15% increase in 2024. This uptick reflects growing global interest in Pakistan, driven by the country's natural beauty, hospitality, and heritage. The return of PIA's flights to Europe will further fuel this growth by making travel to Pakistan easier and more reliable. "We're seeing more tourists from key markets like the USA, China, Germany, and the UK," said Rana. "With enhanced travel options through these European routes, we expect this growth to continue." Pakistan is home to some of the world's most stunning landscapes, from towering mountains to lush valleys, and a rich cultural heritage. In 2019, CNN and Forbes recognized Pakistan as an emerging travel destination, and in subsequent years, the British Backpacker Society named it one of the "friendliest countries" with some of the most breathtaking mountain scenery. Through strategic reforms, PTDC has been building an ecosystem that supports both inbound tourism and local economic growth. The streamlined online visa policy, which processes free visas within 24 hours for visitors from 126 countries, is designed to ensure a seamless experience once PIA brings international tourists to Pakistan. PIA's history is a tale of both success and decline. Once a symbol of national pride, the airline was known for its world-class service, modern fleet, and ability to connect Pakistan globally. In the 1960s and 1970s, PIA was a respected name in aviation, admired worldwide. However, over the years, mismanagement, financial crises, and poor policies led to the airline's downfall. By 2020, PIA faced massive losses, with debts exceeding PKR 56 billion. Political interference, corruption, and failure to modernize further eroded the airline's position in the competitive global market. The revival of PIA's European routes is more than just about restoring an airline—it's part of a broader effort to reclaim Pakistan's global reputation and boost its economy. As the airline resumes services to Europe, the aim is not only to attract more passengers but also to make Pakistan a more accessible destination for tourists. Rana views this as a crucial moment for both PIA and the country. As Pakistan's tourism sector steadily recovers, PIA's revival could spark a new era of growth for both the airline and the nation's tourism industry. While the road to recovery remains long, there is hope that continued collaboration between government agencies, PIA, and the private sector will allow Pakistan's skies—and its tourism sector—to flourish once again.—DNA

Women vendors in Islamabad empowering families, driving informal economy

ISLAMABAD: For many individuals in Islamabad, women vending has become more than just a livelihood, it is a vital source of income and empowerment for some of society's most marginalized groups, including the unemployed, less educated, and those facing limited opportunities. In the bustling streets of the capital, these women are quietly playing an essential role in the local economy, often providing for their families and communities against the odds. As dawn breaks over Islamabad, a group of determined women can be seen setting up their stalls, offering fresh fruits, vegetables, and other essential goods. One such vendor is 35-year-old Fatima, who has been selling clothes and women's essentials at Peshawar Mor Sunday Bazaar. In an interview with APP, she shared her personal journey, explaining how starting her own stall was initially a struggle. But, driven by the need to provide for her children, she persevered. "Today, I am proud to say that, as the breadwinner of my family, I am able to give them a decent education and a comfortable life," she said. Fatima's story reflects the resilience of many women vendors in Islamabad, who, despite facing long working hours, meagre profits, and numerous challenges, continue to work tirelessly for the well-being of their families. These women are not just surviving—they are thriving, becoming pillars of support for their communities. Afshi Safdar, another vendor, offered an insightful perspective on the role of women in vending. "Women who lack formal skills or education often turn to vending as a last resort," she said. "However, I must say that vending has empowered us to take control of our finances. It's been a game-changer for us." Afshi pointed out that the impact of these women extends beyond their immediate families. "We are the backbone of Islamabad's informal economy, providing essential goods and services to hundreds of people every day," she added, emphasizing the indispensable role they play in the local economy.—DNA

Martyrs are pride of the nation: Haider

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Sunday said that martyrs of Pakistan's armed forces are the pride of the nation as the country is safe only because of the great sacrifices laid down by the security personnel.

The governor remarked this during his separate visits to villages of martyrs Havaldar Saeed Iqbal and Sepoy Basit Ali who sacrificed their lives while fighting against terrorists in Wana. Havaldar Saeed Iqbal Shaheed belonged to Shahra-e-Bahadur village and Sepoy Basit Ali Shaheed belonged to Jafar village of Fateh Jang.

Sardar Saleem extended condolence with the families of the martyrs, offered Fateha for the high ranks of Shud and paid tribute to the parents of Shuhda. He said that the nation stands by the defence forces of Pakistan. "Every child of Tehsil Fateh Jang is ready to sacrifice himself for the defence of the motherland", he said. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs. He assured the Shuhda families of all possible facilities to be provided to the families of the martyrs.—APP

Food at your door step Online delivery becomes capital's new norm

ISLAMABAD: The convenience of online food delivery has taken Pakistan by storm, with restaurants across the country, including in the federal capital, witnessing a significant surge in orders placed through mobile phones and the internet. This trend is particularly popular among young Pakistanis, who are increasingly relying on food delivery apps to satisfy their cravings without having to leave the comfort of their homes. Online food delivery orders have increased exponentially over the past year, with many restaurants reporting a significant spike in sales. Ahmed Khan, owner of a popular restaurant in Islamabad said "Our online orders have increased by over 50% in the past year alone." The convenience of online ordering has revolutionized the way people eat and the online food delivery market has been a game-changer for business, he stated. He continued that the rise of food delivery apps food delivery apps have played a pivotal role in driving this trend adding that these apps provide customers with a wide range of dining options, from traditional Pakistani cuisine to international flavors.—APP

Second hand market brings affordable joy to underprivileged

ISLAMABAD: The second-hand clothing market had become a go-to destination for middle-income households seeking quality products at affordable prices. As it had emerged as a beacon of hope for the poor, offering affordable essentials and a chance to rebuild their lives. Amidst the stark economic contrasts of Islamabad, the second-hand clothing market stands as a beacon of affordability for those struggling to make ends meet. A customer Fatima Khan recently shared her heartwarming experience said: "I came here every month to buy clothes and household items for my family because this second-hand market was a blessing for people like us who cannot afford new things." She remarked that for the poor, this market was more than just a place to buy second-hand goods, it is a symbol of resilience and resourcefulness. She mentioned that she was able to purchase high-quality clothing and household items at a fraction of the cost of new products. Another customer a father of three Muhammad Ali, said "I lost my job a few months ago, and I was struggling to make ends meet." "But then I discovered the second-hand clothing market. Now, I can buy affordable clothes and toys for my children.—APP

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Briefs

ITP launches grand operation against illegal parking

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider, has launched a grand operation against illegal parking aiming to ensure smooth traffic flow in the city. A police spokesperson told APP on Sunday that CTO Zeeshan held a meeting with traders and emphasized the importance of abiding by traffic regulations. CTO directed on-duty officers to take strict action against illegal parking violators. The CTO Zeeshan said the public must adhere to traffic laws to maintain order on the roads. Additionally, he instructed taxi drivers to ensure full compliance with traffic regulations. The market union appreciated the steps taken by the CTO Zeeshan to address traffic issues and improve road discipline. "Following traffic laws is the responsibility of every citizen," the CTO Zeeshan stated, adding that legal action will be taken against violators to ensure an efficient and safe traffic system.—APP

KP, Punjab governors laud BellMedEx's contribution to Pakistan's economy

ISLAMABAD: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Faisal Karim Kundi and Governor of Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan commended the medical billing company BellMedEx for its role in bringing significant business to Pakistan from the United States, while also generating substantial employment opportunities for Pakistani youth. Both governors attended the annual dinner and prize distribution ceremony of BellMedEx on Saturday as the chief guests. Speaking on the occasion, Governor KPK emphasized the crucial role the private sector plays in expanding the economy, noting that BellMedEx had created jobs for as many as 1,800 people, a remarkable achievement. He invited BellMedEx's management to establish offices in KPK, offering employment prospects for the region's youth and assuring them of full support from the governor's office in setting up new offices. In addition, Kundi praised BellMedEx for projecting a positive image of Pakistan internationally, highlighting their dedication to delivering services with sincerity and integrity. Governor Punjab, acknowledged the company's impressive performance in recent years and expressed optimism that BellMedEx would soon increase its workforce to 5,000. He urged the company's employees to work with passion and commitment, helping to further enhance Pakistan's image and contribute to its economic growth. Following the speeches, both governors distributed awards to top performers at BellMedEx, with the evening concluding with a lavish dinner. It may be mentioned that BellMedEx is recognized globally as a leading medical billing firm, employing best practices in medical billing and coding for physicians seeking to outsource their billing needs to a reliable third-party.—APP

PEC Chairman unveils vision for engineering reforms

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan moves towards a rapidly evolving technological landscape, the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is spearheading efforts to modernize engineering education, enhance professional standards, and equip engineers with globally competitive skills. In an exclusive interview with the APP, PEC Chairman, Engineer Waseem Nazir shared his vision for the future of engineering in Pakistan. With the Council set to mark its 50th anniversary next year, he emphasized the need for policy reforms, technological adaptation, and skill development to keep pace with global advancements.

Remove encroachments from residential plots of Media Town

LHC directs the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Director PHATA and DG Co-operative housing society to address the petitioners Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) appreciates LHC decision, hopes its implementation and legal action against those responsible.

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Justice Jawad Hassan of the Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench on Friday directed the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Director PHATA and DG Co-operative housing society to remove encroachments/illegals from two residential plots, located in sector A of the Media Town (Rawalpindi Press Club Housing Society) on Monday and to report to the court. Justice Hassan while hearing the petitions of senior journalists Muhammad Asghar and Abdul Latif filed against denial and encroachment by the management of Media Town despite allotment and clearance of all the dues. Justice Hassan directed the

DC Rawalpindi, Director PHATA, DG Co-operative Housing Society and management committee to ensure the handing over the possession of the plots to the petitioners on Monday as the court will be adjourned only after the compliance of court orders. The court had also observed that the court will initiate proceedings against the concerned government officials/officers for not handing over possession of the allotted plots to the petitioners as per provision of the relevant law. According to advocate Saeed Yousuf Khan, counsel for the petitioners the management of media town deprived the senior journalists from their plots in order to facilitate an influential figure of PML-N and also produced the proof of the encroached land before the court.

Mr Saeed also produced an investigation report of government of the Punjab's Housing, Urban development and public health engineering department on Feb 6th regarding "probe into the matter regarding investigation of the layout plan of the house scheme "Rawalpindi press club cooperative housing society". The committee comprised, director (special planning) PHATA, convener, Headquarter Lahore, Director PHATA Region Rawalpindi and Deputy Director (P&D) PHATA Headquarter. The committee said: "So in view of above, Rawalpindi Press Club Cooperative Housing Society is bound to give possession to the owners of plot # 334-A and 335-A as per approved LOP and is responsible for violation of approved layout

plan of Rawalpindi Press Club Housing Society. Action may be taken against representatives of RPCCHS as per law. Grievances of the complainants could be addressed by giving them physical possession in the same area as per approved LOP by removing encroachment/illegals, if possible, or in another area of the scheme if prevailing rules and regulations allows. Accordingly, the requisite documents for construction may be handed over to complainants. In light of the directions of the Hon'ble Lahore High Court, Lahore followed by the findings of the Probe Committee, director of PHATA, Region Rawalpindi is hereby directed to assist the competent authority in the demarcation of the plots in ques-

tion. Upon demarcation of plots, the concerned department/office/management committee shall ensure compliance with the court's directions and address grievances of the petitioners by handing over possession of plot # 334-A and 335-A in Rawalpindi Press Club Cooperative Housing Society, Rawalpindi. Copies of the probe committee's report was sent to the secretary information and culture department Punjab, Regional Police Officer Punjab Police Rawalpindi, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Rawalpindi and Director PHATA, Rawalpindi. Meanwhile: RIUJ president Tariq Usmani appreciated the LHC decision regarding removing encroachments from the two plots of media town and to hand over the processio

KKAWF, embassy of France & Serena Hotels partner to combat water pollution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation in partnership with the Embassy of France, Serena Hotels and United States Educational Foundation is set to hold its fifth edition of its annual environmental awareness event, Keep Korang Clean Plus 2025. This flagship event is part of KKAWF's ongoing efforts to take action to stop the hazardous quality of water from Korang river to flow into the Rawal Dam, the source of drinking water for residents of Rawalpindi/Islamabad. KKAWF strongly advocates for sustainable solutions with the Ministry of Climate Change, the Worldwide Fund for Nature WWF and CDA to protect Rawal Lake from contamination. The foundation urges environmental organizations and authorities to install Trash Barriers at strategic points along the Korang River to prevent waste and pollutants from entering the lake. Given that thousands of households along the river in Bhara Kabu contribute to its pollution, installing these barriers is crucial for ensuring cleaner drinking water for millions of people in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The event will bring together



over 300 students, boy scouts, girl guides, teachers, as well as diplomats, UN agencies, officials from the Government and Corporate entities, environmental advocates, media, influencers and community members for a collaborative cleanup activity. It will be a unique opportunity to witness youth-led environmental advocacy and interact with participants committed to safeguarding our natural resources. This year will include innovative activities for youth including a river clean-up operation, environmental awareness - to educate youth about their role in sustain-

able practices and opportunities for students to showcase their creativity through poems, songs, and essays highlighting the significance of environmental protection. Student teams will compete to see who collects the most waste along a designated 500-meter stretch of the Korang River. All participating students and schools will receive certificates, and winners will receive prizes and medals. The gathering will be addressed by Senior Officials from Embassy of France, Cristina Afridi, Chairperson KKAWF, Officials from Ministry of Climate Change and Ambassador of Portugal

to Pakistan Frederico Silva along with other special guests at the event. Everyone's presence is crucial to work together to protect our environment, inspire positive change, and empower the youth to take on leadership roles in advocating for environmental sustainability particularly the critical issue of water pollution. KKAWF, launched in 2015 is commemorating its first decade of empowering youth to help them realise their full potential of a healthy & productive life. It regularly engages with young people under its five pillars of Drug Awareness, Environmental awareness,

ICCI President sounds alarm on unfavorable business climate

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has called for urgent action from the relevant authorities to address the mounting challenges faced by the business community in Islamabad. Speaking at a presentation in the presence of Chaudhry Mohammad Ali Randhawa, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad during the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) meeting, Qureshi highlighted the significant rise in the cost of doing business and the heavy tax burdens on local businesses, which are jeopardizing the growth of the city's economy and could lead to the relocation of businesses abroad. He reiterated that businesses in Islamabad have been paying higher taxes compared to other regions, a situation that, if left unaddressed, could force businesses to move overseas, further impacting unemployment rates and depriving the government of essential revenue. "The cost of doing business in Islamabad has skyrocketed by 190%, creating an unfavorable environment for industries. This alarming trend could have devastating effects on the local economy," Qureshi stated. He also pointed out that educated youth are already leaving the country due to diminishing job opportunities and business prospects. Furthermore, Qureshi called for urgent reforms in the ship-breaking industry, which plays a crucial role in supplying scrap metal to the steel industry. He highlighted how excessive taxes on this sector are undermining its potential to support the country's manufacturing industries. The ICCI President also reiterated the business community's commitment to working alongside the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to make Islamabad cleaner, greener, and more attractive for both residents and visitors. On this occasion, President FPCCI Atif Ikram Shaikh, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail, Chairman Founder Group Tariq Sadiq, former Presidents ICCI Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Abdul Rauf Alam and other business leaders were present in large number and expressed their support for Qureshi's call for reforms. They also urged the authorities to create a more conducive environment for businesses in Islamabad to ensure the city's continued economic growth and prosperity.—DNA

Public hails govt's pro people policies

ISLAMABAD: The government's initiatives and positive economic trends have drawn appreciation from people across the board, including students, who welcome the decrease in inflation rate, e-bike scheme and scholarship programs. People from various segments of society, including students, have expressed their satisfaction with the government's economic initiatives and policies, which have led to a decrease in inflation rate, introduction of e-bike scheme and scholarship programs, said a report aired by PTV news channel. "I am really happy to find the prices of vegetables and fruits com-

ing down," said a housewife shopping at the weekly bazaar in Islamabad, adding, the government's efforts to control inflation are really paying off. "The prices of pulses and grains have also come down significantly," said another housewife shopping at the weekly bazaar in Lahore. "I am really grateful to the government for taking steps to control inflation." Students have also hailed the government's scholarship and laptop schemes. "I am really grateful to the government for providing me with a laptop," said a student at Punjab University. "It has really helped me with my studies." "I was struggling to afford

a laptop, but thanks to the government's scheme, I now have one," said a student at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET). "It has really improved my learning experience." "I am thrilled with the e-bike scheme, it is a great initiative for students like me," said Ayesha, a student from Lahore. "The decrease in inflation rate has also helped my family manage expenses better." The sentiment is echoed by a student from Multan, who said, "The scholarship program initiated by PML-N led government has been a huge help for me. I can now focus on my studies without worrying about finances."—APP



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NDMA dispatches 23rd humanitarian consignment to Palestine

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in partnership with the Al-Khidmat Foundation, dispatched the 23rd relief consignment of 50 tons of humanitarian aid on Sunday to support war-affected individuals in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Under the prime minister's directives, a total of 1,803 tons of relief supplies have been delivered so far to assist affected communities in Palestine (1,320 tons), Lebanon (372 tons), and Syria (111 tons). The relief consignment contained items such as tinned meat, powdered milk, hygiene kits, clothing, blankets, tents, and sleeping bags. The aid was sent via a chartered flight from Jinnah International Airport in Karachi to Jordan.

The send-off ceremony at Jinnah International Airport in Karachi was attended by senior officials from the NDMA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and Al-Khidmat Foundation. An NDMA spokesperson stated that the Government of Pakistan remains committed to delivering relief supplies in response to the needs of war-affected communities in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.—APP

SSP operations inspects checkpoints

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan visited various checkpoints and duty points across the federal capital on Sunday, emphasizing professionalism and courteous conduct during security checks. A police spokesperson told APP that SSP Shoaib inspected multiple security points and briefed the officers and personnel on ensuring effective crime prevention and maintaining law and order. SSP Shoaib said the officers must perform their duties with honesty and integrity to eliminate crime from the city. SSP reiterated that ensuring the safety and security of citizens remains the top priority of Islamabad Police. SSP emphasized that while conducting security checks, officers should treat citizens with respect and professionalism to ensure a sense of security among the public.—APP

Call it what it is

HERE is a popular reality show on UK television called "A New Life in the Sun," in which professionals help people who long to escape the gray British weather to find a home and a job, or even start a business, in sunnier climes. Many of the participants find happiness when they move. But this is not the kind of relocation US President Donald Trump is offering the Palestinians of Gaza. We should call his suggested plan to permanently "relocate" more than 2 million Gazans what it really is – forced displacement. It is ethnic cleansing. It would only add yet another tier of suffering to a people who, even before Oct. 7, faced extreme hardship and since then have experienced a living hell, including repeated displacements within the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, such a move would be bound to have a destabilizing effect on the entire region. Even by Trump's standards, his joint press conference this week with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was extraordinary. He delivered one bombshell after another as he "clarified" his comments from a few days earlier about relocating the people of Gaza to Egypt and Jordan. His suggestion that the US would take over the territory and transform it into a "Riviera of the Middle East," after permanently pushing its Palestinian residents into neighboring countries, left many people in the region, and far beyond, speechless or enraged. The word "relocation" suggests that the people who undertake such a change either initiated the move to a new place or at least gave their consent; it does not accurately describe a move forced upon them and also upon their designated host countries. Regarding the prospect of compliance by these host countries, Trump told reporters: "They're going to do it. We do a lot for them and they're going to do it." The immediate reactions of these countries to his plan, from indignation to outright rejection, was only to be expected. Trump's suggestion that his plan is intended to be a permanent arrangement is effectively a version of the most extreme ideas of the ultra-right-wing settler movement in Israel. It would serve only to motivate the most militant forces within Palestinian society, who would need no further proof that the US and Israel were conspiring to quash their political aspirations and human rights, including the right to self-determination. This proposed forced displacement is immoral, politically damaging and, furthermore, forbidden under international law. Article 49 of the Geneva Convention clearly states: "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive." When those who support this plan continue to use the words "voluntary departure," they know full well that throughout history, transfers of populations have been moves forced upon millions of people and are never carried out to protect those pushed out of their homes and communities. The transfers simply serve the political interests of stronger powers. The cheering from the sidelines by far-right Israeli proponents of this proposed ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people is unsurprising, and sad evidence of their moral degradation as they proclaim their wish to do precisely the same thing in the West Bank, establishing Jewish supremacy over all land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea.



Lebanon's fragile ceasefire deal

A Hezbollah fighter and his three daughters were brutally killed when "Israel" rigged their home with bombs in Tayr Harfa, South Lebanon near the border. The father, Abbas Haidar, was a brave and pious Hezbollah soldier who took part in the heroic ambushes on Israeli soldier groupings in Chamaa, South Lebanon that helped serve "Israel" in its defeat. Just hours later, the US Ambassador and Trump's New ultra-zionist envoy Ortogus inspected locations in the South, including near Tayr Harfa and Chamaa, the latter where Hezbollah waged crushing ambushes against "Israeli" occupying soldiers months ago. It's no coincidence that these were the sights that, like the burning of tanks in Chamaa, embodied the defeat of the Zionist entity's ground incursion into Lebanon. The fighter hero Abbas was reportedly part of the Chamaa ambush, and "Israel" rigged bombs in his home as dirty revenge. The US Ambassador and Ortogus were there to greenlight it and to assess the aftermath. There was never an explanation for why they did that tour. There is a method to the madness. It's no coincidence that one of the US' top concessions for Gaza – stated in Biden's January 2024 meeting with Israeli leadership – was the replacement of Hamas with a PA-style leadership. And now, PA-style tactics of ground and home attacks against the homes and families of Resistance fighters are being tested, reminiscent of the home invasions and home sabotage undertaken by the comprador authority against the Palestinian Resistance factions in the West Bank. The US helped push for the infiltration of PA-aligned spies into Gaza, sent in by the Authority's intelligence chief. This easily failed and was thwarted by Hamas, as sovereign Gazan authorities managed to maintain control over the enclave despite the Israeli targeted killings, genocide, and complete destruction of infrastructure. On January 5, Palestinian Resistance forces confiscated an RPG used by the Palestinian Authority – loyally acting as "Israel's" ground force in blowing up homes in Jenin. PA-backed gunmen routinely storm into the homes, neighborhoods, and familiar routes of Resistance fighters and resistant intellectuals alike – executing the dirty work on the ground that "Israel" does afar from the air. And speaking of execution, the US – reflected in Ortogus's hopes and dreams – has been backing "Israel's" wanton murders, targetings, and attacks on Hezbollah members and their families – even post-ceasefire. A Hezbollah official in the West Bekaa village of Machghara was gunned down outside his home. It's no coincidence that Netanyahu's choice of gift to Trump was a Golden Pager mounted onto a cross-section of an ancient olive tree trunk – a gold-plated gloat over the desecration of Lebanon's natural and social fabric – the symbolic explosive pager mounted on the severed and sliced appendage of Lebanon's deeply-rooted Southern Lebanese icon (notice again – it was an olive tree, characteristic of Lebanon's south, not a Cedar tree of its north). Perhaps Netanyahu was passive-aggressively reminding Trump of the job the US President is supposed to fulfill. The attack came as New Trump Middle East Envoy Ortogus, who surpasses her predecessor, former IOF member Hochstein, in rabid Zionism, delivered shocking and insulting remarks in the Baabda palace.

Le Pen's Islamic Xenophobia Endangers France

Qamar Bashir



European countries assert the right to migrate freely and enjoy prosperity in any part of the world. However, when Muslim countries resist cultural invasion, they face sanctions, political interference, and even military aggression. Countries that refuse to comply with Western demands often witness their leaders overthrown, societies destabilized, and puppet regimes installed to fulfill foreign agendas. Following 9/11, President George W. Bush threatened Pakistan with devastation if it did not cooperate...

MARINE Le Pen, deeply conservative and deeply rightist, harbors deep-seated animosity towards Muslims and is currently leading the race to become the President of the Republic of France. After Trump's ascension to the presidency, and his drive to cleanse the country of illegal immigrants, Le Pen has taken it a step further. She seeks to eliminate Muslim presence, culture, and Islam from France, using every possible means to spread hatred against Muslims and their religion. Le Pen's rhetoric aligns with a growing trend of nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiments sweeping across Europe, emboldening extremist factions and normalizing hate speech in political discourse. In her latest election poster, she has made this hatred a central theme of her campaign. The poster features two contrasting images: one of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab and another of a French woman with uncovered, neatly styled hair. The caption under the Muslim woman's photo reads, "This is not France," while the caption under the unveiled woman's picture declares, "This is France." This narrow-minded approach, as her primary election slogan, reflects not only an intense animosity towards Islam but also an underlying belief in white racial superiority and a mindset reminiscent of Nazi-era racial and religious cleansing ideologies. The overt message is clear: a rejection of multiculturalism and an endorsement of an exclusionary, mono-ethnic identity that disregards France's rich, diverse history shaped by centuries of cultural exchange. Indeed, this wave of hatred has exposed the true essence within Europe. While European leaders champion openness, religious tolerance, cultural diversity, and human equality on international platforms, they fiercely protect their own religion, race, lifestyle, and cultural values. This obvious double standard shows a mindset that wants to expand, based on old colonial views. It sees other people as lesser, only good for conquering, enslaving, and exploiting. This hypocrisy is evident in immigration policies, media portrayals, and public sentiment that stigmatize Muslims while celebrating European diaspora communities abroad. European countries assert the right to migrate freely and enjoy prosperity in any part of the world. However, when Muslim countries resist cultural invasion, they face sanctions, political interference, and even military aggression. Countries that refuse to comply with Western demands often witness their leaders overthrown, societies destabilized, and puppet regimes installed to fulfill foreign agendas. Following 9/11, President George W. Bush threatened Pakistan with devastation if it did not cooperate, stating it would be "bombed back to the Stone Age." Afghanistan faced relentless bombardment when the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, while Iraq and Libya were devastated under the pretext of

spreading democracy. Iran, for its defiance in preserving its culture and sovereignty, has been subjected to crippling sanctions and demonized as an "evil" nation. This pattern reveals a disturbing trend of punitive actions masked as moral crusades, often resulting in long-term instability and humanitarian crises in the targeted regions. Western powers conveniently ignore their colonial histories, where countries like France, the UK, the Netherlands, and Portugal occupied numerous Muslim nations, imposing their language, culture, and lifestyles with blatant disregard for indigenous identities. In stark contrast, formerly conservative Muslim countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Maldives, Turkey, and Egypt have transformed into diverse, inclusive societies that welcome global visitors, investors, and cultures. Meanwhile, European nations seem to regress into puritanical, exclusionary ideologies rooted in their colonial past, fueled by a fear of the "other" and a refusal to reconcile with their multicultural realities. Traditional media once controlled the narrative, portraying European leaders as paragons of tolerance and champions of human rights. However, social media has shattered this illusion, exposing the deep-seated prejudices, racism, and Islamophobia prevalent in many parts of Europe. Platforms like X reveal the alarming extent of hate speech, with individuals openly expressing bigotry against Muslims and Islam, showcasing the pervasive and venomous ideologies that remain entrenched within European societies. The digital age has democratized information, making it harder to conceal the contradictions between Europe's professed values and the reality of widespread discrimination, systemic racism, and xenophobia that persists beneath the surface. Social media platforms have become breeding grounds for extremist rhetoric, with calls to "cleanse" Europe of Muslims, derogatory depictions of Islamic practices, and the normalization of dehumanizing stereotypes. This hatred is not confined to fringe groups but has seeped into mainstream political discourse, signaling a dangerous societal shift. The normalization of such rhetoric emboldens hate crimes, fosters division, and undermines the social fabric that holds diverse communities together. It is a stark reminder of the fragility of democratic values when confronted with the forces of fear and intolerance. Marine Le Pen reinforces her anti-Muslim stance by spreading misleading information about Muslim-majority countries. For instance, an infographic circulating on social media portrays Algerians as a financial burden, claiming they cost France over 9 billion euros annually through unpaid hospital bills, pension fraud, lost tax revenue, and social assistance. Similar infographics are also injected for other Muslim countries.

This narrative conveniently omits France's brutal colonial history in Algeria from 1830 to 1962, during which over 1.5 million Algerians were killed, subjected to torture, massacres, and forced displacement. France seized over 2.7 million hectares of fertile land, exploited Algeria's natural resources, including iron, zinc, lead, phosphates, and later, Sahara oil reserves, while imposing oppressive taxation without representation. This exploitation fueled France's economic growth, leaving Algeria underdeveloped and economically dependent even after its independence in 1962. The selective amnesia surrounding colonial atrocities serves to decontextualize current immigration debates, framing them as isolated economic issues rather than the legacy of historical injustices. The same oppressive colonial tactics were employed in other Muslim-majority French colonies, including Tunisia (1881-1956), Morocco (1912-1956), Senegal (1659-1960), Mali (1892-1960), Niger (1900-1960), Burkina Faso (1896-1960), Mauritania (1904-1960), Syria (1920-1946), and Lebanon (1920-1946). European colonial powers historically imposed their cultural values and lifestyles on the nations they occupied, believing in the superiority of the white race. This mindset persists today, where non-European races are often expected to adopt Western norms and values while Europeans claim the exclusive right to preserve their cultural identities. Tolerance, it seems, is a one-way expectation imposed on non-white, non-European societies, while European nations exempt themselves from these principles, perpetuating a dangerous double standard rooted in colonial arrogance and racial supremacy. If Le Pen succeeds in implementing her anti-Muslim policies, she risks irreversibly damaging the very fabric of the French Republic. A coordinated boycott by Muslim-majority countries could jeopardize over 100 billion euros in annual trade, crippling sectors like energy, agriculture, and defense. Muslim visitors contributing €155 billion to the French economy annually would suffer immensely. The investments worth billions from Gulf countries into French real estate, technology, and infrastructure could be withdrawn, exacerbating economic instability. The social consequences would be equally dire, deepening societal divisions, fostering resentment, and undermining the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity that form the cornerstone of the French Republic. In pursuit of exclusionary policies, Le Pen risks not just France's economic prosperity but the very essence of its national identity and global influence.

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

Social mobilization and child labour

Ayesha Shabir



Child labour is generally defined as the employment of children in work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmful and that interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN) have classified child labour as exploitative...

SOCIAL mobilization plays a pivotal role in addressing societal issues, particularly those related to human rights, women's rights, gender-based violence (GBV), social cohesion and child labour. My mother, as a dedicated social mobilizer, has been actively engaged in raising awareness and fostering community-driven solutions to these critical concerns. Among the various social issues she addresses, I consider child labour to be the most pressing, as today's child is the youth of tomorrow. Child labour is not merely an economic issue but a fundamental violation of human rights that hampers children's physical, cognitive and emotional development. Child labour is generally defined as the employment of children in work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmful and that interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN) have classified child labour as exploitative, although not all forms of work undertaken by children fall under this definition. Exceptions include work done by child artists, family duties, supervised training and other forms of work that contribute positively to the child's development without interfering with education and well-being. The legislative history surrounding child labour dates back to the 19th century when the United Kingdom introduced a succession of Factory Acts to regulate child labour. The Cotton Mills Act prohibited the employment of children younger than nine years old, while those aged 9-16 were permitted to work for up to 12 hours per day. By 1856, laws allowed children past the age of nine to work up to 60 hours per week, whether during the day or night. In 1901, the minimum permissible working age was raised to 12. These regulations, though progressive at the time, reflected the industrialized world's reliance on child labour, a trend that was also prevalent in other parts of the world. Child labour has existed in various forms throughout history. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, children aged 5-14 from impoverished families were often employed in Western countries and their colonies. These children primarily worked in agriculture, home-based assembly operations, factories, mining and services such as newspaper distribution. Many children worked night shifts lasting up to 12 hours, depriving them of education and healthy development. However, with the increase in household incomes, the establishment of compulsory education and the passage of stringent child labour laws, the prevalence of child labour has declined in many parts of the world.

Despite significant progress, child labour remains a global issue. As of 2023, approximately one in five children in the world's poorest countries are engaged in child labour. The highest number of child labourers reside in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one in four children are subjected to exploitative labour conditions. According to a 2017 report, more than 50% of children aged 5-14 in Mali, Benin, Chad and Guinea-Bissau were engaged in child labour. Globally, agriculture remains the largest employer of child labour, with most child workers found in rural settings and informal urban economies. In many cases, children are employed by their parents rather than by formal businesses. Poverty and lack of access to education are the primary drivers of child labour, perpetuating cycles of intergenerational economic hardship. Research conducted by organizations such as UNICEF and the ILO indicates that boys and girls are equally likely to be involved in child labour but often perform different roles. While boys are more likely to be engaged in hazardous occupations such as mining and construction, girls are disproportionately involved in unpaid household labour, which is often unrecognized and undervalued. Such disparities highlight the need for gender-sensitive approaches to addressing child labour. Between 1960 and 2003, the global incidence of child labour fell from 25% to 10%, as reported by the World Bank. However, the total number of child labourers remains alarmingly high. In 2013, UNICEF and the ILO estimated that approximately 168 million children aged 5-17 worldwide were engaged in child labour. Although progress has been made, significant efforts are still needed to eradicate this social ill. Addressing child labour requires a multi-faceted approach involving education, economic empowerment, legislation and advocacy. Individuals, communities, businesses and governments must collaborate to combat this pressing issue. Some effective strategies include:

- o Increasing public knowledge about the adverse effects of child labour and the importance of education is crucial. Human education resources can be used to teach children, parents and community members about the dangers of child exploitation and the benefits of education.
- o Schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media platforms play a vital role in disseminating information about child labour and advocating for policy changes.
- o Consumers have the power to influence business practices by supporting fair trade and sweatshop-free products. Looking for certifications such as Fair Trade Certified, Fairtrade America and the Good Weave label ensures that purchased products do not involve child labour.
- o Consumers who inquire about the origins of products

should hold retailers and manufacturers accountable and demand ethically produced goods.

- o Providing financial assistance to impoverished families can reduce their reliance on child labour as a source of income.
- o Encouraging skill development and vocational training for parents can improve economic stability and prevent children from being forced into labour.
- o Governments should pass and enforce strict laws against child labour, ensuring that no products in their markets are derived from exploitative child labour.
- o Strengthening labor laws, enforcing codes of conduct and providing support to businesses that adopt ethical labor practices can significantly reduce child exploitation.
- o Individuals can participate in advocacy campaigns, write letters to policymakers and join NGOs working to eradicate child labour.
- o Engaging faith-based organizations, schools and civil society groups in discussions about child labour can encourage grassroots action.

As a social mobilizer, my mother has actively participated in addressing child labour by engaging with parents and communities to raise awareness about its harmful effects. Through her work, she has witnessed firsthand how education and advocacy can empower communities to protect children's rights. Inspired by her dedication, I have also contributed to anti-child labour efforts by volunteering with NGOs, such as Awaz, a British Council-funded initiative dedicated to protecting children's rights. Working with Awaz for nearly a year, I actively participated in educating parents about the significance of education and the dangers of child labour. Our efforts successfully persuaded many families to withdraw their children from labour and enroll them in schools. While complete eradication of child labour remains a daunting task, gradual and sustained efforts can contribute to meaningful change. The eradication of child labour requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, businesses and governments. Every person can play a role in combating this issue by staying informed, supporting ethical consumerism, advocating for stronger legislation and engaging in community-driven initiatives. The exploitation of children for labour is not only a violation of their fundamental rights but also a significant barrier to sustainable economic and social development. By fostering education, empowering families and holding businesses accountable, we can move closer to a world where every child enjoys the right to education and a dignified childhood. It is imperative that we take proactive steps to protect the rights of innocent children and ensure that they have access to a safe and fulfilling future.

Briefs

Pakistan engages Egypt...

FROM PAGE 01

He also voiced strong opposition to any proposals for the displacement of Palestinian people, stressing that their land rightfully belongs to them. Both discussions underscored Pakistan's support for convening an Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers to address the Gaza crisis. The leaders agreed to remain in close contact to coordinate further diplomatic efforts. Pakistan continues to play an active role in mobilizing international and regional support to address the ongoing humanitarian challenges in Gaza.

IMF mission to assess...

FROM PAGE 01

elements of a framework within which economies can prosper. "In 1997, the IMF adopted a policy on how to address economic governance, embodied in the Guidance Note "The Role of the IMF in Governance Issues". To further strengthen the implementation of this policy, the IMF adopted in 2018 a new Framework for Enhanced Engagement on Governance (Governance Policy) that aims to promote more systematic, effective, candid, and evenhanded engagement with member countries regarding governance vulnerabilities—including corruption—that are critical to macroeconomic performance," read the statement. Under this policy and framework, IMF offers to undertake governance and corruption diagnostic assessment (GCDA) with member countries to analyse and recommend actions for addressing corruption vulnerabilities and strengthening integrity and governance in IMF member countries, the spokesperson further clarified.

PM approves abolishing...

FROM PAGE 01

line with a Supreme Court decision, following which the Establishment Division has issued directives to all ministries and divisions to implement the changes. The sources confirmed that all other benefits and facilities available to civil servants under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package will remain unchanged. The decision will not apply to the children of martyrs from law enforcement agencies or those who have sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism. Additionally, the decision will not affect the recruitment of heirs of civil servants who were hired before the change in policy. Earlier in a similar development, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government abolished recruitment under the son quota system for government employees. The provincial government released an official notification regarding the change in the recruitment process.

Trump calls Putin, discuss...

FROM PAGE 01

"These communications are conducted through different channels," Peskov said when asked by TASS to comment directly on the New York Post report. "I personally may not know something, be unaware of something. Therefore, in this case, I can neither confirm nor deny it." The conflict in eastern Ukraine began in 2014 after a pro-Russian president was toppled in Ukraine's Maidan Revolution and Russia annexed Crimea, with Russian-backed separatist forces fighting Ukraine's armed forces. Putin sent thousands of troops into Ukraine in 2022, calling it a "special military operation" to protect Russian speakers in Ukraine and counter what he said was a grave threat to Russia from potential Ukrainian membership of NATO. Ukraine and its Western backers, led by the United States, said the invasion was an imperialist style land grab and vowed to defeat Russian forces.



ISLAMABAD: Runners participate during Marathon 2025 at Fatimah Jinnah Park, in Federal Capital. — Online

National Elite Boxing c'ship starts from today

The President of PBF also mentioned that all arrangements for the successful conduct of the championship have been completed. A team of technical officials has been appointed to ensure smooth event management

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The 41st edition of the National Elite Men's Boxing Championship and the 5th National Women's Boxing Championship is set to start in Karachi today (Monday). According to Lt. Col. (R) Nasir Ijaz Tung, President of the Pakistan Boxing Federation, 14 teams, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, WAPDA, Railways, HEC, Police, Karachi Port Trust, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Azad Jammu & Kash-

mir, and Islamabad, will compete in this prestigious event. The championship will conclude on February 15.

The President of PBF further stated that, following World Boxing (WB) rules, the 41st National Elite Men's Championship will feature ten weight categories, while the 5th Women's Boxing Championship will include eight categories.

It is noteworthy that this is the first time in Pakistan's boxing history that women's participation has exceeded 100. This growth demonstrates the increasing interest in boxing among women in the country. The

first elite women's championship was held in 2018 with only three categories, and now, in its fifth edition, 112 women boxers are competing in eight different categories. Nasir Ijaz Tung emphasized that gender equality is a priority in the Olympic Movement under the International Olympic Committee (IOC) charter. This supports greater access to sports for female athletes and promotes the inclusion of women in sports administration and management. The President of PBF also mentioned that all arrangements for the successful conduct of the championship have been

completed. A team of technical officials has been appointed to ensure smooth event management. A total of 140 male and 112 female entries have been received, and 234 bouts will take place over the six-day event. Additionally, top-performing boxers from the championship will be selected for training camps and provided with the necessary facilities to prepare for international competitions. Weight Categories: Men (in Kg): 47-50, 50-55, 55-60, 60-65, 65-70, 70-75, 75-80, 80-85, 85-90, 90+, Women (in Kg): 45-48, 48-51, 51-54, 54-57, 57-60, 60-65, 65-70, 70-75.

Mbappe helps Real to hold Atletico for draw

The draw keeps Real at the top of LaLiga standings with 50 points

WEB DESK

MADRID: Real Madrid salvaged a 1-1 draw against city rivals Atletico Madrid in LaLiga on Saturday with Kylian Mbappe scoring a second-half goal to cancel out Julian Alvarez's first-half opener for the visiting side. That kept Real top of LaLiga on 50 points, one ahead of Atletico in second who missed a chance to leapfrog them. Barcelona, third on 45 points, visit Sevilla on Sunday with a chance to close the gap in the title race. In a tale of two halves at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, Atletico dominated the first 45 minutes and took the lead when Alvarez struck a 35th minute penalty after Aurelien Tchouameni had fouled Samuel Lino inside the box. Real roared back after the break, with Mbappe striking home a rebound in the 50th minute to level the game. But they were frustrated in their attempt to grab a win by an imperious Jan Oblak, who made a string of stunning saves. Diego Simeone's Atletico arrived in fine form, having won 19 of their previous 21 games in all competitions and they showed why they have the best defence in Europe's top five leagues with 15 goals conceded in 23 games. On Saturday, despite missing defensive stalwart Robin Le Normand to suspension, Simeone's side was once again rock-solid at the back, frustrating Real's stellar attack who were unable to create a single shot on target in the first half. Winger Lino and forward Alvarez were a constant menace up and down the left channel, often exposing the deficiencies of Lucas Vazquez and Tchouameni who got the start in a depleted Real defence without their top four defenders due to injuries. In the 25th minute, Atletico's players complained forcefully to the referee over a studs-up challenge on Pablo Barrios by Dani Ceballos, asking for a straight red. But Cesar Soto Grado gave only a yellow. Five minutes later, Atletico had their complaints heard when Tchouameni left a foot in on Lino as the ball came into the box in a quick counter-attack. At first, the referee did not spot the foul but he was called to review the play in the VAR booth, he pointed to the penalty spot. Cold-blooded Alvarez held his nerve under deafening booring from the sold-out Santiago Bernabeu crowd to brazenly chip his penalty down the middle as Thibaut Courtois dived low.

MI Cape Town thump Sunrisers Eastern Cape

Boult bags the Player of the Match award for his economical bowling figures

JOHANNESBURG: A combined batting effort, followed by Kagiso Rabada's four-wicket haul, led MI Cape Town to thrash defending champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape by 76 runs and win the SA20 2025 here at The Wanderers on Saturday. The Sunrisers, who won the first two editions of the league, failed to continue their winning run in this year's edition as they were outclassed by Rashid Khan-led MI Cape Town. The Afghan spinner's decision to bat first in the final bore fruit as his batting unit racked up a formidable total of 181/8 in the allotted 20 overs. Leading the way for Cape Town were middle-order batters Connor Esterhuizen and Dewald Brevis, who shared a 50-run partnership for the fourth wicket. Esterhuizen top-scored with a 26-ball 39, studded with two fours and as many sixes, while Brevis smashed two fours and four sixes on his way to an 18-ball 38. Meanwhile, top-order batter Ryan Rickelton also added valuable runs at the top with a quickfire 33 off just 15 deliveries with help of one four and four sixes. — Agencies

Australia crush SL to secure historic victory

The series victory marks Australia's first in Sri Lanka since 2011

WEB DESK

GALLE: A clinical Australia took a little over three days to pound Sri Lanka by nine wickets in the second Test and complete a 2-0 series sweep here on Sunday. Australia's first series victory in Sri Lanka since 2011 is a timely boost for a team that will be defending their World Test Championship (WTC) title in the final against South Africa in June. Australia were in the box seat having taken a decisive lead of 157 in the spin-dominated contest at the Galle International Stadium. When the fourth day's play started, the touring side needed 25 minutes to claim the last two Sri Lankan wickets and bowl out the hosts for 231 in their second innings. Steve Smith's men returned to chase down the 75-run target, losing the lone wicket of opener Travis Head. Usman Khawaja (27) and Marnus Labuschagne (26) guided Australia to victory with Sri Lanka opener Dimuth Karunaratne, who bowled out after playing his 100th Test, bowling the last over. "We played really well from the outset," Australia captain Smith, who struck his second hundred of the series to pocket the player-of-the-series award, said. "The plans that the batters came with and were able to adapt to the conditions here, it was amazing." "And then I thought all our bowlers did a tremendous job." "Since coming here in 2016, the guys have developed so many different plans and it's been great to see a constant im-

provement." Smith's 259-run stand with Alex Carey (156) powered Australia to a commanding 414 in reply to Sri Lanka's first innings 257. Carey made the most of his promotion to number five ahead of Josh Inglis, who suffered back spasm, and went on to win the player-of-the-match award. Australia's Matthew Kuhnemann (4-63) and Nathan Lyon (4-84) wrecked Sri Lanka in their second innings. The spin duo claimed a combined 30 of the 40 Sri Lankan wickets in the series. Battling half-centuries by Angelo Mathews (76) and Kusal Mendis (50) helped Sri Lanka avoid a second successive innings defeat but Australia never took their foot off the pedal. Smith, leading the touring side in absence of regular skipper Pat Cummins, became the first Australian, fifth overall, to take 200 outfield catches. "Losing a home series two-nil is very disappointing. The condition was very suitable for us," Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva said. "We haven't had opportunities to get into the game, right from the first game, and Australia proved why they are in the (WTC) final." The teams move to Colombo for a two-match one-day series beginning on Wednesday. Three matches were played on the fifth day of the final round of the ongoing 2nd COAS Inter-Club Hockey Championship at the Manzoor Hassan Hockey Stadium here on Sunday. Civil Quarters Hockey Club Peshawar defeated Crescent Hockey Club Sargodha 1-0 in a hotly contested first match. Aimal netted the lone goal of the match.

Israeli forces withdraw from key Gaza corridor

FROM PAGE 01

withdrawal of forces from the area will fulfill another commitment to the deal. The 42-day ceasefire is just past its halfway point and the sides are supposed to negotiate an extension that would lead to more Israeli hostages being freed from Hamas captivity. But the agreement is fragile and the extension isn't guaranteed. The sides are meant to begin talks on the truce's second stage but there appears to have been little progress. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was sending a delegation to Qatar, a key mediator in talks between the sides, but the mission included low-level officials, sparking speculation that it won't lead to a breakthrough in extending the truce. Netanyahu is expected to convene a meeting of key Cabinet ministers this week on the second phase of the deal, but it was not clear when.

PM Shehbaz to participate in world...

FROM PAGE 01

He would be accompanied by a high-level delegation including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and other key members of the cabinet, reflecting Pakistan's strong commitment to deepening its engagement with the UAE and other global partners, it added. During his visit, the premier will deliver a keynote address at the WGS, highlighting Pakistan's vision for inclusive economic growth, digital transformation and governance reforms. He would also hold bilateral meetings with the UAE leadership as well as engage with Heads of State/Government from participating countries and leading CEOs of major multinational companies. "Pakistan and the UAE share a deep-rooted brotherly relationship built on mutual trust, understanding and a longstanding mutually beneficial cooperation. The UAE remains one of Pakistan's key economic and strategic partners, with strong collaboration across multiple sectors," the spokesperson said.

Zafar urges CJP to postpone...

FROM PAGE 01

had been raised by five sitting judges of the IHC and four judges of the Supreme Court over the matter. "It is also gravely concerning that these objections have exposed the transferred judges to unjust criticism pertaining to their impartiality and integrity," he added. Earlier this month, President Asif Ali Zardari approved the transfer of one judge each from the Lahore, Sindh, and Balochistan High Courts to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) amid speculation that the capital court's next chief justice would be a "transferred judge." On February 4, five judges of the capital sent a representation to the IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and CJP Afridi against placing them down on the seniority list. They were of the view that seniority should be determined from the date of the new oath. The fresh transfers to the IHC have changed the seniority list, creating unrest among the judges.

'Only Parliament or SC can...

FROM PAGE 01

Justice Mazhar agreed with the constitutional bench's decision. He emphasised that only a constitutional bench has the authority to review the constitutionality of laws, and a regular bench cannot interpret constitutional matters. Justice Mazhar supported the withdrawal of previous orders issued by a two-member bench. He further stated that the 26th amendment remains part of the constitution, and its provisions are clear and transparent. "We cannot turn a blind eye to this amendment. Yes, it has been challenged, and notices have been issued to the parties. A decision on whether to refer the case to a full court will be made on merit," he wrote. Justice Mazhar reiterated that until the amendment is formally annulled, all legal matters must proceed under its framework.



ISLAMABAD: Dr Ashok Kumar, Dr Mansoor, Tanveer Noshai, Haji Hanif and others pose for a group photo during a ceremony in honor of the retired employees of PIMS. — DNA

Briefs

Philippines to strengthen economic ties with Jordan

AMMAN: A delegation of 13 Philippine companies and senior officials will arrive in Jordan on Sunday as part of a business, trade, and investment mission aimed at deepening economic cooperation between the two nations. The mission, scheduled for Feb. 11-12 in Amman, will see the Philippine delegation engage with 39 Jordanian companies in efforts to boost bilateral trade and investment, the Jordan News Agency reported. Speaking at a joint press conference alongside Philippine Trade Commissioner Michael Angelo Roaring from the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Dubai, Wilfredo C. Santos, Philippine ambassador to Jordan, reaffirmed Manila's commitment to fostering stronger economic ties with Jordan. Santos said: "The Philippines, as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, seeks to expand its global presence by forging strategic partnerships. Our robust sectors in food, agriculture, manufacturing, and creative industries align well with Jordan's strategic location, its safety and security as an oasis of peace in this region, and its investment-friendly environment."—APP

Bangladesh's air force chief seeks stronger defense ties with KSA, UAE

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Air Force chief began a multi-day visit to Saudi Arabia and the UAE on Sunday, a trip expected to strengthen Dhaka's defense ties with the Gulf states. Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan arrived in Riyadh on Sunday, where he is due to hold talks with top officials at the Royal Saudi Air Force, including his counterpart, Lt. Gen. Turki bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz. Khan will also visit RSAF's bases and establishments as part of his trip to the Kingdom, according to the public relations division of the Bangladesh Armed Forces, ISPR. "The visit of our air chief marshal will strengthen defense cooperation between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia," ISPR Director Lt. Col. Sami Ud Dowla Chowdhury told Arab News. "Khan will discuss opportunities for increasing collaboration in the area of joint exercise and training. The visit will definitely pave the way for closer cooperation between the two air forces in the coming days." Dhaka and Riyadh signed in 2019 an agreement to further their military cooperation, which has served as a basis for their collaborations in the field. From Saudi Arabia, Khan will continue his Gulf trip to the UAE on Feb. 14 to meet his Emirati counterpart, Maj. Gen. Staff Pilot Ibrahim Nasser Mohamed Al-Alawi, and discuss "various bilateral issues of mutual interest."—APP

German chancellor slams Trump's Ukraine rare earths demand

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz slammed as "selfish and self-serving" Donald Trump's demands for Ukrainian rare earths in exchange for US military aid, in an interview published on Saturday. Rare earths group metals used to transform power into motion in a vast array of things ranging from electric vehicles to missiles and there is no substitute for them. "Ukraine is under attack and we are helping it, without asking to be paid in return. This should be everyone's position," Scholz told the RND media group, when asked about Trump's demands for a possible quid pro quo for US aid. The German chancellor had already described Trump's demands as "very selfish" on Monday after a European Union summit in Brussels. He had said Ukraine's resources should be used to finance everything needed after the war, such as reconstruction and maintaining a strong army. "It would be very selfish, very self-serving" to demand something from Ukraine in exchange for aid, he said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in carpeting on a newly constructed road during of F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange project during development work, in Federal Capital.

Sialkot - country's hub for export-oriented industries

SIALKOT: Sialkot is a leading hub for export-oriented industries and a key economic centre. Along with Gujranwala and Gujrat, it forms the 'golden triangle' of industrialised northern Punjab. Renowned for its skilled craftsmanship, Sialkot has built a global reputation for high-quality, value-added goods. Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) former president Abdul Ghafoor Malik highlighted the city's vital role in Pakistan's economy, with 99pc of its production exported worldwide. Sialkot's small and medium industries generate over \$2.25 billion in annual foreign exchange, strengthening the national exchequer. The city is globally recognised for producing leather goods, sports equipment, surgical instruments, textiles, musical instruments, cutlery, and military uniform badges. Its footballs, hockey sticks, cricket gear, and boxing gloves are used in international competitions, including the Olympics and World Cups. Sialkot's corporate sector actively contributes to social initiatives on a self-help basis, fostering a culture of community-driven development. Despite challenges such as global competition and technological limitations, efforts are underway to modernise industries, embrace sustainability, and diversify exports to maintain its competitive edge. A testament to innovation and resilience, Sialkot continues to bolster Pakistan's economy, providing employment and enhancing the nation's global trade standing.—APP

Minimum taxes imperative to attract investment

FAISALABAD: Minimum taxes are imperative to attract maximum local and foreign investment which can play a key role in accelerating socioeconomic activities in order to weed out poverty by creating job opportunities in addition to undertaking development projects for public welfare, said Rehan Naseem Bharara, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing under-training officers of the Pakistan Provincial Services Academy (PPSA) Peshawar during a meeting, he welcomed the delegates and said that this visit would provide an opportunity to the public servants to harness their professional skills to efficiently tackle the administrative and economic challenges. He explained in detail the role of FCCI in industrial development, the importance of public private collaboration and challenges and opportunities for industrial growth. He also responded to the questions and queries of the officers and advised them to serve Pakistan with sincerity, commitment and devotion. Mr. Abdul Sattar Chief Instructor PPSA briefed the aims and objectives of the study tour of the under training officers.—APP

Israeli military says it is expanding West Bank operation

JERUSALEM: A pregnant 23-year-old Palestinian was killed by Israeli security forces on Sunday in the Nur Shams refugee camp in the West Bank as part of an expanded Israeli army operation in the occupied territory. The Palestinian Health ministry said Sundos Jamal Mohammed Shalabi, who was eight months pregnant, was struck by Israeli gunfire, adding that the foetus also did not survive and that Shalabi's husband was critically injured. The Israeli army said they expanded the military operation to four refugee camps in the West Bank. In Nur Shams, a Palestinian refugee camp east of Tulikarm, Israeli forces had killed several "militants" and detained wanted individuals in the area, a military spokesperson said on Sunday.—APP

Limited lending for private sector

Banks' investment in govt papers surges to Rs26t

Anjum Nisar says SBP data shows how banks run govt, earn huge profits from taxpayers' money

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has stated that the massive investment in government papers leaves little room for lending to the private sector, as the banks' investments in government papers reached Rs26 trillion by December 2024, contributing 57.6 per cent to the central government's domestic debt. The BMP Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government has been using taxpayers' money to pay unprecedented returns to the banks, urging the central bank to review its policies to facilitate the private sector. The latest data issued by

the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) revealed how banks' money runs the central government and how the banks earn record profits from taxpayers' money. Mian Anjum Nisar said that it's not new that the government borrows from banks but the size of banks money has been increasing as domestic debts. The data also showed that the banks had been making record profits by getting high interest rates, like 22 per cent during the entire FY24, while the return on T-bills remained around this rate and sometimes even higher than the policy rate. Moreover, the government borrowing from the SBP also increased by record highs during the period, increasing inflationary pressures on the economy. He observed that private sector has found no space to borrow from financial institutions, as banks

are preferring to park their money in risk-free government securities in huge sums. He said that banking money's flow has now directed towards the government papers, which will definitely hit the economic growth adversely, affecting the investment landscape of the country too. The BMP Chairman was of the opinion that the government's shift for borrowing from the central bank to commercial banks will likely result in banks making profits however this would hurt overall economic growth. The State Bank of Pakistan's latest data shows that a low volume of private sector credit offtake means lower domestic investment, hindering business activity and economic growth and promoting unemployment in the country. He added the trend is alarming and a criteria of bad financial management of the country, as

all the monetary aggregates tell us a sad story of the failure of the authorities. The off take at the beginning of last financial year was much higher than the preceding year but disappointing economic situation along with the higher rates discouraged the private sector from borrowing additional funds during the later months. The central bank had justified massive rate hikes throughout the fiscal year citing rising inflationary pressures. With weaknesses in private capital inflows continue to persist, the Central Bank should cut policy rates to spur growth, as cut would infuse confidence in the business community and propel economy. The industry is expecting the cut in interest rate, which could help boost private sector growth.—INP This massive investment in government papers left little room for

lending to the private sector. However, in the second quarter of the current fiscal year, the banks had to increase lending to meet the advance-to-deposit ratio (ADR) limit to avoid the 15 incremental tax imposed by the federal government. Banks suddenly increased their lending to the private sector, which reached around Rs1.3tr; now, this lending size is shrinking. To avoid tax on lower ADR, the banks lent Rs1.3tr to the non-banking financial institutions (NBFI) as short-term lending. The details showed that the banks' most significant investment was in the longer-term Pakistan Investment Bonds (PIBs). The total investment of PIBs till Dec 2024 was Rs26tr. Scheduled banks' investment in PIBs was Rs19.4tr while the rest of Rs6.332tr was invested by non-banks or corporate sector.

Saudi businesses eye stronger ties with Pak as Albaik confirms expansion

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, engaged in a series of high-profile meetings in Jeddah, focusing on enhancing trade and investment partnerships between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The discussions, held during the first-ever "Made in Pakistan" exhibition, centered on business collaborations, investment opportunities, and Saudi brands entering the Pakistani market, said a press release issued here on the other day. In a key meeting with prominent Saudi businessmen, the Minister invited them to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan across energy, agriculture, IT, healthcare, infrastructure, and consumer goods. He highlighted Pakistan's 22% export growth to Saudi Arabia, reaching \$700 million, and assured Saudi investors of a business-friendly environment with tax exemptions, investor protection laws, and access to a 240-million-strong consumer market. Saudi business leaders expressed keen interest in collaborating with Pakistani counterparts, particularly in construction materials, textiles, and food industries. Several proposals were discussed to enhance trade partnerships and industrial investment, with the Minister extending an invitation for them to visit Pakistan and participate in trade exhibitions like TEXPO, Food-AG, and the Healthcare & Mineral Show. The discussions also touched on Pakistan's recent ease-of-doing-business initiatives, including Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and the National Compliance Centre, aimed at streamlining trade regulations and enhancing export standards. A major highlight of the visit was Minister Jam Kamal Khan's meeting with Albaik owner Rami Abu Ghazala. The Minister was given a tour of Albaik's operations, where he met Pakistani employees working at the fast-food giant.—Agencies

PIAF hails govt pledge to further reduce power tariff

LAHORE: As the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made a pledge of reducing electricity tariff further for domestic and industrial consumers through power sector reforms the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Sunday hailed the commitment of the government to cut the cost of production. PIAF Chairman Faheem Rehman Saigol, in a joint statement along with senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary said that low-cost environment-friendly electricity should be provided to the industry. Faheem Saigol pointed out that revisiting agreements with the Independent Power Producers led to savings for the national exchequer and reduced the price of electricity for consumers. He said the reduction in deficits of power distribution companies (Discos) due to a campaign against electricity theft was made possible because of the hard work of the Ministry of Power and supporting institutions. Nasrullah Mughal said it was a good sign that the ministry and the relevant departments were cooperating to rectify defects of the last seven decades. He said that bringing down losses for Discos by speeding up the campaign against electricity theft is the right decision. Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary pointed out that the performance of Discos improved after the appointment of board members with good reputations from the private sector. More members of good reputation from the private sector should be appointed to the boards of the remaining Discos, he said, adding that the reduction in distribution losses resulted from reforms. He continued that the tariffs for domestic and industrial consumers would be further reduced. The meeting was also briefed on targets to improve power sector performance in the next three years. It was said that the receipts of the Discos reached 93.26 per cent by December 2024 due to the reforms and the campaign against electricity theft. PIAF leadership said that government's external financing needs will remain significant in the coming year, despite progress in rebuilding its foreign exchange reserves. The government needs to repay over \$22 billion in external debt in the fiscal year 2025, including nearly \$13 billion in bilateral deposits. Securing sufficient external financing remains a challenge, considering large maturities and lenders' existing exposures. Last month, the country agreed on a \$1 billion loan with two Middle Eastern banks at a 6-7% interest rate. Pakistan's central bank chief earlier said the country aims to raise up to \$4 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year. To address its external financing needs from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral and bilateral lenders, Fitch said Pakistan needs to continue implementing structural reforms, including those related to fiscal consolidation and improving its business environment. Pakistan is undergoing reforms under a \$7 billion IMF program, which is up for its first review later this month. The program aims to help Pakistan address deep-rooted economic issues such as its large fiscal and current account deficits. "Deteriorating external liquidity, for example linked to delays in IMF reviews, could lead to negative action. Still, Fitch noted that Pakistan has made progress in rebuilding its foreign exchange reserves, outperforming targets set by the IMF.—DNA

Industrial development essential for economic growth, prosperity: Gohar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Senior Vice President FPCCI and Secretary General UBG Sindh, Hanif Gohar, stated that the country's economy is currently going through difficult times. Economic stability is not possible without trade and industrial development. The government should create a conducive environment for the business community and encourage women's participation in business. He added that he has come from Karachi with a passion for serving his region; He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony during his visit to the Mansehra Chamber of Commerce and Industry. On this occasion, Secretary General of UBG (FPCCI) Zafar Bakhtawari, former President and Chief Coordinator of Chakwal Chamber of Commerce



and Industries Khwaja Arif Yusuf, President of Talagang Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malik Shabbir Awan, Executive Member of FPCCI Colonel (Retd.) Sadiq Sultan and others accompanied him. The delegation met with the chamber officials and the business community. The President of the Mansehra Chamber of Commerce

and Industry, Syed Mumtaz Ahmad Shah, along with other officials, warmly welcomed the esteemed guests. Discussions were held on the issues faced by the business community, trade development, and challenges in the industrial sector. In his speech, Hanif Gohar said that witnessing the underdevelopment of his area, the lack of medical

facilities, and limited employment opportunities, he established a hospital and the Hunar Foundation. He also mentioned that land has been provided for Indus Hospital under the CPEC project, where a 200-bed hospital will be built for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He assured the business community of Mansehra that he is always available to help

resolve their financial and other issues. He said that UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari is present in Islamabad to resolve any of your issues, and now this communication will continue. While addressing the ceremony, Zafar Bakhtawari stated that Hanif Gohar is the pride of Karachi and the identity of Mansehra. His love for his homeland has brought him back, and he is filled with the spirit of serving the region. The business community of Mansehra should benefit from his experience. UBG has always represented the rights of traders. Due to the efforts of UBG's Patron-in-Chief, S.M. Tanveer, electricity prices are expected to be reduced by half. He also vigorously raised the issue of IPPs, and the interest rate is also decreasing. Work is ongoing in the real estate sector as well.

Briefs

Pakistan sends aid for Lebanon, Gaza, Syria

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has sent another relief consignment to aid war-affected civilians in Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the latest consignment departed from Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and is the 23rd batch of aid sent to the region. The 50-ton relief package for Palestine includes: Canned meat, powdered milk, blankets, clothes, tents, and warm bedding. The NDMA spokesperson confirmed that Pakistan has so far sent a total of 1,803 tons of humanitarian aid to Lebanon, Gaza, and Syria, ensuring support for the affected communities.

Indian security forces kill 31 Maoists

NEW DELHI: Indian security forces have killed 31 Maoist rebels in the forests of Chhattisgarh state. Two Indian commandos were also killed in the battle, and two other security force members were wounded, police said. Chhattisgarh has seen a long-running insurgency by Maoists who say they are fighting for the rights of the poor. Sunday's clashes were among the deadliest since the government ramped up efforts to crush the insurgency, which has been running since the 1960s.

"So far 31 dead bodies of the Maoists have been recovered," senior police officer Sundarraj Pattilingam said. The death toll could rise as police carry out operations in the area, he said. Police said they had seized assault rifles and grenade launchers from the bodies of the dead rebels. The clashes took place in the forests of Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh. Amit Shah, India's interior minister, who says the government expects to crush the rebellion by 2026, said the operation had been a "big success". The rebels are inspired by the Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong. They claim to be fighting for communist rule and greater rights for tribal people and the rural poor. The insurgency began in West Bengal state in the late 1960s and has since spread to more than a third of India's 600 districts. The rebels control large areas of several states in a "red corridor" stretching from northeast to central India. Major military and police offensives in recent years have pushed the rebels back to their forest strongholds and levels of violence have fallen. - Agencies

Sri Lanka hit by nationwide power cut

COLOMBO: Power is being gradually restored across Sri Lanka after a nationwide outage left buildings including hospitals having to rely on generators. Officials say it may take a few hours to get power back across the island nation, but medical facilities and water purification plants have been given priority. Energy Minister Kumara Jayakody reportedly blamed a monkey for causing the power cut, saying the animal came into "contact with our grid transformer causing an imbalance in the system", according to the AFP news agency. The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) said the power cut had been caused by an emergency at a sub-station, south of Colombo, and gave no further details. "Engineers are attending to it to try and restore the service as soon as possible," the minister said. The CEB said "we are making every effort to restore the island-wide power failure as soon as possible". Hospitals and businesses across the island nation of 22 million people have been using generators or inverters. Sri Lanka experienced widespread blackouts during its economic crisis in 2022. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Family members of the workers of demolished Monal Restaurant hold placards during protest at the sight of the restaurant on Margalla Hills, as in the time of extreme inflation and unemployment, such common people are suffering a lot across the country. - Online

Azma mocks PTI for low turnout at Swabi rally

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab's Information Minister Azma Bukhari has criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for failing to attract a sizable crowd at its recent rally in Swabi, claiming that even with official resources, the party could not gather 5,000 people. Bukhari said the people of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) had rejected PTI founder's politics of "unrest and chaos." She alleged that government employees were made to mark attendance at the event, yet turnout remained low. "Junaid Akbar has failed his first political test miserably, while Ali Amin Gandapur once again resorted to crudeness to please PTI's founder," she remarked. She further claimed that Punjab's youth were benefitting from initiatives such as electric bikes and scholarships, and that KP's young population deserved the same opportunities.

Light rain likely in Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: A new weather system bringing clouds has entered Punjab, with the possibility of light rain in several districts, including Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, and the Pothohar Division. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), while clouds will continue to cover the region, rain chances remain low for most areas, including Lahore, Express News reported. However, the current system is expected to move out of Pakistan by tonight, reducing the chances of further precipitation. In Lahore, the minimum temperature has been recorded at 8 degrees Celsius, with a maximum expected to reach 24 degrees Celsius.

CNS stresses need for global maritime coop

On the sidelines of the AMAN Dialogue, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, held interactive meetings with Heads of Navies and Coast Guards attending the event



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The two-day AMAN Dialogue, a maiden event conducted as an adjunct to

Exercise AMAN 2025, commenced at Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi. The dialogue, organized under the aegis of the Pakistan Navy, has brought together Chiefs/Heads of Navies, Maritime Organizations, and

renowned academicians from around the globe. The inaugural session was attended by the Defence Minister of Pakistan, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, as the Chief Guest. In his welcome address, Chief of the Naval Staff underscored the significance of the AMAN Dialogue and emphasized the need for sharing experiences among maritime nations to formulate actionable strategies for countering emerging maritime threats. Delivering the keynote address, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed applauded Pakistan Navy's efforts in promoting a collaborative approach to tackle complex maritime security challenges. He also highlighted Navy's contributions towards raising awareness about Blue Economy and supporting the socio-economic uplift of coastal communities at national level.

Under the overarching theme, "Secure Seas, Prosperous Future," the AMAN Dialogue features multiple panel discussions and deliberations by Chiefs of Navies and heads of delegations on a wide range of topics, including maritime security, maritime cooperation, blue economy, and the impact of technology on maritime security. The dialogue provides an exclusive platform for global naval leadership, supported by renowned academia, to devise strategies for a secure maritime future. On the sidelines of the AMAN Dialogue, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, held interactive meetings with Heads of Navies and Coast Guards attending the event. These meetings focused on contemporary maritime issues, matters of mutual interest, and prospects for enhanced maritime collaboration.

Parliament lacks legitimacy, created through rigging: Fazl

Fazal reiterated that the true parliament belongs to the people, not to what he described as "fraudulent institutions"

SHAMIM SHAHID

MARDAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has alleged that a global conspiracy including the United States is being hatched to eliminate Islamic seminaries in Pakistan. Addressing a gathering in Takht Bhai, Mardan on Sunday, he reiterated his rejection of the February 8 elections, claiming that the "dark shadow of rigging" still looms over the country. He termed the current parliament as illegitimate, claiming it was formed through large-scale rigging in the February 8 elections. Fazl reiterated that the true parliament belongs to the people, not to what he described as "fraudulent institutions." Expressing solidarity with Palestinians, he hailed their resilience despite more than 50,000 martyrs in Gaza. JUI head also issued a stern warning, declaring that as long as he has the strength, no force can impose Qadianism in

Pakistan. "We have not abandoned our mission and will continue our resistance. The people are my parliament, and we will enter the assemblies while staying in the field," he declared. Expressing concern over delays in implementing the Religious Schools Act in various provinces, Fazlur Rehman stressed that his party believes in solving issues through dialogue rather than confrontation. Reacting to former US President Donald Trump's remarks on Gaza, the JUI-F leader called him the "biggest lunatic in the world," asserting that the global community has rejected his stance. Fazlur Rehman further warned of an alleged scheme to freeze bank accounts under the pretext of registration, calling it a deliberate move to undermine religious institutions. He also asserted that his party remained steadfast in its struggle, which he termed "political jihad." The JUI-F chief vowed to resist any attempts to suppress his movement, cautioning that public outrage could shake the foundations of "fake institutions."

KSA slams Israeli plan of Palestinians' displacement

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Sunday reiterated its categorical rejection of statements regarding the displacement of the Palestinian people from their land, particularly those made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Kingdom's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it rejected "such statements that aim to divert attention from the continuous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian brothers in Gaza, including the ethnic cleansing they are subjected to." The ministry likewise expressed its appreciation of the "condemnation, disapproval and total rejection announced by the brotherly countries" regarding the Israeli leader's comments. "The Kingdom also points out that this extremist, occupying mentality does not understand what the Palestinian land means to the brotherly people of Palestine and their emotional, historical and legal connection to this land, and it does not think that the Palestinian people deserve to live in the first place, as it has completely destroyed the Gaza Strip, killed and injured more than 160,000, most of them children and women, without the slightest human feeling or moral responsibility," the Saudi Foreign Ministry statement said. "The Kingdom affirms that the Palestinian people have a right to their land, and they are not intruders or immigrants to it who can be expelled whenever the brutal Israeli occupation wishes. "The Kingdom notes that the proponents of these extremist ideas are the ones who prevented Israel from accepting peace by refusing peaceful coexistence, rejecting the peace initiatives adopted by the Arab countries, and systemati-

cally practicing injustice toward the Palestinian people for more than 75 years, with disregard to the truth, justice, law and the values established in the United Nations Charter, including the human's right to live in dignity on his land," the statement added. The Saudi Foreign Ministry also reiterated that the right of the Palestinian people "will remain firmly established and no one will be able to take it away from them no matter how long it takes." It added lasting peace would only be achieved by "returning to the logic of reason and accepting the principle of peaceful coexistence through the two-state solution." Egypt earlier condemned as "irresponsible" statements by Israeli officials suggesting establishing a Palestinian state on Saudi territory, with its Foreign Ministry emphasizing that the suggestion was a "direct infringement of Saudi sovereignty." It added that the Kingdom's security was a "red line for Egypt." The Jordanian Foreign Ministry described the Israeli remarks as "inflammatory and a clear violation of international law, relevant UN resolutions and state sovereignty." Spokesperson Sufian Qudah criticized what he described as Israel's continued provocative policies and rhetoric, stressing that such statements reflect an exclusionary and hostile approach that undermines regional stability, Petra reported. Jordan, he added, stands in full solidarity with Saudi Arabia against these statements, urging international actors to take a firm stance against irresponsible rhetoric that threatens peace efforts. The UAE also strongly condemned and denounced Netanyahu's "reprehensible and provocative" statements regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state in Saudi Arabia and "affirmed its categorical rejection of these unacceptable statements."

Aga Khan laid to rest in Egypt's Aswan

CAIRO: Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, the 49th hereditary Imam of the Ismailis, was laid to rest in Egypt's Aswan city at a private burial ceremony on Sunday, according to a statement issued by the community. In the statement, the community said Prince Rahim al-Hussaini Aga Khan - the 50th hereditary Imam - and his family were present during the ceremony. "The Governor of Aswan facilitated and participated in a dignified procession through the city to the banks of the River Nile," it said. Shah Karim's casket was transferred by boat in a ceremonial crossing to the mausoleum of Mawlana Sultan Mahomed Shah. The casket was carried by hand to the hilltop mausoleum, where Shah Karim's body was interred. After the ceremony, leaders expressed condolences to the family, and the Governor of Aswan presented Prince Rahim with a symbolic key to the City of Aswan as a mark of respect. A new mausoleum for Mawlana Shah Karim will be constructed as his final resting place on land adjacent to the existing structure, the statement added. - DNA

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