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Sharaa calls Trump Gaza plan 'serious crime' bound to fail

Detailed News On Page-07

CJP Afridi briefs IMF mission on judicial reforms

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Klaasen wants Pakistan-less tri-series final

Detailed News On Page-06



PM meets MBZ, others

Pakistan, UAE seek to deepen economic coop

Terming UAE as Pakistan's trusted ally, the Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's pro-investment policies aimed at facilitating UAE's investors in key sectors such as energy, infrastructure, mining and IT

DNA

PM at WGS

ABU DHABI: Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have discussed to explore the opportunities to enhance bilateral ties in ways that serve mutual interest. This was discussed during a meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at Qasr Al Shati in Abu Dhabi. The Prime Minister was welcomed by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir was also present in the meeting. During the meeting, the two sides also discussed ways to deepen cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE. The talks focused on economic, trade, and development fields, alongside other areas that align with both nations' visions for sustainable economic growth and prosperity. The meeting provided an opportunity to address the significance of the World Governments Summit in identifying global trends in governance and presenting actionable strategies to enhance government preparedness in navigating global transformations. The discussions underscored the importance of leveraging these shifts to accelerate development and build a better future for all. The two sides also exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest, with a focus on recent developments in the Middle East. They emphasized the need for intensified international efforts for a comprehensive and

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan stands at 'defining moment'

Economic stability is a means and not an end, says Premier Shehbaz

DNA

DUBAI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday highlighted the incumbent government's achievements to stabilise the country's economy, saying that Pakistan stands at a "defining moment of economic transformation". "Despite huge challenges, placing our economy on a firm footing has been a central plank of what we have achieved in Pakistan in the last year," the premier said while addressing the World Governments Summit 2025 in Dubai. He pointed out that headline inflation has dropped to 2.4% in January this year — the lowest in nine years while the interest rate was capped at 12%, a major stimulus for private sector credit. "Economic stability is a means and not the end...Our five Es under National Economic Transformation Plan, Uraan Pakistan, is driving

Continued on Page 06



ABU DHABI: Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif meets President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at Qasr Al Shati. — DNA

Erdogan to arrive in Pak today

PM Shehbaz and President Erdogan to co-chair 7th session of HLSCC, says FO

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is arriving in Pakistan today (February 12) on a two-day official visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Foreign Office (FO) confirmed in a statement on Tuesday. According to FO spokesperson Shafiqat Ali Khan, President Erdogan would be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers and senior officials, as well as corporate leaders. During the two-day visit — Feb 12-13 — PM Shehbaz and President Erdogan would co-chair the 7th Session of the Pakistan-Turkiye

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Lawmakers secure massive salary hike

Bill proposes to increase salaries of Members of National Assembly and Senators from Rs218,000 to Rs519,000

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentarians' remunerations are set to swell by a staggering 138% as the Members of Parliament Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill 2025 sailed through the National Assembly with a majority vote on Tuesday. The bill proposes raising parliamentarians' salaries from Rs218,000 to Rs519,000, aligning them with federal secretaries' pay. Already approved by the Senate, the bill now awaits the President of Pakistan's

Continued on Page 06

FO confirms

Sixteen Pakistanis confirmed dead in Libya boat tragedy

FO said that a team from the Pakistani Embassy in Tripoli visited Zawiya city and gathered information after meeting local officials and the Zawiya hospital

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) confirmed on Tuesday that at least 16 Pakistanis were among the dead after a boat carrying illegal migrants sank near the coast of Libya while 10 are still unaccounted for. The Foreign Office (FO), in a statement, said that a team from the Embassy of Pakistan in Tripoli visited Zawiya city and after meeting local officials and the Zawiya hospital administration, gathered information. "According to unconfirmed reports there were 63 Pakistanis on the boat and so far 16 bodies have been recovered and their Pakistani nationalities established based on their passports," it said. "There are 37 survivors including one in hospital and 33 in police custody. Reportedly, around 10 Pakistanis are missing in the accident. Three of the survivors are in

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Dozens of Pakistanis deported from KSA, UAE, Canada

Meanwhile, immigration authorities at Karachi Airport offloaded 47 passengers bound for 16 different countries

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Around 100 Pakistanis have been deported from six countries, including Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), over various legal and immigration violations. According to sources, Saudi authorities deported five blacklisted individuals, 13 beggars, and five people staying beyond their permitted duration. Additionally, 16 individuals

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After Trump ultimatum

Ceasefire only way to return captives: Hamas

Trump said on Monday he would propose cancelling the ceasefire in Gaza and "let hell break out" if all Israeli captives held by Hamas were not released by midday Saturday

FOREIGN DESK

DOHA: Hamas has denounced US president's call for cancellation of the Gaza ceasefire unless the Palestinian resistance movement frees all remaining Israeli captives in a matter of days, saying Donald Trump must remember that the only way for the return of Israeli captives is to respect the deal. "Trump should know that in order for the ceasefire in Gaza to last, both sides must comply with their obligations. This is the only way to bring back the [Israeli] captives," Sami Abu Zuhri, a high-ranking member

of the Hamas political bureau, said. He added, "The language of threats has no value and only complicates matters." Trump said on Monday he would propose cancelling the ceasefire in Gaza and "let hell break out" if all Israeli captives held by Hamas were not released by midday Saturday. "As far as I'm concerned, if all of the hostages aren't returned by Saturday at 12 o'clock, I think it's an appropriate time. I would say, cancel it and all bets are off and let hell break out. I'd say they ought to be returned by 12 o'clock on Saturday," he said.

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Briefs

President Zardari meets Portuguese counterpart

The two leaders discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation and promoting cultural and people to people relations

DNA

LISBON: President Asif Ali Zardari held a meeting with the President of the Portuguese Republic, Mr Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, at the Palácio Nacional de Belém today. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa warmly welcomed President Asif Ali Zardari at the Palace. The two leaders exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance and emphasized the need to further deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields. President Asif Ali Zardari stated that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Portugal as the two countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. The two leaders discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation and promoting cultural and people to people relations.

PTI to take up 'rigging issue' with IMF

Opposition leader's comments come as a six-member IMF delegation met with CJ Yahya Afridi

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Opposition leader of the National Assembly Omar Ayub has announced that his party will present concerns over the 2024 general elections and the 26th constitutional amendment before the International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation. "We will present the entire matter of the elections before the IMF delegation," Ayub stated. "We will also highlight the issues caused by the 26th amendment."

'Attack' on judiciary

Imran throws weight behind lawyers' movement

PTI to present dossier containing details from past two and half years to IMF delegation, says Faisal Chaudhry

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Former premier and incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan threw his weight behind the lawyers' protest movement against the "unconstitutional" appointment of judges on Tuesday and termed the 26th Amendment an "attack" on the judicial system. His remarks were conveyed to the media outside Rawalpindi's Adiala jail by his legal counsel Faisal Chaudhry. His remarks came a day after the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) approved the appointment of six new judges to the Supreme Court amid a boycott by PTI lawmakers and two senior SC judges. Earlier, three judges — from Sindh, Balochistan, and Lahore — were transferred to the IHC, drawing severe criticism from the legal fraternity. The lawyer community

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CB to decide fate of Imran's letter: CJ Afridi

CJP also meets IMF delegation, briefs Fund members on judicial reforms and court independence

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Yahya Afridi has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's request pertains to Article 184(3) of the Constitution, thus, the matter has been forwarded to the committee and will be handled by the constitutional bench.

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TTP threatens Afghanistan's neighbours: Pakistan warns

"We must sincerely address the terrorist threats from Afghanistan," he added

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: Pakistan is at the forefront of counter-terrorism efforts, fighting not only Da'esh, but also Tehrike Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Majeed Brigade operating from safe havens in Afghanistan, Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN Security Council, as he urged the 15-member body to act against these elements. "This threat of Daesh, TTP and Majeed Brigade is a threat not only to Afghanistan and Pakistan but to the entire region and beyond," the Pakistan envoy said in a debate on the 20th biannual report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security. "We must sincerely address the terrorist threats from Afghanistan," he added. At the same time, Ambassador Akram said the international community has failed to address State terrorism, including the use of State power to suppress legitimate struggles for self-determination or to continue foreign occupation. "There must be

accountability for the violation of fundamental human rights, especially the right to self-determination and in situations of foreign occupation," he said, referring to the suppression of the freedom struggles of Kashmiri and Palestinian people. Opening the debate, UN Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, who heads the Office of Counter-Terrorism, said that Da'esh remains a serious global security threat despite years of sustained efforts to dismantle its operations. "Terrorism remains a significant and evolving threat to global peace and security, one that no State can confront in isolation," he said. In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy also said that terrorist attacks have increased globally, especially across the Middle East, Africa and in and from Afghanistan. "While Al-Qaeda 'core' was decimated in Afghanistan, largely due to Pakistan's efforts, I may mention, several of Al-Qaeda's subsidiaries have emerged elsewhere, including in

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PEDO, EZMDC review proposals for utilization of affordable electricity

PESHAWAR: Pakhtunkhwa Hydel Development Organization (PEDO) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZMDC) discussed proposed framework for transmission lines to explore various suggestions to utilize the locally electricity for industrial sectors at affordable rates here on Tuesday. The meeting was co-chaired by the Special Assistants to KP Chief Minister on Industries and Energy & Power, Abdul Karim Tordher and Tariq Sadozai. Additional Secretary Industries Department, Rehan Gul Khattak, along with officials from the departments of Industry, Energy & Power, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Dispatch Company, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company, Small Industries Development Board and Pakhtunkhwa Hydel Development Organization also attended the meeting. During the meeting, KP-EZMDC officials presented their proposals regarding suitable transmission lines to cater the energy needs of economic zones and industrial parks through various transmission corridors linked to local energy projects. They also proposed the establishment of a company's subsidiary transmission line company to meet the energy requirements of these zones and industrial estates. Furthermore, they suggested providing land at Katlang site within the economic zone for the establishment of a grid station by PEDO, which will facilitate the transmission of power from the Swat and Dir corridors. The PEDO officials also updated the participants of meeting on its plan for the provision of affordable electricity to industries, highlighting upcoming energy projects under the organization. They gave detailed information about the energy projects near to completion. The participants were directed to collaborate and carry out the necessary homework to agree upon a feasible and practical plan for the way forward.—DNA

PHC grants protective bail to KP CM till March 5

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court on Tuesday approved the protective bail request of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur until March 5. A bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Salahuddin heard the plea for protective bail. The petitioner's lawyer and the Advocate General appeared in court, while CM Ali Amin Gandapur was absent. The court emphasized that, as per legal requirements, the petitioner must appear in person. It granted a new date for the hearing but stated that the applicant must be present for the protective bail to be considered further. Following this, the court approved the protective bail request until March 5 and adjourned the hearing.—APP

Iranian Consul General hosts 46th Islamic Revolution event

Nourian highlighted the enduring struggle of the Iranian people in bringing about the revolution and sustaining its vision despite early challenges, including war and prolonged economic sanctions

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Hasan Nourian, Consul General of Iran in Karachi, hosted a grand reception at the Iranian Consulate General to mark the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, diplomats, and officials, reflecting the strong ties between Iran and Pakistan. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Mr. Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh, while Mr. Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh, was also in attendance. In



his welcome address, Mr. Nourian highlighted the enduring struggle of the

Iranian people in bringing about the revolution and sustaining its vision despite

early challenges, including war and prolonged economic sanctions. He expressed gratitude to all dignitaries and guests for their presence and support. Adding to the significance of the occasion, the visiting Commander of the Iranian Navy also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the resilience and progress of the Iranian nation. Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, in his keynote speech, commended the people of Iran for their steadfast determination in the face of adversity. He extended heartfelt congratulations to the Iranian Consul General

al, the government, and the people of Iran on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan. The celebration culminated in a ceremonial cake-cutting, attended by the Consul Generals of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Russia and several other countries. Guests were then treated to a lavish dinner, showcasing the rich cultural hospitality of Iran. The event served as a testament to the deep-rooted friendship and diplomatic ties between Iran and Pakistan, reinforcing shared values and mutual cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Bill boards installed on various locations of the Capital inscribed with Pakistan-Türkiye friendship slogans. The Turkish President arrives in Pakistan today. — Online

Pak, Bahrain enjoy long standing, robust ties: Ayaz

The Speaker National Assembly emphasized the immense potential for growth in trade and investment, particularly within Pakistan's agricultural sector

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday said that Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy longstanding and robust ties deeply rooted in shared religious, cultural and historical values. "These commonalities have fostered a sense of mutual respect and understanding, creating a foundation for fruitful bilateral cooperation across multiple domains. Both countries have consistently worked together to promote regional stability, economic growth, and cultural exchange, establishing a close-knit partnership that has withstood the test of time, he said. He expressed these views during his meeting with Mohamed Ebrahim Mohamed Abdulkadar, Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan at Parliament House. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the pivotal role of proactive Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFGs) in strengthening ties between Pakistan and Bahrain. He noted that making

the Pak-Bahrain PFG active and vibrant would bring parliaments and people closer together. By facilitating direct communication between lawmakers, these exchanges allow both nations to better understand each other's priorities and work collaboratively to address mutual challenges. Parliamentary exchanges also provide a platform to share knowledge, best practices and innovative solutions. On the special invitation of Ayaz Sadiq, the Bahraini parliamentary delegation Ahmed Bin Salman Al Musallam, President of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain will visit Pakistan from February 16 to 19. The Speaker highlighted that such visits are crucial for exploring opportunities in trade, investment, and business. He also mentioned that the Speakers of the four Provincial Assemblies, as well as those from Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, would be especially invited on the

occasion. The inclusion of Provincial Speakers, he added, would enhance the role of provinces in parliamentary diplomacy. The Speaker emphasized the immense potential for growth in trade and investment, particularly within Pakistan's agricultural sector. With its vast arable land, diverse climate, and strategic location, Pakistan is well-positioned to be a key partner for Bahrain in the agricultural and food security industries. "By expanding bilateral trade in these areas, both countries stand to gain from increased market access, technological exchange, and economic diversification. This economic partnership aligns with Bahrain's vision to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on oil exports, offering new avenues for growth across various sectors." In addition to economic collaboration, Ayaz Sadiq highlighted the invaluable contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in Bah-

rain, who play a pivotal role in the development of both countries. The diaspora's involvement spans various sectors, including business, education, healthcare, and construction, contributing significantly to Bahrain's development while simultaneously creating strong economic and cultural links between the two nations. Their involvement also serves as a bridge for deepening social and cultural ties, promoting mutual understanding and collaboration at the grassroots level, he added. Mohamed Abdulkadar expressed appreciation for the Speaker's sentiments, emphasizing that parliamentary exchanges are essential to fostering greater bilateral cooperation. The ambassador highlighted the importance of these exchanges not only in strengthening diplomatic ties but also in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue.—DNA

Ahsan vows to achieve 90% literacy rate

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday reiterated the government's strong commitment to achieving a 90 percent literacy rate, calling it essential for sustainable national development. Speaking at the launch ceremony of Pakistan's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mid-term review report, he expressed serious concerns about the current state of primary education in the country, mentioning that nearly 2.5 million children remained out of school. He was of the view that cognitive development was one of the most important factors for children's growth, yet it was lacking in the current education system. He minister pointed out the disparity in higher education rates between Pakistan and its neighbors: while Pakistan's rate stands at just 13 percent, India's is 30 percent, Bangladesh's is 35 percent, and China has reached 70 percent. "Education is indispensable for development, and it must be accompanied by increased resources and improved governance," he said. Ahsan Iqbal also regretted that, under the tenure of the previous PTI government, the education budget was slashed to just 1.5 percent of GDP. However, he noted that the PML-N government has been gradually increasing the education budget since 2022. "Both the federation and the provinces must allocate adequate resources for education," he stressed. While acknowledging that indicators in the District Education Report had improved, he urged that the serious flaws identified within the system should be addressed as a top priority. Under the URAAN Pakistan initiative, the minister highlighted that education had been prioritized within the national agenda. He also reminded the audience that Pakistan would celebrate its 100th year of independence in 2047, urging the nation to unite in its efforts to achieve national development goals. "Development is impossible without peace, stability, continuity in policies and reforms. In the past, Vision-2010 and Vision-2025 were squandered, but now continuity in policies is crucial," he added. The minister cautioned that Pakistan was among the top countries globally in terms of hepatitis and diabetes prevalence and was one of the three most polio-affected nations. Ahsan Iqbal expressed optimism about the country's future, declaring that the government aimed to pay off the debt accumulated over the past seven years within the next 22 years. "And every child will be in school within the next five years, and 100 percent enrollment will be ensured at the primary level," he vowed.—DNA

Efforts afoot for women to excel in scientific, technical fields: Maryam

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the role of women in science and technology is not only necessary but indispensable. In her special message on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, she stressed the importance of equipping young girls with modern scientific and IT skills to drive progress, adding that the Punjab government is taking significant steps to advance women and girls in scientific and technical fields. CM Maryam Nawaz highlighted the Honhar Scholarship Program, which provides full tuition coverage for thousands of female students, particularly in scientific disciplines. "Now, no girl in Punjab will be deprived of pursuing her dreams due to lack of resources," she assured. The chief minister explained that the Laptop Scheme aims to provide female students with access to modern technology, enabling them to enhance their educational and professional abilities. "Through this initiative, our daughters will strengthen their skills and contribute to the global digital economy," she said, emphasizing the growing role of women in the digital market. Maryam Nawaz also announced the launch of a free Wi-Fi program in Lahore, specifically benefiting public spaces and female students. She noted, "Pakistan's devel-

opment is deeply tied to the empowerment of women." The CM said, "We will ensure every facility is available to our daughters to help them excel in science, technology, and IT at global standards." She added, "We are building a Punjab where women are at the forefront of development, leading the way in progress." Moreover, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday visited Government Pilot Higher Secondary School to launch the largest government school science and technology show. The CM distributed cash prizes among the winners of Jashn-e-STEAM in eight categories. Students and their teachers of Hafizabad, Jhang, DG Khan and Multan received prizes. CM Maryam Nawaz was welcome by the scouts with enthusiastic applause on her arrival. She got out of the vehicle and expressed affection for the children. She shook hands with the students playing school band. Children dressed in vibrant regional costumes welcomed her by playing the tambourine. The CM inspected the Jashn-e-STEAM exhibition. She had a detailed look at the stalls of schools of all districts, inspected models made by the students, and congratulated them. Students presented her sketches, paintings and pieces of calligraphy.—APP

Health units to be well-maintained for patients

KHANEWAL: Provincial Parliamentary Secretary for Communication and Works Muhammad Saleem Hanif vowed that the Punjab government would turn health units an ideal for all kinds of treatment for patients in the province. Addressing a meeting of the District Health Council here on Tuesday, he said some exclusive measures for betterment of the DHQ hospital were adopted with dedication and commitment. The parliamentary secretary directed to accommodate guardians of the patients in the hospitals' premises as well with dignity and respect. He announced to award certificates for staffs who would maintain cleanliness in the hospital under the given SOPs. The medical superintendent of the hospital, director development and other officers were also present.—APP

40,000-liters fuel oil tanker overturns

MULTAN: 40,000 liters of oil tanker overturned near Lal Haveli Qadirpur Rawan, here on Tuesday. According to police spokesperson, the accident occurred due to the driver fell asleep while driving and the oil tanker overturned. Oil tanker contained 30,000 liters of petrol and 10,000 liters of diesel were leaked onto the road. Rescue teams spilled oil was carefully transferred to another tanker to minimize the risk of fire. Rescue teams in coordination with the district administration cordoned off the area and started operation.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

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



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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122
& Rescue Services.....4451122
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Motorway Police.....9270601-20
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WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Bapsi Sidhwa remembered for her literary contributions

The attendees reflected on her role in bringing Pakistani and Parsi literature to the global stage, emphasizing her ability to weave historical events into deeply personal and engaging narratives. Many highlighted how her writings provided a voice to the marginalized, particularly women, and explored the complexities of historical and social change

DNA

ISLAMABAD An event to pay tribute to renowned Pakistani author Bapsi Sidhwa was held in Islamabad today, organised by her nephew, MNA Ispahanyar M. Bhandara. Mr Bhandara is the only son of Ms Sidhwa's brother the late Minoo Bhandara (1938-2008), and the CEO of their family business the Murree Brewery founded in 1861. The event was held at the Multipurpose Hall of the Islamabad Club and was attended by Islamabad's literary community as well as friends of the family. A panel of esteemed guests spoke at the event. They included Ms Perin Boga, former literature and drama teacher at Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore and a family friend of Bapsi Sidhwa and the Bhandara family; Senator Walid Iqbal, whose parents Justice Javed Iqbal and Nasira Iqbal were also friends of Bapsi Sidhwa; Harris Khaliq, Secretary-General/CEO of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and also an award-winning poet; and Dr Arif Azad who has written widely on culture, politics, and literature and is also a health and public policy consultant. The event began with a welcome note by Ispahanyar Bhandara who remembered his aunt fondly. He recalled her relationship with her brother Minoo and praised her

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Senator Walid Iqbal, MNA Ispahanyar Bhandara and others posing for a picture on the occasion of a Memorial Refence for renowned novelist and intellectual Bapsi Sidhwa. Speakers paid glowing tributes to late Bapsi Sidhwa and praised her for her iconic work.— DNA

contribution to Pakistani literature in English. The MC of the afternoon's proceedings Nilfar Afridi Qazi followed and invited the panel to take their seats. The panel segment was curated by Anna R. Ali, who also moderated the discussion. Ms Perin Boga began with a presentation about the milieu that Bapsi Sidhwa grew up in, the Parsi community to which she belonged and how her writing took flight. Pegging her presentation on some of the architectural delights of Lahore she provided a pictorial journey through

Bapsi Sidhwa's beloved Lahore augmented by images taken from FS Ajjazuddin's book *Forgotten Images* and the painting of Commercial Buildings by Ijaz Anwar. This was the city which nurtured Bapsi Sidhwa to write her first book *The Crow Eaters* in 1978, followed by *The Bride* in 1982. Senator Walid Iqbal recalled his parents' friendship with Bapsi Sidhwa, reminding the audience that it was his father who helped Bapsi self-publish *The Crow Eaters* in Lahore before it was published in the UK, leading to Ms



ISLAMABAD: MNA and Parliamentary Secretary Ispahanyar Bhandara presenting a set of books of Bapsi Sidhwa to representative of the Islamabad Club, for the Islamabad Club Library.— DNA

Sidhwa's international acclaim. Harris Khaliq and Dr Arif Azad also shared their views on the themes of Bapsi Sidhwa's work – the complexity of Partition, pluralism, women's rights, the lives of minorities – and her rich storytelling that brought to life a wide gamut of characters and places. Video tributes were sent in by Feroze Bhandara, Bapsi Sidhwa's younger brother who lives in Houston, Texas; Ameena Saiyid (OBE, SD), Publisher and Managing Director of Lightstone Publications and founder of Adab Festival;

Muneeza Shamsie, editor and critic and the author of a literary history, *Hybrid Tapestries* and editor of four anthologies of Pakistani writing in English. And finally, Sadia Uqaili, a Pakistani American artist, and filmmaker, educator and activist, and the producer of Bapsi – a feature-length documentary on the life and work of Bapsi Sidhwa. This was followed by a six-minute clip of the documentary, some of it showing a snippet of Bapsi Sidhwa's life in Houston, Texas, USA where she lived after leaving Pakistan.

SECP grants license to first digital, online-only securities broker in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has granted a license to Tamkeen Securities (Pvt) Ltd, Pakistan's first fully digital, online-only securities broker, marking a significant milestone. The award of license marks a significant leap toward modernizing Pakistan's capital markets, enhancing accessibility, and democratizing investment opportunities for retail and institutional investors nationwide, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. The newly licensed digital brokerage house will allow investors to open accounts and execute trades, completely eliminating the need for physical visits, paperwork, or traditional brokerage channels. This initiative aligns with SECP's strategic vision to accelerate digital transformation, promote financial inclusion, and strengthen Pakistan's capital markets through innovation. With this development, Pakistan joins the ranks of global markets that have successfully implemented fully digital trading platforms, catering to the evolving needs of tech-savvy investors and boosting retail participation in the stock market.—APP

Dr Aafia case IHC seeks reply from govt on declarations, open letter

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) has asked the government to file a written reply to two declarations and an open letter that were filed before the court. As per details, a single bench of Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaque Khan heard the constitutional petition of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui. Imran Shafique, advocate for the petitioner appeared before the court in person with petitioner. Clive A. Stafford Smith appeared through a video link. Zainab Janjua, Amicus, Barrister Munawar Iqbal Duggal, Additional Attorney General, Abdul Khaliq Thind, DAG and Yasir Arfat Abbasi, AAG Muhammad Hamza, Assistant Director-US, MoFA also appeared before the court. The court in its order said: Mr Smith has filed the latest declaration dated 30.1.2025. The CM also attaches a declaration of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, and an open letter to the government of Pakistan, titled 'Bring Dr Aafia Siddiqui home - You have forsaken your daughter, it is time to correct betrayal', by Dr Omar Suleiman a highly respected Imam in Dallas Fort Worth, which to be replied by the government. The judge wrote: "I can't but resist reproducing the following passage in Dr Omar Suleiman's open letter which reads as follows: 'Former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark has described the case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui as the worst case of individual injustice he had ever seen. And after everything she has endured - kidnapping, imprisonment, torture- Aafia has been described as the most wronged woman on the planet.' The court order continued: Further, it is also quite obvious from Mr. Smith's declaration that Mr. Hamza, who though has been very proactive in his support for the case, is not high up enough in the chain of command in MoFA. In the previous orders, this Court had passed the directions for senior officers of MoFA to participate in the proceedings but they have dropped away. From now onwards, the Additional Secretary (Americas) will participate in each and every hearing. If he seeks exemption from personal appearance on any particular date, he would have to file an application in advance. "Learned AAG is directed to file a written reply to the two declarations and the open letter referred above two working days before the next date of hearing. The case was relisted on 21.02.2025 for 10:30 am.—DNA

OGRA takes action against LPG exploiters

The teams were also routed to visit Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan premises where fire erupted in LPG plants causing huge losses to exchequer and public lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has taken serious note of the illegal decanting, theft of gas and mixing of carbon dioxide (CO2) with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) with other safety standard

erupted in LPG plants causing huge losses to exchequer and public lives. OGRA LPG & Enforcement teams in coordination with local administrators have raided four sites in Sindh Province and discovered illegal mixing of CO2 with LPG and sealed all the sites immediately, and lodged FIRs against the concerned individuals. The teams

of CO2 was being done. The sites have been sealed and FIRs have been registered. The illegal manufacturing sites at Gujranwala were also apprehended and FIRs have been registered against the culprits. OGRA has decided to exhaust all legal options to eliminate these illegal activities and has written letters to Chief Secretaries, Commis-



issues and routed its teams to visit the identified areas and take appropriate action as per rules/regulations. CO2 mixing with LPG has been traced in various locations of Sindh province, especially at Khairpur Mirus, Ghotki, Pano Aqil & Ranipur. And manufacturing of substandard cylinders has been traced in the different locations of Gujranwala. The teams were also routed to visit Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan premises where fire

have also prepared reports on the negligence of local handlers causing blasts in Multan & Dera Ghazi Khan and have sealed three illegal manufacturing sites of sub-standard LPG cylinders in Gujranwala. OGRA's LPG & Enforcement team visited the LPG sites at; Thehri Pass Khairpur, Shah Hussain Bypass Khairpur, National Highway Ranipur, and spotted an illegal site at Ghotki where theft of gas, illegal decanting and mix-

tioner of Sukkur and the Custom Collectorate, urging them to ensure safety at the local level by curtailing the illegal sale of LPG in the area. It is pertinent to mention here that LPG is highly flammable, and the mixing of CO2 poses fatal risks, including adverse environmental impacts. CO2 has higher pressure than LPG, which can cause serious safety concerns as equipment calibrated for LPG may not function properly.

NA body emphasizes for reassessing high-cost project

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance on Tuesday emphasized the need to reassess the high-cost project, due to its low profitability. The 10th meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue was held in the Parliament House, under the Chairmanship of Syed Naveed Qamar, MNA/Chairman. The Pak Mint Project is being continued solely for historical reasons, and allocating a substantial amount to it during a period of financial constraints would not be wise, said Chairman Syed Naveed Qamar. Bilal Azhar Kayani, Convener of the Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, presented the report of the sub-committee on "The Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024", which was subsequently adopted by the committee. The Chair emphasized that the Revenue Division should revisit Clause (5)(a) to provide greater clarity on the term "cash and equivalent assets." He also directed the Revenue Division to finalize the updated online system/mobile app and present a demonstration to the committee within two months. The Chairman and Members commended the hard work, dedication, and thorough efforts of the Sub-Committee Convener, its esteemed Members, Special Invitees, and all relevant Stakeholders in the preparation of the report. He acknowledged their commitment to ensuring a comprehensive and well-structured review of the proposed amendments. In his remarks, the Convener also expressed his gratitude to all participants, including the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials, for their exceptional cooperation and valuable contributions throughout the process. The successful adoption of the report marks a significant step towards refining and improving the tax framework, reflecting the collective efforts of policymakers, experts, and key stakeholders in strengthening the country's financial and economic landscape. The Committee further Considered "The Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024" (Government Bill), and recommended following Amendments in the new section 114C of Amendments of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001. In section 114C, Clause (2) paragraph (a) be replaced as follows (a) Purchase of all rickshaws, motorcycles and tractors.—DNA

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Briefs

'Govt tried to negotiate, opposition refused'

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik, on Tuesday said that the government made serious efforts to hold talks with the opposition, but they refused to negotiate. Talking to a private news channel, he said the government held three meetings and even offered a 10-month plan, but the fourth meeting could not happen because the opposition refused to join. Replying to a query regarding the protest of lawyers, he said major legal bodies, including the Supreme Court Bar Association and Pakistan Bar Council, supported the process, he claimed, while adding that only a small group, linked to a political party, was protesting. He rejected comparisons to the 2007-09 lawyers' movement by saying that the movement was against a dictator, while today, Parliament has the right to make legal changes. He added that protests based on political motives would not change anything. "The judges have been appointed, and the system is moving forward," he said. Barrister Aqeel also dismissed concerns over international monitoring. He said visits by organizations like the IMF were routine and followed legal procedures.—APP

PTA, FIA, conduct raids against foreign SIM sellers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FAI) (Cyber Crime Wing) jointly conducted a series of coordinated nationwide raids against sellers involved in the unlawful sale of active international SIM cards. These actions were part of an ongoing effort to combat fraudulent telecommunications activities and ensure national security, said a news release. The raids carried out across multiple locations, including Abbottabad, Skardu, Peshawar, Lahore, and Sialkot, targeted individuals and entities engaged in the unauthorized distribution and sale of international SIM cards being used for illicit activities, including fraud and unverified communications. Several suspects have been apprehended, and a significant number of illegally activated SIM cards have been seized. PTA and FIA were closely monitoring the illicit trade of active SIM cards, which poses a substantial risk to public safety by enabling anonymous and untraceable communications. Using these SIMs for illegal purposes, such as cybercrime, financial fraud, abduction, and other unlawful activities, has raised concerns among security agencies. Authorities had urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious SIM card sales. Strict regulatory measures are being reinforced to prevent unauthorized SIM distribution, and violators will face severe legal consequences.—APP

Naqvi for swift completion of F-8 Jinnah Avenue flyover

Interior Minister ordered the immediate removal of debris around the project site and stressed that any shortcomings in the beautification work would not be tolerated. He also instructed that work on the connecting roads under the flyover should be expedited.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the F-8 Jinnah Avenue Interchange project in Islamabad and inspected the finishing work of the under-construction flyover. During the visit, he set a deadline for 100% completion of the project by February 18. Interior Minister emphasized the swift completion of all project components, particularly the connecting roads and landscaping. He also met with the workers working on the project and appreciated their hard work. The workers informed the Interior Minister that they were working round the clock to meet the deadline. He praised their efforts and encouraged them to continue working with dedication. Interior Minister ordered the immediate removal of debris around the project site and stressed that any shortcomings in the beautification work would not be tolerated. He also instructed that work on the connecting roads under the flyover should



be expedited. Federal Secretary of Interior Muhammad Khurram Agha, Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa, IG Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon, contractors, and relevant officials were also present on the occasion. The project director briefed the Minister on the progress of the project.

Crack down on illegal wall chalking to preserve city's aesthetic

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Islamabad on Tuesday launched a campaign against illegal wall chalking and unauthorized advertisements to maintain the capital's visual appeal. Despite existing regulations, violators are facing strict legal action, including case registrations and arrests. According to a spokesman for the ICT administration, the district administration is intensifying its efforts to keep Islamabad clean and visually appealing. A city-wide campaign is underway to curb the practice of wall chalking, which has been a persistent issue. In this regard, all Assistant Commissioners have been directed to conduct crackdowns in their respective areas to ensure compliance with the ban. Meanwhile, the administration has registered cases against painters and advertisers who continue to engage in wall chalking despite the prohibition. Furthermore, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has appealed to citizens to support the administration's efforts to maintain the city's beauty. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the ban and urged painters to avoid any involvement in wall-chalking activities. The DC's call for cooperation highlights the collective responsibility of both the administration and citizens in preserving the city's aesthetic. The ongoing actions aim to send a clear message that violations will not be tolerated, and those who flout the rules will face legal consequences. This campaign is part of a broader initiative to enhance the overall environment of the federal capital. By addressing the issue of wall chalking, the administration hopes to improve the city's appearance and ensure that Islamabad remains a model of cleanliness and order. The spokesman stated that the district administration's proactive measures against illegal wall chalking underscore its commitment to maintaining the city's visual standards. Citizens are encouraged to play their part by adhering to the regulations and supporting the administration's efforts. Together, the goal is to keep Islamabad clean, beautiful, and free from unauthorized advertisements.

CTP issue alternative traffic plan

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government is going to start construction of an underpass on Rawalpindi Mall Road soon and City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has prepared a comprehensive alternative traffic plan to maintain uninterrupted traffic flow. Additional traffic police personnel will be deployed on Mall Road, while the citizens have been requested to use alternative routes during the construction period. According to a CTP spokesman, the Mall Road will be temporarily closed from MH Hospital to TM Chowk during the construction work. In view of this closure, steps have been taken to divert traffic

to alternative routes. Traffic going from MH Chowk to TM Chowk will be diverted to Haidar Road parallel to Mall Road, from where the vehicles will be able to easily move towards Murree Road and Kutchery Chowk. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Beenish Fatima said that additional personnel have been deployed on alternative routes during the construction of the underpass so that traffic flow could be maintained and the citizens do not face any difficulties. He further said that the citizens should follow the advisory of the CTP and use alternative routes to avoid any hassle during the construction work.

The CTO urged the citizens to follow the instructions issued by the Traffic Police and in case of any kind of problem or difficulty, contact the CTP Rwp social media handle (@ctrwp) or helpline no 051-9274843. The completion of this project will not only improve the traffic flow on Mall Road but also the overall road condition of Rawalpindi city will also improve. The CTP has assured that all possible steps are being taken for the safe and comfortable travel of the citizens. The motorists are requested to use alternative routes during the construction, obey traffic rules, and contact the CTP immediately in case of any emergency.—APP

Police arrest 4 kite sellers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police while conducting raids in different areas managed to arrest four accused and recovered 500 kites and five kite flying string rolls, said a Police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi are making efforts to arrest kite sellers and flyers. He said that Bani police arrested Numan and seized 230 kites and string rolls while Pirwahai police rounded up Nadeem Ahmed for having 210 kites and three string rolls. Saddar Wah police netted an accused namedly Qadir with 100 kites and Saddar Baroni police arrested Nadeem for possessing 15 kites and a string roll. The spokesman informed that Rawalpindi district police on the directives of CTP Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani are also organizing awareness walks in different areas against kite flying and aerial firing. The aim of the walks was to provide awareness to the citizens about the harms of the kite flying and its prevention. Special awareness pamphlets were distributed during the walks and awareness banners were also displayed at different points.—APP

High expectations, communication gaps ruin marriages

ISLAMABAD: Psychologist and CEO of Psych Infinity, Kiran Aamir Tuesday said clashes were normal part of any marriage, but most marital troubles stem from unrealistic expectations and poor communication. Talking to APP she said love marriages often see more conflicts as partners assume they already had perfect compatibility and understanding she said that such partners expect perfection without discussing their expectations. Explaining the first red flag in the marital relationship, she said dissatisfaction with oneself, one's partner or the relationship was the initial marker. "Behavioral changes like constant quietness, frequent quarrels, excessive complaining or difficulty expressing feelings are clear indicators that something is wrong", she maintained. Not all conflicts are bad, Kiran said adding, "If minor clashes bring partners closer, they're healthy but if they create distance, it's time to address the issues". The psychologist explained the evolution of marriage over time and said that marriage has shifted from an economic arrangement to a romantic partnership. "With more women becoming financially independent, marriage now revolves around companionship, intimacy and mutual support during tough times", she highlighted. Kiran stressed that mediation in relationships should only happen with mutual consent and couples should consult someone who is objective and understands their lifestyle. When it comes to professional counselling, she clarified that psychologists don't make decisions for their clients instead, they help couples explore conflicts from new perspectives and empathize with each other. "Most people seek help because they want to stay together but can't resolve their issues alone," she said and warned that therapy can't fix problems if one partner completely lacks the will to work on the relationship.—DNA

ANF recovers over 55 kg drugs in 3 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations recovered over 55 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that 55.200 kg drugs worth over 5.8 million were recovered in three operations conducted in Panjgur, Gujranwala and Islamabad. 36 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in Panjgur, Balochistan and accused was arrested during the operation. 13.2 kg hashish and 3.6 kg opium hidden in a secret cavity of a vehicle checked near M-1 Motorway, Islamabad and an accused was arrested. In third operation, 550 grams opium, 1.5 kg ice and 440 intoxicated tablets were recovered from 4 suspects near Sialkot Bypass, Gujranwala. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.—APP

RDA inflows rise to \$9b in Jan

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$9.564 billion by the end of January 2025 as compared to US \$9.342 billion by December (2024) end. The data showed that the inflows of remittances during January were recorded at US\$ 222 million as compared to US\$ 203 million in December and US\$ 186 million in November 2024, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. According to the data, almost 778,697 accounts registered under the programme by the end of January 2025. By the end of January, overseas Pakistanis have invested US \$479 million in Naya Pakistan Certificates, US \$799 in Naya Pakistan Islamic Certificates, and US \$59 million in Roshan Equity Investment.—APP

Seminar to enhance food safety standards for local bakers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) recently organized an awareness seminar for the Nan Bai Association, aiming to address challenges faced by local bakers and improve food safety standards in the Federal Capital. The event, held at the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, brought together key stakeholders, including business leaders, traders, and IFA officials, to discuss ways to ensure the delivery of hygienic food to citizens. Deputy Director Operations of Islamabad Food Authority, Dr. Tahira Siddiqui, led the seminar, which was attended by prominent figures from the local business community. Among the attendees were Muhammad Awais Sati, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders

and Small Industries, Senior Vice President Sheikh Tayyab Saeed, Vice President and General Secretary of the Jamiat AlQuresh Meat Welfare Association Sardar Zaheer Ahmed, and Chairman Founder Group Saqib Taj Abbasi, President of the Capital Nan Bai Association Islamabad, Sajjad Ali Abbasi. The event also saw participation from other influential business leaders and traders. During the seminar, traders highlighted the challenges they face in complying with food safety regulations and shared their suggestions for improvement. Dr. Tahira Siddiqui acknowledged the efforts of the business community in delivering food that meets health standards and assured them of the IFA's continued support in addressing their concerns. She emphasized the importance of collaboration between the authority and trad-

ers to ensure the provision of safe and hygienic food to the public. The seminar featured a detailed presentation by the IFA team, focusing on the importance of adhering to health and safety standards in food preparation and distribution. They discussed the topics such as improving food quality, streamlining licensing procedures, and exploring opportunities for business growth. On the occasion, participants praised the IFA's efforts and offered recommendations for further enhancing food safety measures in the future. Dr. Tahira Siddiqui reiterated the IFA's commitment to resolving traders' issues and improving food quality. She assured attendees that the authority would take all necessary steps to support the business community while prioritizing the delivery of safe food to citizens. Meanwhile, the leadership of the

Chamber also pledged to work closely with the IFA to address traders' concerns and implement measures for better food safety standards. A significant portion of the seminar was dedicated to educating bakers about hygiene practices and the importance of maintaining high food quality standards. The IFA team provided a comprehensive briefing on the licensing process, ensuring that traders were well-informed about regulatory requirements. This initiative aims to simplify compliance for small businesses while safeguarding public health. Traders acknowledged the authority's efforts in addressing their challenges and expressed optimism about future collaborations. The seminar served as a platform for open dialogue, fostering a sense of partnership between the IFA and the local business community.

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Operation Gladio

OPERATION GLADIO' is the collective name for a notorious Cold War-era program whereby Anglo-American intelligence services and NATO, in conjunction with mafia elements and fascist paramilitaries, constructed a pan-European nexus of clandestine "stay behind" armed resistance units. Their ostensible purpose was to remain ever-poised to respond to potential future Soviet invasion. In reality, these guerrilla factions carried out false flag attacks, assassinations, robberies, mass casualty bombings, and other incendiary acts to discredit the Western left, while fomenting a "strategy of tension". Their objective was simple: "You were supposed to attack civilians, women, children, innocent people from outside the political arena. [This would] force the public to turn to the state and ask for greater security...People would willingly trade their freedom for the security of being able to walk the streets, go on trains or enter a bank. This was the political logic behind the bombings. They remain unpunished because the state cannot condemn itself." This candid explanation was provided by an Italian fascist, jailed for life in 1984 for a car bombing 12 years earlier that killed three police officers, and injured two. The attack was intended to be blamed on the Red Brigades, a left-wing militant group. This false flag's unraveling played a significant role in subsequently blowing the Operation wide open publicly. However, three-and-a-half decades later, much remains unclear and uncertain about Gladio, and the evidential trail went cold long ago. In November 2024, The Grayzone exposed how a cloak-and-dagger Ministry of Defence-created cell of military and intelligence veterans, dubbed Project Alchemy, is charged with "keeping Ukraine fighting...at all costs". Since the proxy war's first days, the unit has strategised and orchestrated a vast array of belligerent acts, both covert and overt, to escalate the conflict and prevent a negotiated settlement. Chief among their initial recommendations was the creation of a "stay behind", Gladio-style force, to carry out assassinations and sabotage in Russian territory. During the interviews, Cossiga revealed these "special services" were born following a tour of Europe, where he studied "different models" of special forces units for inspiration. Repeated visits to the base camp of Britain's SAS, where he was shown "mock-up villages" used to train soldiers deployed to Northern Ireland during London's brutal "counterinsurgency" against the province's Catholic minority, convinced him to "opt for the British model". Cossiga explained, "the meanest of all were the British" - and besides, if Gladio's activities ever came to public light: "I could always defend myself by saying I had chosen the model used in the oldest parliamentary democracy in the world." Despite all this, and a 1959 Italian intelligence agency report stating plainly "domestic threats" were a dedicated "stay behind" target, Cossiga vehemently refuted any suggestion Operation Gladio was ever "intended to combat subversion" by local political elements. Its sole purpose, he insisted, was to "resist invasion" by the Soviet Union, which never materialised. Yet, Cossiga's unconvincing veil of denial slipped somewhat when asked whether he believed it possible for security and intelligence agencies "to act without the implicit or explicit approval of a government": Yes it is. A certain autonomy exists, and it's not as if an intelligence service has to tell its government what it does.

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Trump's new gilded age

US President Donald Trump concluded his inaugural address with the boast "our golden age has just begun". However, as some observers have noted, he could be more likely to start a new Gilded Age if he keeps obsessing over late 19th-century US domestic and foreign policies. Who better than Mark Twain, the creator of the term, to shed light on the future implied by this phrase? When there are shadows of inequality, oligarchy, imperialism and reckless competition hanging over us again, revisiting the classics can help foster vigilance and reflection. Echoing Twain's recurring themes, the current US economy displays signs of progress with technological advancements, yet daunting challenges persist. Inequality, inflation and a much-speculated stock market bubble have fuelled voter dissatisfaction, one of many reasons for their choice of Trump over Kamala Harris. Notably, the income gap has made a U-turn since the 1970s and now reached late 19th-century levels. Despite Trump's re-election disappointing many, his victory mirrors a desire for change among the middle and working class. Meanwhile, despotism, economic disparity and corruption are on the rise. Five days after outgoing US president Joe Biden warned about these in his farewell speech, billionaires Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg witnessed another billionaire's swearing-in. Moreover, speculators seem to have found a new promised land. Two days later, when asked about his newly launched cryptocurrency at the first press conference, Trump replied, "several billion - that's peanuts for these guys". Trump is signalling his shift to imperialism by ordering the renaming of the country's highest peak and making claims on more territories. Meanwhile, exiting several UN bodies and halting foreign aid once again reveals his inherent isolationism. The judgment of which path can "make America great again" will be made by growing arrogance and opportunism, as indicated by a far more "me first" attitude in his second inaugural address. Twain at one point supported the belief in America's "manifest destiny" to expand its territory, but later the unsustainable exploitation of colonies and disdain for morality led him to change his position. He went on to write the anti-imperialist pamphlet King Leopold's Soliloquy. Trump has revived the notion of manifest destiny but adopted a more "cost-effective" approach than his predecessors, acting from a position of strength and tariffs. This includes coercing its allies and partners. Trump is adept at aggressive tactics: first making ludicrous demands, then presenting a choice between a "big stick" and a smaller one and eventually pressuring adversaries to concede to his demand. He has faced few obstacles, such as in the case of Colombia. If Secretary of State Marco Rubio's newly proposed "America's first" foreign policy comes at the expense of other nations in the region, it will expose its paradox. History warns against appeasement. The pressing question is whether the world is ready to act accordingly when the US abandons its claim to moral authority. This makes the US' China policy look comparatively less consequential. Trump's life is built around expecting a deal - ideally "the greatest and biggest deal ever," as he described the phase one trade deal with China during his first term. To this end, he is using well-tried tactics with some patience, opening with just 10 per cent tariffs and lifting the ban on the US Post Office accepting parcels from China soon after imposing it.

Online safety and cyberbullying

Zahra Ali

The emergence of Cyberbullying, which is the act of abuse and humiliation on digital platforms has now become a common phenomenon. Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying never stops and can happen to anyone and follows them wherever they go through social media and smartphones. The anonymity of the internet gives courage to the aggressors whilst making it extremely difficult for the victims to escape without severe consequences. These effects are often tragic and can result in depression, anxiety and in severe cases, self-harm and even suicide

CHILDREN have more access to technology compared to previous generations, which gives them more opportunities. Nonetheless, the cons of overbearing screen time cannot be ignored. Cyberbullying, online predators, and exposure to adult content are some major risks that loom everywhere. The internet is an incredibly powerful resource for education and communicating, but at the same time, it is a playground for those who wish to inflict psychological harm or exploit children in any way possible.

The Reality of Cyberbullying

The emergence of Cyberbullying, which is the act of abuse and humiliation on digital platforms has now become a common phenomenon. Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying never stops and can happen to anyone and follows them wherever they go through social media and smartphones. The anonymity of the internet gives courage to the aggressors whilst making it extremely difficult for the victims to escape without severe consequences. These effects are often tragic and can result in depression, anxiety

and in severe cases, self-harm and even suicide.

Threats from Online Predators

Talking to unfamiliar people on the web likely results in facing online grooming from predators who seek to exploit them. Social media, gaming sites, and chat rooms can also function as platforms for these predators, who seek to exploit naive to retrieve private information or even to misappropriate them.

Exposure to Inappropriate Content Children can come across violent, explicit, or misleading content that may affect their perception in a negative way. In addition, misinformation, hate speech, and extremist ideologies also pose a significant danger because they can affect their beliefs and behavior.

The Digital Literacy Gap

The digital literacy skills necessary to successfully manage online hazards are often lacking in children. They could not be aware of phishing scams, comprehend privacy settings, or distinguish between accurate and false information. They are vulnerable to identity theft, fraud, and psychological manipulation if they are not given

the right direction.

The Need for Action

Ensuring online safety requires a collective effort from parents, educators, policymakers, and tech companies:

- **Parental Guidance:** Parents must educate children about online risks, encourage open communication, and implement parental controls.
 - **Educational Reforms:** Schools should integrate digital literacy programs to equip children with skills to identify cyber threats and practice responsible online behavior.
 - **Policy and Regulation:** Governments must enforce stricter regulations on online platforms to protect children from harmful content and cybercriminals.
 - **Tech Industry Responsibility:** Social media and technology companies should enhance safety measures, implement age-appropriate content filters, and respond swiftly to reports of cyberbullying and abuse.
- By fostering awareness and proactive measures, we can create a safer digital environment where children can explore, learn, and connect without fear.

The Gazafication of Jenin will not succeed

Ahmad Ibsais

This military strategy exposes Israel's fundamental blindness. It sees resistance as something tangible - fighters to eliminate, tunnels to destroy, leaders to assassinate, weapons to seize. But in Palestine's refugee camps, resistance flows through generations like blood through veins. It lives in the stories passed down, in the stubborn insistence on dignity under siege, in the resolve to rebuild what has been destroyed. History has already written this story. In Jenin, in Jabalia, in every refugee camp across Palestine, generations have transformed spaces of temporary refuge into permanent monuments to an idea that cannot be killed

LAST month, as the Israeli army started pulling out of Gaza under the ceasefire agreement, it announced an "operation" in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin and its refugee camp. For three weeks now, it has been terrorising the Palestinian people there, using fighter jets, helicopters, tanks, drones, and bulldozers to kill and destroy.

Emboldened by the world's indifference, the Israeli government is clearly attempting to replicate Gaza in the West Bank. But the Gazafication of Jenin and other refugee camps in the West Bank is bound to fail, just as similar brutal strategies have failed in the past.

There is a reason why Israel picked Jenin for the start of its renewed bloody assault on the West Bank. The camp, which was established in the aftermath of the Nakba to house 8,000 Palestinians violently expelled from their homes by Zionist forces, has been an incubator of resistance for decades.

During the first Intifada, it became one of the nuclei of Palestinian organising and resistance. The youth who had known nothing but occupation became its voice, its fist, its heart.

During the second Intifada, Jenin once again served as a hub of the resistance. In April 2002, the Israeli army invaded the city, murdering 52 Palestinians, destroying hundreds of homes, and displacing more than a quarter of the population. Israel declared victory then, claiming to have crushed "terror". Yet, from the ruins of Jenin, a new generation rose, carrying on the unshakeable will to resist.

In the 2020s, armed resistance activity intensified in Jenin and other refugee camps in the West Bank. This culminated in another brutal Israeli assault on the city in July 2023, just months before the outbreak of the genocide in Gaza. The operation involved the deployment of fighter jets, armed drones, tanks, bulldozers, and thou-

sands of troops. The Israeli army killed at least 10 Palestinians, destroyed homes and infrastructure, and displaced thousands. And yet, resistance re-emerged once again and responded to calls from Gaza for mobilisation.

Jenin has become a hub of resistance for a reason. Refugee camps are not merely places where the displaced survive - they are the beating hearts of Palestinian consciousness. These are places where the wounds and trauma of the Nakba are passed from generation to generation, where sons and daughters inherit their parents and grandparents' desire to return home.

Children grow up seeing their neighbourhoods raided, friends detained or murdered, just like 10-year-old Saddam Rajab from Tulkarem who was shot in the abdomen by an Israeli soldier on January 28 and the ambulance carrying him was blocked by Israeli troops at a checkpoint. Saddam died 10 days later.

Children in refugee camps know the steep price of fighting for freedom, and as adults, they still choose to pay it anyway.

In the Gaza Strip, refugee camps like Jabalia have also been major strongholds of Palestinian resistance for decades for the same reason. Historically, Jabalia has been the largest refugee camp in Palestine, housing 100,000 people. In 1987, it produced the spark that ignited the first Intifada. It has been repeatedly targeted by Israeli military assaults which have left behind mass casualties and destruction.

After the start of Israel's genocidal war, the Israeli army launched several assaults on the camp, each time following the same brutal template: massive bombardment, house demolitions, and displacement of civilians.

Each time it claimed to have dismantled the resistance, only to return several months later for another "clearing operation".

In the fall, the Israeli army launched a massive

campaign of air strikes that devastated Jabalia. Some 90 percent of buildings are estimated to have been destroyed.

Yet the resistance persisted, launching operations that resulted in significant Israeli military casualties.

The ongoing assault on Jenin uses the same failed playbook to "dismantle" resistance through destruction. It has killed more than 45 Palestinians, including two-year-old Laila al-Khatib, forcibly displaced 20,000, demolished entire blocks, besieged a hospital, and cut off the city from the rest of the West Bank.

Wholesale destruction did not work in Jenin before and it did not work in Gaza, so why does Israel think it would now?

This military strategy exposes Israel's fundamental blindness. It sees resistance as something tangible - fighters to eliminate, tunnels to destroy, leaders to assassinate, weapons to seize. But in Palestine's refugee camps, resistance flows through generations like blood through veins. It lives in the stories passed down, in the stubborn insistence on dignity under siege, in the resolve to rebuild what has been destroyed.

History has already written this story. In Jenin, in Jabalia, in every refugee camp across Palestine, generations have transformed spaces of temporary refuge into permanent monuments to an idea that cannot be killed. With each invasion, with each demolition, with each attempt to break the will of these communities, the resolve only strengthens. It lives in the determined step of a child walking to school through checkpoints, in the defiant smile of an elder rebuilding their home yet another time, and in the collective refusal to accept displacement as destiny.

This is why the Gazafication of Jenin will fail. You can kill revolutionaries, but you cannot kill the revolution. You cannot bomb an idea into submission. You cannot kill the will to be free.

Briefs

Pakistan, UAE seek to deepen..

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lasting peace in Palestine based on the two-state solution to maintain regional security, stability, and peace. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid warmly welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reaffirming deep-rooted and longstanding ties between Pakistan and the UAE. Thanking Mohammed bin Rashid for the invitation, the Prime Minister lauded this transformative and timely initiative, providing a platform to world leaders, policy makers and experts, where they could gather under one roof to hold global discourse on the future of governance and better future.

Pakistan stands at 'defining...'

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this change focusing on exports, e-Pakistan, environment and climate change, energy and infrastructure and equity and empowerment," he said. The premier noted that energy security and sustainability were not just an economic necessity but also a national priority. "Pakistan is committed to achieving a 60% clean energy mix by 2030 and transitioning 30% of all vehicles to electric mobility," he said. "We are rapidly scaling up solar, wind, hydro-power and nuclear energy. Our southern regions hold 50,000 MW of untapped wind energy potential. Our northern hydropower projects will add 13,000 MW of clean energy capacity.

Imran throws weight...

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would challenge the nominations of the six judges in the top court, PTI Senator Hamid Khan said on Monday, vowing to continue the "protest movement". Furthermore, all three representative bar councils of the federal capital - Islamabad Bar Council (IBC), Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCB), and Islamabad District Bar Association (IDBA) - announced launching a long march during the hearing of 26th amendment-related petitions.

CB to decide fate of Imran's...

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The CJM made the comments during his interaction with journalists in Islamabad. "I have asked the committee to review the letter and make a decision," the top judge said. "The letter has been forwarded to the judges' constitutional committee, which will determine the course of action. Since the matter pertains to Article 184(3), it must be addressed by the constitutional bench," he clarified. He revealed that the decision to forward the PTI founder's letter to the committee had already been made a day earlier.

Lawmakers secure massive...

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signature to take effect. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Romina Khurshid Alam tabled the bill, with neither opposition nor treasury lawmakers raising any objection to the whopping increase in their salaries. The bill seeks to amend the Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) Act, 1974 [The Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill, 2025]. On January 26, the National Assembly's Finance Committee gave the bill a go-ahead in a meeting chaired by the National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq

Williamson opines on Babar Azam's 'Fab Five' status

'He is a world-class batter who consistently delivers for his team,' Williamson praises Babar

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: New Zealand's star batter Kane Williamson on Monday, gave his verdict on Babar Azam's status in the 'Fab Five', terming him a 'world-class batter'. An infamous term in world cricket, 'Fab Four' has been long associated with India's Virat Kohli, Australia's Steve Smith, England's Joe Root and Williamson, who are among the most consistent batters since the last decade. But, with Babar's achievements and consistent performances, which also saw him breaking several records of the 'Fab Four', several cricket pundits called for the expansion of the elite group to accommodate his inclusion. Babar, who was 31 centuries to his name across formats, is yet to reach triple figures since his 151-run knock against Nepal in August 2023. However, despite his recent struggles,



Williamson remained confident in the batter's abilities and emphasised that he is certainly a part of the elite group, highlighting his consistent performances for

Pakistan. "Babar Azam is certainly a part of the 'Fab Four' or 'Fab Five,' which consists of some of the finest players in the game. He is a world-class batter who consistently delivers for his team," said Williamson. Kane Williamson, who scored a match-winning century in New Zealand's six-wicket victory over South Africa on Monday, also reflected on his team's performance, stating that the Blackcaps handled the pressure well and played like a unit. "Our team worked hard and due to this, we got good results. Devon Conway played brilliantly and the South Africa team was equally competitive and performed well in the match," Williamson said. The 34-year-old also discussed the behaviour of the pitch, sharing that it got easier to bat on under lights. "As the evening progressed, batting became easier, and we adapted well to the situation," Williamson shared.

Heinrich Klaasen wants Pakistan-less tri-series final

'If we can knock them out and play in the final, that will at least put a smile on my face,' says Klaasen

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: South Africa's wicketkeeper batter Heinrich Klaasen on Tuesday, expressed his desire to knock out hosts Pakistan from the tri-nation ODI series final, scheduled to be played at the National Bank Stadium here on Thursday. Klaasen, one of the five key players who joined South Africa's inexperienced squad here earlier today, shared his plans for the upcoming virtual semi-final against the home side. The right-handed batter acknowledged the challenge Pakistan possess in their home conditions but said that the tri-series final without the home country will put a smile on his face. "Tomorrow is obviously a big day for the series. We played Pakistan not too long ago, but obviously Pakistan in their conditions



are a different beast, so I'm looking forward to that," said Klaasen during the pre-match press conference. "We just got together today, basically the boys only arrived at 2 o'clock this morning. For the guys that

are new to the squad, we've got to do a little bit of homework, we've got a nice day out to face these conditions and see what it is like. "Obviously there's a bigger picture in mind as well. The ICC [Champions] trophy is

also in play next week, so it's a good exercise for us. If we can knock them out and play in the final, and the home country is not involved, that will at least put a smile on my face."

For the unversed, South Africa suffered a 3-0 clean sweep at home against Pakistan in December last year. However, Heinrich Klaasen was exceptional in the series and scored three consecutive half-centuries, including a 97-run knock in the second ODI. South Africa squad for tri-nation ODI series: Matthew Breetzke, Temba Bavuma(c), Jason Smith, Kyle Verreynne(w), Wiaan Mulder, Eathan Bosch, Senuran Muthusamy, Mhlahi Mpongwana, Junior Dala, Lungi Ngidi, Tabraiz Shamsi, Heinrich Klaasen, Tony de Zorzi, Corbin Bosch, Meeke eel Prince, KeshavMaharaj, Kwena Maphaka, Gideon Peters.

Jomel crowned men's player of month

Overall, Warrican picked up 19 wickets at an exceptional average of just nine, besides scoring 85 runs at an average of 42.50

KARACHI: West Indies Jomel Warrican has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for January 2025, following his stellar performance in the recent Test series against Pakistan. Warrican, who bagged the Player of the Series in Pakistan and West Indies' 1-1 stalemate in Multan, edged out stiff competition from his Pakistani counterpart Noman Ali and India's Varun Chakravarthy. Warrican was the standout performer with the ball for the West Indies as he registered magnificent bowling figures of 10/101, coupled with an unbeaten 31-run knock in the opening fixture. He was equally impressive in the second Test, where he picked up nine wickets, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings and played a pivotal role in leading his side to a historic victory over Pakistan. Overall, Warrican picked up 19 wickets at an exceptional average of just nine, besides scoring 85 runs at an average of 42.50. "It's an honour to win this award. One of my goals for this year was my first five-for in Test cricket, but I did not think that it would be this grand," Warrican said in an ICC-released statement. "I see this as one small step in my cricketing career, and I look forward to many more. I promised my captain something special in this series, especially when my father, my biggest supporter, predicted a phenomenal performance for me. "Multan has a special place in my heart: not only because of the historic win for the West Indies, beating Pakistan away from home, but also by earning this prestigious award." For the unversed, Jomel Warrican is the first West Indian to win the prestigious award since Gudakesh Motie in May 2024. - Agencies

Rubiales tells court Hermoso consented to World Cup kiss

MADRID: Luis Rubiales has told a court that Spanish footballer Jenni Hermoso gave her consent before he kissed her at the Women's World Cup final in 2023. The former president of the RFEF is on trial accused of sexual assault and attempting to coerce MsHermoso into publicly saying the kiss had been consensual. Giving evidence, Mr Rubiales, 47, said he was "absolutely sure" the player gave permission for the kiss, adding: "In that moment it was something completely spontaneous." The incident occurred during the medal-giving ceremony after Spain's World Cup win in Australia, triggering protests and calls for Mr Rubiales's resignation. He denies any criminal wrongdoing. Mr Rubiales described the kiss as "an act of affection" to Spain's National Court in Madrid on Tuesday. "Jenni embraced me," he said. "I've known her for many years and I kissed her because she was a champion. This was a tremendous moment for her. We were champions, we were thanking each other. "She pressed me very hard by the waist and then I asked her whether I could give her a kiss and she said yes." He added: "I took hold of her so as not to fall back." Mr Rubiales was questioned in court over whether he asked MsHermoso for a kiss or a "little kiss". "I can't remember exactly," he replied. "But I think it was a little kiss." He was also asked if he was aware of the protocol against sexual harassment and sexual violence, to which he replied he was aware of it. MsHermoso has previously told the court she had never given permission to be kissed and the incident had "stained one of the happiest days of my life". The Spain forward said: "My boss was kissing me, and this shouldn't happen in any social or work setting." She added: "A kiss on the lips is only given when I decide so." MsHermoso said she was pulled aside soon after the kiss and asked to consent to a statement minimising incident, which she refused to do. Mr Rubiales then asked her to record a video with him on the flight home because he was being accused of assault on social media, she told the court. She said she had received death threats which prompted her to move her family to Mexico, where she now plays. - Agencies

Key players join South Africa's squad

DNA

KARACHI: The return of key players have bolstered South Africa's squad ahead of their crucial tri-nation ODI series match against hosts Pakistan, scheduled to be played at the National Bank Stadium here on Wednesday. According to the details, three senior players KeshavMaharaj, Heinrich Klaasen and Tony de Zorzi, alongside new-comers KwenaMaphaka and Corbin Bosch joined the Proteas' camp here and will also be available for selection for the upcoming match. Meanwhile, Temba Bavuma-led South Africa's inexperienced squad, which suffered a six-wicket thrashing in their campaign opener against New Zealand, reached here from Lahore in the morning. Upon their arrival, South Africa's squad participated in a detailed training session to boost their preparations for the high-stakes encounter, while New Zealand, who have already punched their ticket to the final with back-to-back victories, will rest today.

E-commerce platforms enrich Pakistan's digital economy: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In recent years, the e-commerce landscape in Pakistan has witnessed a significant transformation, driven by increasing internet penetration, smartphone usage, and a growing appetite for online shopping. According to E-commerce data analytics website (ECDB), Pakistan is the 50th largest market for E-commerce with a predicted revenue of US\$3,257.7 million, placing it ahead of Iran. Revenue is expected to show a compound annual growth rate (CAGR 2024-2028) of 14.0%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$5,493.3 million by 2028. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, seven markets are considered by ECDB within the Pakistani E-commerce market. Electronics is the largest market and accounts for 23.9% of the Pakistani E-commerce revenue. It is followed by Hobby & Leisure with 21.7%, Fashion with 18.9%, Furniture & Homeware with 12.1%, Care Products with 8.6%, DIY with 7.9%, and Grocery with the remaining 7.0%. As per the website's detailed analysis, the monthly E-commerce revenue of the Pakistani market was US\$311 million in January 2025. This refers to a growth of 5.9% compared to Decem-

ber 2024. E-commerce platforms like Temu, known for its affordable prices and wide range of products, is reshaping the way Pakistanis shop online. According to the company, it is handling 15,000 orders daily to Pakistan, all of which 100% are pre-paid. This is a notable departure from the prevailing trend in Pakistan's e-commerce sector, where around 95% of transactions are still conducted through cash-on-delivery. For Pakistani consumers, Temu provides gateway to global trends and quality products that were once out of reach for the local public. Chinese e-commerce giants like AliExpress, Temu, and JD.com are increasingly entering the Pakistani market, offering consumers access to a wide range of affordable products. Similarly, Pakistani sellers are leveraging platforms like Alibaba to export goods to China and other international markets. This cross-border trade is boosting economic activity and fostering cultural exchange. As China and Pakistan embrace digital transformation, their collaboration in e-commerce is creating new opportunities for trade, innovation, and economic growth. This partnership is not only strengthening bilateral ties but also positioning Pakistan to become a key player in the global digital economy.

TTP threatens Afghanistan's...

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North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa," he said, pointing out that D'aesh was suppressed in Syria and Iraq, but the franchises have also emerged in Afghanistan and in the Sahel. As such, Ambassador Akram stressed that the international community must address the terrorist threat together, through a comprehensive, coordinated and principled strategy based upon the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) adopted by the General Assembly. Noting that there are all over two dozen terrorist groups operating inside Afghanistan, which is also the "main hub for ISIL-K's recruitment and facilitation", he said that the country is the main hub of recruitment of Daesh. "We reject any imputation that there is any such recruitment in Pakistan."

Sixteen Pakistanis confirmed...

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Tripoli and being looked after by the Embassy," the statement added. The FO also listed details of the dead bodies so far identified as Pakistani nationals, with all of them hailing from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. "The Embassy in Tripoli is in the process of gathering further information and maintaining contact with the local authorities," it concluded. The confirmation comes a day after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said a vessel carrying around 65 passengers capsized near the port of Marsa Dela, north-west of Zawiya City, Libya.

Dozens of Pakistanis deported...

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were expelled for violating contract terms, while 23 workers who had absconded from their jobs were also deported. Furthermore, 13 Pakistanis were sent back from Saudi Arabia for working without a sponsor (Kafeel), violating local labour laws. Meanwhile, three blacklisted Pakistanis were expelled from Oman, Somaliland, and the UAE. In Canada, one Pakistani national was deported for overstaying their visa, whereas in Iraq, seven individuals were removed for illegal residence. The UAE also deported one Pakistani for lacking proper documentation, while nine others were released from jail and subsequently sent back to Pakistan.

Ceasefire only way to return...

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The US president said he wanted the captives released en masse, instead of a few at a time. "We want 'em all back." On Monday evening, Hamas said it will delay the release of more Israeli captives planned for Saturday "until further notice," due to the Tel Aviv regime's violations of the ceasefire in Gaza. The captives will "remain in place until the occupying entity complies with past obligations and compensates retroactively," Abu Obeida, spokesperson for the Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, said in a statement.

Erdogan to arrive in Pak today

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high-level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), the spokesperson added. "At the conclusion of the session, a joint declaration and a number of important agreements/MoUs are expected to be signed. The two leaders will also address a joint press stake-out," read the statement. It added that President Erdogan will also have bilateral meetings with PM Shehbaz and President Asif Ali Zardari. Together with PM Shehbaz, the visiting dignitary will address the Pakistan-Turkiye Business and Investment Forum, bringing together leading investors, companies and business people from both sides.

Naqvi hosts National Stadium workers for luncheon

'You have won hearts with your hard work. Thank you all,' Naqvi praises the workers

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi hosted more than 700 construction workers of the National Bank Stadium for a luncheon to acknowledge their efforts in completing the venue's upgradation in a record 120 days. The PCB chairman personally met the workers and interacted with them. He also thanked the workers and lauded their dedication in completing the venue's upgradation in a record time. Naqvi then formally invited the construction workers to watch the upcoming tri-nation ODI series match between Pakistan and South Africa - the first fixture at the venue after its upgradation. "It is your right to watch the match. You have won hearts with your hard work. Thank you all," Naqvi praised the workers.

"We succeeded due to the tireless work of the workers. Every worker is our hero who turned our dream into reality," he added.

Pakistan's white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan, who was also present at the ceremony, echoed Naqvi's remarks and promised

the workers that the national team will work hard and is committed to winning the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025.

"You people have worked hard and proved that we are a hard-working nation," said Rizwan while addressing the ceremony. "Like you, we will also work hard and are hopeful to give good results as we always do in Karachi," he added. The glittering ceremony was also attended by senior PCB officials, Advisor Amir Mir, Chief Operating Officer Sameer Ahmed and Chief Executive Officer PSL Salman Naseer. For the unversed, the newly-renovated stadium will host two matches of the ongoing tri-nation ODI series, involving Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa, on February 12 and 14. It will then host three much-awaited matches of the Champions Trophy 2025, including the curtain-raiser between Pakistan and New Zealand, scheduled on February 19.



Briefs

PSX stays bullish, gains 1,632 more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 1,632.41 points, a positive change of 1.47 percent, closing at 113,010.38 points as compared to 111,377.97 points on the last trading day. A total of 486,935,003 shares were traded during the day as compared to 415,160,931 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 30.381 billion against Rs 23.947 billion on the last trading day. As many as 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 264 of them recorded gains and 117 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 66 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 59,148,179 shares at Rs 10.83 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 30,022,192 shares at Rs.1.56 per share and Citi Pharma Limited with 21,953,013 shares at Rs.106.56 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs183.14 per share closing at Rs23,415.42 whereas runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs 34.32 rise in its share price to close at Rs.1,200.00. Raffhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.124.95 per share price, closing at Rs 9,365.05, whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited with Rs 20.87 decline in its per share price to Rs.661.61.—APP

Gold price up by Rs100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 100 and was sold at Rs 303,100 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 303,000 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 86 to Rs 259,859 from Rs 259,773 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs 238,212 from Rs 238,133. The prices of per tola silver decreased by Rs 61 to Rs 3,312 whereas that of ten gram went down by Rs 52 to Rs 2,839. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$1 to \$2,904 from \$2,903, the Association reported.—APP

Syria's Sharaa calls Trump Gaza plan 'serious crime' bound to fail

DUBAI: Syria Arab Republic's new president, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, said in remarks broadcast on Monday he believes US President Donald Trump's plan to reset Palestine from Gaza and take over the Strip "is a serious crime that will ultimately fail." Trump had said the US would take over the war-ravaged Gaza Strip and develop it economically after Palestinians are resettled elsewhere. He said Palestinians would not have the right of return to Gaza under his proposal. In an interview with a UK podcast, Sharaa, an Islamist whose militant group Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham was once an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, said Trump's proposal would not succeed. "I believe no power can drive people from their land. Many countries have tried to do it and they have all failed, especially during the recent war in Gaza over the past year and a half," he said. Sharaa, declared president for a transitional phase after his group's fighters led the overthrow of Bashar Assad, said it would be neither "wise nor morally or politically right" for Trump to lead an effort to force Palestinians out of their land. "Over 80 years of this conflict, all attempts to displace them have failed; those who left have regretted their decision. The Palestinian lesson that every generation has learned is the importance of holding on to their land," he added.—APP

ICCI-Egypt Charge d'Affaires discuss strategies to boost bilateral trade

Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza termed the visit a significant step towards fostering greater business collaboration between Egypt and Pakistan. The meeting also saw the participation of Executive Member Chaudhry Mohammad Irfan and ICCI member Shahid Zafar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Sameh Ahmed E-Ghamrawi, Charge' d'Affaires of Egypt, has pledged to boost bilateral trade between Egypt and Pakistan by facilitating business exchanges and promoting private sector collaboration. During his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Tuesday, Mr. E-Ghamrawi emphasized the need for increased business delegation exchanges and the establishment of closer ties between the ICCI and Cairo Chamber of Commerce and Industry, along with other relevant government departments. Accompanied by the Embassy officers, Amr Abdallah and Ahmed Zowil, the Charge' d'Affaires highlighted Egypt's attractive investment opportunities, including tax exemptions, joint ventures, and value-added prospects that would benefit both countries. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi welcomed the Egyptian delegation and stressed the importance of promoting balanced trade, specifically by showcasing Pakistan's export potential in sectors



such as pharmaceuticals, marble, gemstones, and pink salt. He further emphasized the ICCI's determination to not only enhance local business but also strengthen international trade. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to deep-

ening cooperation between the two nations. Executive Member Fatima Azeem called for increased exchanges of women entrepreneurs to empower women in both countries. Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry underscored the similarities between Egypt and Pakistan, while

Sanaullah Khan highlighted the role of Al-Azhar University in religious education. Naem Siddiqui, Special Advisor to the ICCI President, stressed the need for direct connectivity between the two countries to facilitate business growth. Secretary General Ghulam

Murtaza termed the visit a significant step towards fostering greater business collaboration between Egypt and Pakistan. The meeting also saw the participation of Executive Member Chaudhry Mohammad Irfan and ICCI member Shahid Zafar.

Global policymakers, innovators gather in New Delhi

NEW DELHI: Thousands of top industry executives, innovators and policymakers gathered in New Delhi on Tuesday for India Energy Week 2025, where they will be discussing energy access and sustainability. More than 70,000 delegates, officials and visitors are expected to take part in the Indian government's flagship annual energy event, which over the next four days will feature 500 speakers, 700 exhibitors and 10 national pavilions from countries including the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia displaying their newest technology. Held at the Yashobhoomi convention center in New Delhi, India Energy Week 2025 aims to spotlight energy access, security and new global energy systems, in line with the South Asian giant's vision of energy transition. "India's energy ambitions stand on five pillars: We have resources, which we are harnessing. Secondly, we are encouraging our brilliant minds to innovate. Thirdly, we have economic strength, political stability. Fourthly, India has strategic geography, which makes energy trade more attractive and easier. And fifthly, India is committed to global sustainability. This is creating new possibilities in India's energy sector," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a virtual address to the event's participants. "The next two decades are very important for India's development. And in the next five years, we are going to cross many big milestones. Many of our energy goals are aligned with the 2030 deadline. We want to add 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. Indian Railways has set a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Our goal is to produce 5 million metric tons of green hydrogen every year by 2030... What India has achieved in the last 10 years has given us the confidence that we will definitely achieve these targets." India aims to generate 500 GW of electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, under its nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement. Solar energy is the dominant contributor to its renewable energy growth, accounting for 47 percent of the total installed renewable energy capacity. The solar power sector has observed a 3,450 percent increase in capacity over the past decade, rising from 2.82 GW in 2014 to 100 GW in January 2025, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. The growth is fueled by local solar module production, which in 2014 had a capacity of only 2 GW. "There is a lot of potential in India for manufacturing various types of hardware including PV modules. We are supporting local manufacturing," Modi said. "India's major focus is on Make in India and local supply chains.—Agencies

Philippine divorce activists vow to fight on

MANILA: In her bid to convince lawmakers to legalize divorce, Filipino fruit vendor Avelina Anuran has publicly testified about the abuse she said she regularly endured at the hands of her husband. She also keeps a copy of the medical certificate from the bloody injuries she says he inflicted, hoping it might one day serve as evidence in court. But the mother of two-turned-activist has gotten no closer to ending her marriage. The Philippines is one of just two countries — along with Vatican City — where divorce remains illegal. Last week, the latest attempt to introduce a divorce law evaporated as the upper house ended its session without even a hearing. "They kept passing it around," Anuran said. The last time such legislation made its way to the Senate in 2019, she painstakingly detailed her experience for a public hearing. But the bill foundered. Spouses have a "right to be free," she said, adding that she would keep pushing for a law. "Hopefully it will (pass) next year, with new senators coming in." Ending a marriage in the deeply Catholic society of 117 million is possible only via annulment or "nullification.—APP

Kuwait PM says Trump's decisions will impact global economy

DUBAI: Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah has warned that US President Donald Trump's economic decisions would have "repercussions" for the entire world. Speaking at the World Governments Summit in Dubai on Tuesday, in a departure from his planned speech, the prime minister said listening to Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the IMF, about the direction of the global economy and AI "was a joy." He added: "But I need to ask you all to be very attentive to Trump's decisions. He seems to be only looking for his own benefits which will affect the whole world and there will be repercussions." On Monday, Trump increased tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to a flat 25 percent, with no exceptions or exemptions. Trump said his decision was aimed at supporting struggling American industries. But the action risks triggering a global trade war.—APP

People's trust key to a state's success

DUBAI: Trust is the foundation of a government's success, according to the chairman of the World Governments Summit, the UAE's Minister of Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Gergawi. "Trust in government (worldwide) stands only at 52 percent," Al-Gergawi said on Tuesday, quoting findings from the Edelman Trust Barometer, on the opening day of the World Governments Summit 2025 in Dubai. He emphasized the need to ensure that strong relationships are built between governments and the people they serve. He said the world has undergone 25 years of unprecedented transformation with new challenges arising. "We are stepping into an entirely new era in the history of human civilization," he said. Al-Gergawi said the global economy grew from \$34 trillion in 2000 to \$115 trillion in 2024, and international trade expanded from \$7.1 trillion to \$33 trillion during the same period. Rising competition in technology and artificial intelligence has led to techno-political wars such as currently between DeepSeek and OpenAI, he added. "In 2000, technological warfare and military robots existed only in science fiction. Today wars are fought with drones, autonomous weapons and AI." "Governments that understand the past deeply are the ones who are able to build a better future," he added.—APP

Bangladesh aims to hold December polls in first vote since Hasina ouster

DHAKA: Bangladesh is preparing to hold elections in December, the first general vote since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, the former longtime prime minister, Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Mohammad Sanaullah said on Tuesday. The country's interim government, headed by Nobel prize laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus, has been implementing a series of reforms and preparing for elections since taking charge in August, after Hasina fled Dhaka amid student-led protests that called for her resignation. In November, the transitional authorities appointed a new five-member election commission, which held a meeting with foreign envoys on Tuesday to present its plans for the upcoming polls. "We have told them that we must make preparations based on the earliest possible date for the election. Our position remains unchanged. We are preparing with December in mind," Sanaullah told journalists after the meeting. "The national election is currently the Election Commission's priority." Yunus previously said that Bangladesh could hold elections by the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026, provided that electoral reforms take place first. This includes having the Election Commission prepare a new voter list, a process expected to take months. Following 15 years of uninterrupted rule, Hasina and her Awami League party had allegedly politicized key government institutions, including the Election Commission. In a report submitted to the interim government last week, a special commission on electoral reforms said that Hasina was responsible for rigging the last three national polls in Bangladesh, as it proposed more than 200 recommendations to improve the country's voting system. "In 2014, 2018 and 2024, we witnessed three general elections where the big takeaway was that these were not participatory. There were big questions regarding the quality of these elections due to the absence of the opposition," Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, chairman of the National Election Monitoring Council, told Arab News.—APP



KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf witnessing fire demonstration during the AMAN 2025 exercise. — DNA

Israeli military operation displaces 40,000 Palestinians in West Bank

The laws ban UNRWA from operating in Israeli territory and prohibit Israeli officials from having any contact with the agency

UNITED NATION: The forced displacement of Palestinian communities in the northern part of the occupied West Bank is escalating at an alarming pace, the UN agency that assists Palestine refugees, UNRWA, has warned. Several refugee camps are nearly empty after Israeli forces launched Operation Iron Wall on 21 January, making it the longest operation in the West Bank since the second intifada, according to the agency. The operation started in Jenin camp and then expanded to Tulkarm, Nur Shams, and El Far "a camps, displacing 40,000 Palestine refugees." UNRWA said thousands of

families have been forcibly displaced since Israel began carrying out large-scale operations in the occupied West Bank in mid-2023. "Repeated and destructive operations have rendered the northern refugee camps uninhabitable, trapping residents in cyclical displacement," the agency stressed. Last year more than 60 per cent of displacement was a result of Israel Defense Forces operations. UNRWA said forced displacement in the occupied West Bank is the result of an increasingly dangerous and coercive environment. "The use of air strikes, armoured bulldozers, controlled detonations, and ad-

vanced weaponry by the Israeli Forces has become commonplace — a spillover of the war in Gaza," the agency noted. Meanwhile, armed Palestinians are also increasingly active in the northern West Bank, deploying improvised explosive devices inside refugee camps, including near UNRWA facilities and civilian infrastructure. The militants have engaged in violent clashes with both Israeli and Palestinian forces, UNRWA said. Furthermore, from December 2024 onwards, Palestinian forces operations further exacerbated displacement from Jenin camp. New laws in effect UNRWA reiterated that civilians and civilian in-

frastructure must be protected at all times and that collective punishment is never acceptable. "Jenin Camp stands empty today, evoking memories of the second intifada. This scene stands to be repeated in other camps," the agency said. UNRWA stated that it no longer has any contact with the Israeli authorities following the implementation of two laws on 30 January, thus making it impossible to raise concerns about civilian suffering or the urgent need for humanitarian aid delivery. The situation "puts at grave risk the lives of Palestine Refugees and the UNRWA staff that serve them." The laws ban UNRWA from

operating in Israeli territory and prohibit Israeli officials from having any contact with the agency. Separately, UN humanitarian affairs office, OCHA, said ongoing operations by Israeli forces in Jenin, Tulkarm and Tubas continue to cause civilian casualties, with at least 40 people reportedly killed since 21 January. The UN and partners continue to support Palestinians affected by the ongoing operation in Jenin, which continues to drive displacement. OCHA said the World Food Programme (WFP) and partners have reached nearly 1,200 households with cash assistance. —Agencies

Tanveer chairs meeting of Pakistan Sugar Mills Association

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the Pakistan Sugar Manufacturing Association (PSMA) focused on important decisions related to the pricing and distribution of sugar across the country. The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensure sugar is available at affordable prices for the public, said a news release. He announced that a micro-plan for sugar distribution would be introduced this week in every district. Rana Tanveer announced that special measures would be taken to provide sugar at discounted rates during Ramadan. "Sugar stalls would be set up in every district starting three days before Ramadan and continuing until the 27th of Ramadan. These stalls will offer sugar in ample quantities to ensure no shortage for the public", he said. Tanveer revealed that the price of sugar at discounted rates will be announced later this week to ensure that especially the lower-income groups have access to affordable sugar during Ramadan. He emphasized that with the cooperation of provincial governments, sugar stalls will be established across the country to ensure easy availability of sugar in all regions.—APP

Briefs

Committee to probe national kitty losses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has set up a committee to investigate financial losses to the national exchequer following former aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan's 2020 statement in Parliament about pilots with dubious licences, it emerged on Tuesday. In June 2020, during a parliamentary session, Khan stated that investigations had revealed more than 262 of the country's 860 active pilots either held fake licences or had cheated in their exams. According to a cabinet secretariat notification the newly formed committee will "assess the financial losses incurred by the national exchequer due to the irresponsible statement" by Khan in 2020. The committee will also "evaluate the reputational damage caused to the country and [the Pakistan International Airlines] due to this irresponsible statement." The seven-member committee will be chaired by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif as the convenor. It will also comprise the minister for law and justice, the minister for finance and revenue, the secretaries of defence ministry and ministry of law and justice, CEO of PIA, and the director general of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The committee is expected to submit its reports to the cabinet within four weeks, according to the notification. According to Khan's statement in 2020, the pilots included 141 from Pakistan PIA, nine from Air Blue and 10 from Serene Air, while the rest were affiliated with flying clubs, chartered plane services or foreign airlines.

Regional unity only way to confront Israel

TEHRAN: The chief of staff of Iran's Armed Forces has condemned the US-Israeli plan for the forced displacement of Gazans, saying the only way to confront the Israeli "terrorist" regime is through unity among the countries of the region. Major General Mohammad Baqeri made the remarks during a meeting with Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, chief of staff of the Sultanate of Oman's Armed Forces, at the headquarters of the General Staff of the Armed Forces in Tehran on Tuesday. "Given the barbaric and expansionist nature of the Zionist regime, the only way to confront this occupying and terrorist regime is through unity and solidarity among the countries of the region." General Baqeri said the "friendly" relations between Iran and Oman are "historical and developing." "Our relations with the Sultanate of Oman are strong and stable, but given the existing circumstances, the ties must expand further." Iran's top general said the development of maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman is "essential to combat smuggling and ensure maritime security." - Agencies

Pak slips two spots on global corruption perceptions index

TIP Chairperson Justice (ret'd) Zia Perwez, in the statement, mentioned that in CPI 2024, the score of all countries in the region except Oman, China, Turkey and Mongolia has reduced

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's position on the 2024 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has declined by two spots, ranking 135th out of 180 countries compared to 133rd in 2023, a fresh report revealed on Tuesday. Transparency International's CPI report assesses 180 countries and territories based on the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, using a scale from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). In a statement, Transparency International Pakistan mentioned that the CPI is released annually by Transparency International Berlin and that TIP has no role either in the collection of data or the calculation of the country's score. TIP Chairperson Justice (ret'd) Zia Perwez, in the statement, mentioned that in CPI 2024, the score of all countries in the region except Oman, China, Turkey and Mongolia has reduced. Pakistan slips two spots on global Corruption Perceptions Index: Transparency International Whereas, he noted, Pakistan's score and rank on CPI 2024 has reduced by 2 points from 29 in CPI 2023 to 27 in CPI 2024. Pakistan's rank has reduced by 2 points from 133 in CPI 2023 to 135 in CPI 2024, out of 180 countries. "The downslide for the region shows that Pakistan is one

of the countries that is holding up against the overall trend in the region," the retired judge noted. "Corruption levels remain alarmingly high" The statement mentioned that global corruption levels remain alarmingly high, with efforts to reduce them faltering, according to the latest report. The report, it said, has exposed serious corruption levels across the globe, with more than two-thirds of countries scoring below 50 out of 100. The global average on the index has remained unchanged at 43, highlighting the need for urgent action against corruption and warning of a critical global obstacle to implementing successful climate action. Against a backdrop of record-breaking global warming and extreme weather events, erosion of democracy and a decline in global climate leadership, the world has its back against the ropes in its fight against the climate crisis. "Corruption is making that fight much harder, and the international community must address the link between corruption and the climate crisis," the anti-corruption watchdog said. Pakistan slips two spots on global Corruption Perceptions Index: Transparency International TI Chairperson François Valérien said that corruption is an evolving global threat that does far more than undermine development - it is a key cause of declining democracy, instability and human rights

violations. "The international community and every nation must make tackling corruption a top and long-term priority," the statement mentioned. This is crucial to pushing back against authoritarianism and securing a peaceful, free and sustainable world, the statement mentioned. "The dangerous trends revealed in this year's Corruption Perception Index highlight the need to follow through with concrete action now to address global corruption," he said. Almost 6.8 billion people live in countries with CPI scores under 50, the anti-corruption watchdog said, which is equivalent to 85% of the world population of 8 billion. For the seventh year in a row, Denmark obtains the highest score on the index (90) and is closely followed by Finland (88) and Singapore (84). Countries with the lowest scores are mostly in fragile and conflict-affected countries like South Sudan (8), Somalia (9), Venezuela (10), Syria (12), Libya (13), Eritrea (13), Yemen (13) and Equatorial Guinea (13). Over a quarter of the countries in the sample (47) got their lowest score yet on the index, including Austria (67), Bangladesh (23), Brazil (34), Cuba (41), France (67), Germany (75), Haiti (16), Hungary (41), Iran (23), Mexico (26), Russia (22), South Sudan (8), Switzerland (81), the United States (65) and Venezuela (10). Over the past 5 years, seven countries - Côte d'Ivo-

ire (45), the Dominican Republic (36), Kosovo (44), Kuwait (46), the Maldives (38), Moldova (43), and Zambia (39) - have significantly improved their scores in the index. The CPI also highlights the billions of dollars of climate funds that are at risk of being stolen or misused. Most countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change score below 50 on the CPI. Huge numbers of people are at need-less risk because corruption is impairing climate projects meant to protect them. This highlights the critical need for robust transparency and accountability measures to ensure the effective use of these funds. Recent TI research shows how corruption can undermine a "just transition" to net zero, highlighting specific examples in South Africa (41), Vietnam (40), and Indonesia (37), where insufficient safeguards have created opportunities for unscrupulous actors. In South Africa (41) around a billion rand (more than \$56 million) is stolen each month from Eskom, the state-owned energy provider, according to its former chief executive. Countries suffering the worst effects of the climate crisis have the lowest scores, including South Sudan, Somalia, and Venezuela. In Somalia, climate change has wreaked havoc on the country's agricultural economy and worsened its 30-year-long conflict.

IHC judge's remarks an attack on parliament

"Pillars of judiciary, parliament, administration have collapsed," the judge had said

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker AyazSadiq has described remarks by an Islamabad High Court judge as an attack on parliament. Speaking during a session of the National Assembly, Sadiq said that the judge's statement was an assault on the legislative body and that no one has the right to make derogatory comments about parliament. Sadiq also directed the Federal Minister for Law AzamNazeerTarrar to convey to the relevant judge that parliament is supreme. Furthermore, the speaker mentioned that he had written separate letters to the government and opposition regarding the appointment of election commissioner. The remarks in question were made by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of the IHC during a hearing today related to a petition challenging Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) exam results.

CJP briefs IMF mission on recent judicial reforms

CJP Afridi says IMF mission emphasises need for foreign investment protection in Pakistan



MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: An International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation, currently in Pakistan to review the judicial framework as part of the ongoing \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF), met Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) YahyaAfridi and hailed the ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening governance and accountability.

The IMF's technical mission team is visiting the country to conduct a governance and corruption diagnostic assessment (GCDA), the Ministry of Finance said in a statement. It will examine six key governance-related sectors and institutions, the statement added. The GCDA report would recommend actions for addressing corruption vulnerabilities and strengthening integrity and governance, which will assist the government in bringing about reforms for promoting transparency, strengthening institutional capacities and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, the ministry had said. According to a press release issued by the Supreme Court on Tuesday, the chief justice provided an overview of "the ongoing efforts to enhance judicial performance". He informed the delegation, led by Joel Turkewitz, that the judiciary in Pakistan is independent, and being head of the institution, it is his responsibility to protect the independence. The CJP further said that the judiciary is not used to direct interaction with such missions but since the Finance Division requested, this interaction is taking place. He also said he would be "quite guarded to his comments and views". Furthermore, the statement said, CJP Afridi highlighted key constitutional developments with respect to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan and reforms, including senior-level judicial appointments, judicial accountability, and the restructuring of the JCP. He went on to elaborate on the "merits of integrating the judiciary and the parliamentary committee to ensure a more transparent and efficient judicial selection process." Justice Afridi also informed that the Supreme Court "is in the process of finalising a critical agenda for the upcoming National Judicial Policy-Making Committee (NJPMC) meeting expected in last week of February".

UK, US refuse to sign int'l AI declaration

PARIS: The UK and US have not signed an international agreement on artificial intelligence (AI) at a global summit in Paris. The statement, signed by France, China and India among other countries, pledges an "open", "inclusive" and "ethical" approach to the technology's development. Downing Street said the UK "hadn't been able to agree all parts of the leaders' declaration" and would "only ever sign up to initiatives that are in UK national interests". Earlier, US Vice President JD Vance told delegates in Paris that too much regulation of artificial intelligence (AI) could "kill a transformative industry just as it's taking off". Vance told world leaders that AI was "an opportunity that the Trump administration will not squander" and said "pro-growth AI policies" should be prioritised over safety. He said that this would require regulation which fosters AI development "rather than strangles it". Vance added that leaders in Europe should especially "look to this new frontier with optimism, rather than trepidation". His comments appear to put him at odds with French President Emmanuel Macron, who defended the need for further regulation. "We need these rules for AI to move forward," Macron said at the summit. The UK has previously been a champion of the idea of AI safety, with then prime minister Rishi Sunak holding the world's first AI Safety Summit in November 2023. Andrew Duffield, Head of AI at fact-checking organisation Full Fact, said the government's decision not to sign the Paris communique put that in jeopardy. "By refusing to sign today's international AI Action Statement the UK Government risks undercutting its hard-won credibility as a world leader for safe, ethical and trustworthy AI innovation", he said. The statement signed by 60 countries says the summit has affirmed to reducing digital divides by promoting AI accessibility, and ensuring it is "transparent", "safe" as well as "secure and trustworthy", among other aims. "Making AI sustainable for people and the planet," is listed as a further priority. The agreement also notes that AI energy use - which experts have warned could rise to use as much as small countries in years to come - was discussed at a Summit for the first time. Addressing the UK's decision not to sign it, the Prime Minister's official spokesperson told reporters that "these discussions are pretty live" and noted that the UK has "worked closely with the French throughout this process". "They remain one of our closest partners in all areas of AI," they said. - Agencies

Vandalism, arson now a trend, says Justice Rizvi

Discussions being held in court should instead take place in parliament, laments Justice Mandokhail

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi on Tuesday remarked that vandalism had taken place inside the Lahore Corps Commander's House on May 9, 2023, noting that acts of arson and destruction had now become a trend. The remarks were made during a hearing by a seven-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan during an intra-court appeal against military trials of civilians. Representing convicted accused ArzamJunaid, presented arguments before the court, Advocate Salman Akram Raja argued that the main verdict stated that courts could not be established beyond

Article 175(3) of the Constitution. In response, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar noted that in service matters, initial hearings are conducted at the departmental level. Raja further asserted that Article 175(3) should also apply to army officers. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan observed that the Constitution was enacted in 1973 and that the 18th Amendment had reviewed martial law regulations. "Why do you want the SC to intervene in matters that are parliament's responsibility?" he questioned. Justice Afghan added that the issue would be examined if a military officer was involved and urged that the counsel to stay within the limits of the said case. He also mentioned that India had amended its laws through parliamentary legislation.

Uzbekistan echoes Pakistan's concerns regarding Afghanistan



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Like Pakistan, Uzbekistan was also deeply concerned about instability in Afghanistan, said Ambassador JavlonVakhobov during a discussion hosted by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). He noted that the recent increase in cross-border terrorism has negatively impacted both ongoing and proposed joint economic projects. Ambassador Vakhobov

emphasized that Uzbekistan's primary agenda was economic viability and connectivity, making stability in Afghanistan crucial. He expressed Uzbekistan's desire to collaborate with the Pakistani government to create an enabling environment for enhanced connectivity and praised Pakistan's efforts to engage with Central Asian states for multisectoral cooperation. During the event, Ambassador JauharSaleem, President of the IRS, highlighted the pressing issues of regional instability and the Afghan Taliban's failure to uphold their commitments from the Doha agreement. He pointed out that the Afghan Taliban face challenges beyond instability, including their inability to establish an inclusive government, ensure girls' education, and prevent their territory from being used for terrorism. Ambassador Saleem commended Uzbekistan for its proactive approach to fostering regional connectivity and expressed optimism for potential collaboration on various China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He also suggested that establishing the Central Asia + Pakistan think tank forum at the IRS would promote meaningful discussions, particularly concerning Afghanistan. Other participants included former Ambassador and Chief Research Fellow Mr. KadambaySultanov and Lead Research Fellow Mr. AlouddinKomilov. The discussions focused on expanding the strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and Pakistan through think tank collaboration, establishing an Expert Council on regional connectivity, and launching the Central Asia, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan (CAPA) center at the IRS. The event was well attended by diplomats, researchers, students and journalists.

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