



Islamabad POST

Friday, February 14, 2025

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China lauds Trump-Putin phone call, reiterates end to war

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan hosts largest refugee population

Detailed News On Page-08

Sarfaraz Ahmed predicts CT 2025 semi-finalists

Detailed News On Page-06



Pledge stronger economic ties

Pak, Turkiye eye \$5 billion trade target

We encourage our investors, who are driving force of economic cooperation, to engage actively in Pakistan, says Erdogan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Underscoring a shared commitment to fortifying economic ties between the two nations, Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdo an said on Thursday that both nations have agreed to ramp up efforts to boost bilateral trade to \$5 billion. "We agree with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to increase our efforts to reach the target of \$5 billion dollars in trade volume," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo an said at joint news conference with the Pakistani premier in Islamabad. Accompanied by a high-level delegation, Erdo an arrived in Islamabad late Wednesday night for a two-day visit to co-chair the 7th session of the Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) with PM Shehbaz. In light of the deep-rooted historical ties between the two nations, the HLSCC, which was established in 2009, stands as the highest-level mechanism institutionalising Turkiye-Pakistan solidarity, Erdogan said. "We have just concluded the seventh meeting of our council, where we reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening our relations. Within this framework, we signed 24 agreements covering trade, water resources, agriculture, energy, culture, family and social services, science, banking, education, defence, and healthcare," the Turkiye president added. Erdogan said they organised a business forum with the participation of entrepreneurs from various sectors, emphasising:

Continued on Page 06

UK to review PIA flight ban next month

The airline has been banned from operating flights to UK since July 2020

AGENCIES

LONDON: The British Safety Committee has reportedly scheduled a meeting for March 12, 2025 to review the resumption of Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) direct flights to the UK. During this meeting, the committee will assess the resumption of PIA's flights. The British Civil Aviation Authority and the Department for Transport (DFT) will present the latest audit reports of PIA and Pakistan Civil Aviation. If the British Safety Committee approves, PIA will resume direct flights to the UK. The airline has been banned from operating flights to the UK since July 2020. PIA management is hopeful about the restoration of flights to the UK following the successful resumption of operations in European countries, sources reveal.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President of Turkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif exchange document of joint declaration of 7th meeting of Turkiye-Pakistan High Level Strategic Cooperation Council. - DNA

Suicide bomber strikes Afghan ministry in Kabul

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Thursday's attack

AGENCIES

KABUL: One person was killed and at least three wounded in a suicide attack on the Afghan ministry of urban development and housing on Thursday, a Taliban government spokesman said. "The suicide attacker wanted to enter the ministry and one of the mujahideen (security forces) shot him and then in the result of the explosion another person near him was killed and three injured," interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani told AFP. Violence has waned in Afghanistan since the Taliban surged back to power and ended their

Continued on Page 06

Security forces killed 13 terrorists

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khwarij

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: On 12-13 February 2025, thirteen Khwarij were sent to hell in five separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On reported presence of Khwarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces in general area Khulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, resultant, five khwarij including Kharji Shah Gul @ Rohani were sent to hell.

Continued on Page 06

says Pakistan moving forward

COAS denies receiving any letter from PTI founder Imran Khan

"I will not read it even if I get it," says COAS Gen Munir in an informal conversation with journalists

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir denied receiving any letter from former premier and PTI founder Imran Khan on Thursday. Talking informally to the media and apparently referring to the incarcerated former premier's 'open letters', the army chief said he would not "read it [letter] even if I receive it". The army chief maintained that he would forward any such communication to the prime minister if he received it. General Munir maintained that the country was progressing satisfactorily and Pakistan was on the path of development. "Pakistan is moving forward and Pakistan has to move forward," the army chief added. The development came only a day after Khan, who has been behind bars since August 2023 in dozens of cases ranging from corruption to terrorism, penned a third open letter to Gen Munir, according to his lawyer. In the third letter, the jailed PTI founder reiterated

Continued on Page 06

Attempts made to create differences with PTI: Fazl

Role of parliament, politicians being abolished, says Maulana Fazlur Rehman

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday revealed that attempts were made to create differences between his party and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Differences emerged between the ruling coalition and the JUI-F chief - who played a key role in the toppling of former prime minister Imran Khan's government in 2022 - after the politico-religious party termed the February 8, 2024 elections "rigged". During his interaction

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

CM KP meets Imran Khan in jail

PTI founder directed CM to develop working relationship with newly appointed office-bearers

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday met party founder Imran Khan at Adiala Jail. The meeting was arranged in the conference room of Adiala Jail and it lasted for more than one and half hour. The overall political situation and party affairs were discussed during the meeting. According to sources, Imran Khan directed CM Gandapur to develop a good working relationship with the newly appointed office-bearers of PTI in the province. The issue of expelling Sher Afzal Marwat from the party was also discussed in the meeting. The sources added that PTI founder directed Gandapur to take measures in order to eradicate corruption from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PPP, JUI pillars of govt

Durrani says, 26th Amendment suspended constitution

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Former federal minister Muhammad Ali Durrani on Thursday said that "any alliance that supports the 26th Amendment will be affiliated with government not the opposition". "It is not our objective to bring a government alliance," in an interview to a private news channel veteran politician said. "The government is standing over two pillars, the People's Party and the JUI," Muhammad Ali Durrani said. "The PPP or the JUI save it, when it faces difficulties," he opined.

Justice Hilali remarks

Limits were crossed during May 9 mayhem

Constitutional bench hears plea against civilians' military trial; Salman Akram Raja's arguments to continue on Feb 18

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Musarrat Hilali has asked lawyer Salman Akram Raja to answer whether he acknowledged that a crime was committed on May 9, 2023, questioning why basic rights are now being emphasised after the limits were crossed during the incident. "Limits were crossed on May 9, and now you remember basic rights?" Justice Hilali remarked as a seven-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, heard an intra-court appeal against the military trials of civilians on Thursday. Raja, presenting convicted criminal Arzam Junaid, argued that in the United Kingdom, court-martial trials were conducted by high court-style judges rather than military officers, and the commanding officer can only refer serious cases to an independent forum. However, Justice Amin-Ud-Din countered that the bench was

Continued on Page 06

Govt clarifies

No reference against SC judges

Rana Sanaullah never talked about filing reference against judges, says Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar clarified on Thursday that the premier's aide, Rana Sanaullah, never talked about filing a reference against Supreme Court judges except for presenting his point of view regarding "misconduct" by some of the judges amid growing tensions over the nomination and transfer of senior jurists.

Continued on Page 06

Israel-Hamas deal back on track after mediators' efforts

Mediators have secured a commitment from the Israeli regime to implement a humanitarian protocol starting on Thursday morning

NEWS DESK

DOHA: The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says will proceed with the sixth phase of captives-prisoner exchange on Saturday, contingent upon "Israel honoring its commitments." Palestinian sources close to the negotiations said on Thursday that significant progress has been made in maintaining the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, facilitating the planned captive-prisoner exchange. "Hamas has confirmed to Egyptian officials its commitment... to conducting the sixth exchange of prisoners on time, on Saturday, as soon as Israel honors its commitment," a source said. Meanwhile, mediators have secured a commitment from the Israeli regime to implement a humanitarian protocol starting on Thursday morning, another source said. Hamas has sent a delegation led by its top negotiator and Gaza chief, Khalil al-Hayya, to Cairo for discussions with Egyptian officials to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the group said in a statement. The statement added that recent meetings have centered on ensuring the full implementation of the agreement's terms, particularly the provision of shelters,

Continued on Page 06

Trump to meet Putin in Saudi Arabia on Ukraine

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: US President Donald Trump will see his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Saudi Arabia for their first meeting since taking office in January. Trump's announcement came after an almost 90-minute phone conversation with the Russian leader, where they discussed in ending the nearly three-year Moscow offensive in Ukraine. "We ultimately expect to meet. In fact, we expect that he'll come here, and I'll go there, and we're gonna meet also probably in Saudi Arabia the first time, we'll meet in Saudi Arabia, see if we can get something something done," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. A date for the meeting "hasn't been set" but it will happen in

Continued on Page 06

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Pak keen to increase trade, investment with Japan: Tessori

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Thursday said that Pakistan was keen to increase trade with Japan and the investors of Japan would be provided all support and co-operation under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) project. He said this during a meeting with Japanese Ambassador Akamatsu Shichi here at the Governor House on Thursday. The Japanese Ambassador called on Kamran Tessori at the Governor House and extended invitation

to participate in Expo-25 to be held in the Japanese city of Osaka. Speaking on the occasion, the Japanese Ambassador said that Sindh province is very attractive for investment and Japanese investors were interested for investing their capital in various sectors. Akamatsu Shichi said that under the Governor's Initiative, the youth must be taught Japanese language and for his purpose all required support and assistance would be provided by the Embassy of Japan. Earlier, the Japanese top diplomat was presented with a guard of honor upon his arrival at the Governor House and the Ambassador

also planted a sapling at the Governor House as part of the tree plantation campaign. He later hoisted the flag and wrote his impressions in the visitor's book. The Japanese Ambassador also visited the "Bell of Hope" and the Quaid-e-Azam's historical room. The Japanese Ambassador further said that the ongoing projects under the Governor's Initiative will prove to be important for public welfare. Governor Kamran Tessori told the Ambassador that Japanese investors should benefit the attractive environment in the province by investing their capital in profitable sectors.

Youth's role vital in KP's development: Saadat

PESHAWAR: Youth play a crucial role in the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as they are empowered by the Right to Information Act (RTI) to monitor public institutions and ensure transparency in governance, said Syed Saadat Jahan, Deputy Director Communication of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC). Addressing a group of selected youth under the 'Youth Leadership Program', organized by the non-governmental organization CGPA here, he said that by utilizing RTI, young individuals could obtain authentic information from government bodies, thereby increasing accountability in public offices. Jahan explained the procedure for filing RTI requests and encouraged the youth to actively use this tool, particularly in matters of public interest. "The more RTI requests you file, the greater the pressure on public office-holders to uphold merit and fairness in governance," he stated. He emphasized that RTI can be instrumental in ensuring transparency in job recruitment, allocation of public funds, and distribution of public resources. He urged the participants to utilize this legal framework to promote accountability and good governance in the province.—DNA

First Lady of Turkiye visits Maarif International School



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The First Lady of Turkey, Emine Erdoğan visited the Maarif International School in H-8, Islamabad on Thursday during her official visit to Pakistan. The visit highlighted the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and Turkiye, particularly in the field of education. A special ceremony was held at the school to showcase the institution's contributions to Pakistan's education sector. The Maarif International School, a

project of the Turkish Maarif Foundation, is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art educational facilities, fostering academic excellence, and promoting cultural exchange between the two brotherly nations. During the event, students presented vibrant cultural performances to welcome the Turkish First Lady, reflecting the strong historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkiye. She engaged with young students, viewed their creative work, and expressed appreciation for the school's efforts in shaping future generations.

Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy exemplary diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations, deeply rooted in shared history, values, and mutual respect. Over the years, both nations have collaborated in various fields, including defense, trade, health, and education. Turkiye has been a key partner in supporting Pakistan's infrastructure and humanitarian initiatives, while Pakistan has reciprocated through unwavering diplomatic support. The Turkish Maarif Foundation, under the patronage of the Turkish government, has played a pivotal role in strengthening educational ties between the two countries. It has established several institutions in Pakistan, providing modern education with a global perspective while incorporating elements of Islamic values and cultural heritage. The Maarif International School is part of a global network of educational institutions established by the Turkish Maarif Foundation. These schools offer internationally recognized curricula, with a focus on science, technology, and languages, preparing students for higher education and global careers. The First Lady's visit reaffirmed Turkiye's commitment to supporting Pakistan's education sector and fostering people-to-people connections. The event concluded with an exchange of goodwill messages between the school administration and the Turkish delegation, further solidifying the educational partnership between the two nations.

SALU, Spanish varsity sign MoU to boost archaeological studies

SUKKUR: In a landmark move, Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) Khairpur and Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) in Spain have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance archaeological and cultural heritage studies. The MoU on Thursday, signed by SALU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk, aims to promote joint research projects, archaeological studies, and the preservation of Sindh's cultural heritage.—APP

CISSS, IICA sign MoU to enhance research, regional dialogue

KARACHI: The Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) has formalized an institutional collaboration with the Tashkent-based International Institute for Central Asia (IICA) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here the other day. The MoU aims to foster research and dialogue on a wide range of strategic, economic, and geopolitical issues of mutual interest. The MoU was signed by CISSS Executive Director Ambassador (R) Qazi M Khalilullah and Ambassador (R) Javlon Vakhobov, Managing Director of IICA, representing their respective institutions. Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening engagement with Central Asian Republics (CARs) and prioritized five key areas: political and diplomatic cooperation, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defense, and people-to-people exchanges. He further commended the steady progress in Pakistan-Central Asia relations, as evidenced by the establishment of a strategic partnership and the signing of landmark transit trade and preferential trade agreements. Highlighting Pakistan's strategic geographical advantage, Ambassador Khalilullah emphasized that the country provides the shortest land route for Central Asian states to access global markets through the ports of Pakistan. Referring to the major regional connectivity projects, particularly the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, he stressed the need to integrate the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with other regional initiatives to enhance economic inter-connectivity. Beyond physical infrastructure, he underscored the significance of soft connectivity, advocating for enhanced cooperation in tourism, education, and research to strengthen people-to-people ties.—DNA

French envoy opens French photographer's photos exhibition

DNA

KARACHI: A French photographer in Karachi, a civilization wrapped in colors, tells the cultural story of Pakistan and France through the lens of photographs. A glimpse of culture through the lens. A beautiful blend of culture, history, creation, Pakistani heritage and French aesthetics was presented in the exhibition of unique photographs at the Alliance Française Gallery. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Consul General of France. The French Consul General described the cultural junction as a symbol of strong relations between the two countries and appreciated the organization of the exhibition. On this occasion, the French photographer presented

beautiful pictures of the wonderful moments of French sports and the historical and cultural heritage of Pakistan. The French photographer said that the people of Pakistan are very hospitable.

After Karachi, he will present his photos for the exhibition in Lahore. On this occasion, the participants appreciated the photos and said that the cultural heritage of Pakistan is truly unparalleled,

and it is a rare opportunity to see it in this way. The exhibition not only reflects the cultural relations between Pakistan and France, but also gives a new dimension to the art of photography.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi offering dua during the inauguration ceremony of 24/7 Passport Office at the NADRA Mega Center in Nazimabad.

NBF hosts Najeeba's book launching ceremony

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) under the auspices of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training hosted a prestigious book launching ceremony of renowned writer and poet Dr. Najeeba Arif's latest literary endeavour, "Nawah e Kazima". The event took place at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium the other day. "Nawah e Kazima" is a meticulously crafted Urdu translation of the revered "Qaseeda Burda Shareef", a timeless and sacred poem that holds a distinguished place in Islamic world. Dr. Najeeba Arif who is also serving as Chairperson of Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Managing Director (MD) of the National Book Foundation (NBF) for publishing her book and organizing its launching ceremony. She stated that she was deeply indebted to her mother's prayers, which have guided her throughout her journey. "I feel her presence with me in every moment, and I am grateful for the love and support she instilled in me." She said that "May Allah include us all among the lovers and followers of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and may we continue to draw inspiration from his teachings and legacy." MD, NBF Murad Ali Mohmand said that it was an honour to publish Najeeba Arif's Book which was the best translated edition of popular Qaseeda Burda shareef. He said, "Reading culture shall be promoted and it is moral responsibility of everyone to play his or her part in it.—APP

Naqvi inaugurates 24/7 passport office in Nazimabad Karachi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has inaugurated a new passport office at the NADRA Mega Center in Nazimabad, Karachi for convenience of the citizens. This office will operate 24/7, with three shifts, allowing citizens to apply for passports at any time. During the inauguration ceremony, Interior Minister inspected the passport counters and met with the staff. He also interacted with citizens visiting the

NADRA Mega Center for passport and ID card services and inquired about their experiences. The citizens expressed satisfaction with the facilities provided and thanked the minister. The citizens praised the initiative, saying it's a great initiative that will make things much easier for the public. On the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi also addressed the issues faced by women visiting the center for biometric verification under the Benazir Income Support Program. He issued on-the-spot instructions

to the relevant authorities to resolve their problems immediately. The women appreciated the Minister's prompt action. Interior Minister emphasized that it's government's responsibility to resolve the issues being faced by the masses. A detailed briefing was also given to Interior Minister regarding the working of the passport office at the NADRA center. DG Passport Mustafa Jamal Qazi and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Mushaal calls for political efforts for Kashmir resolution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the wife of Kashmiri freedom leader Yasin Malik, said that intellectual, legal, and concerted political efforts are required to address the Kashmir issue. Speaking at a seminar titled "From Struggle to Unity: Re-imagining Kashmir's Future" at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIU), she stated that Kashmiris are enduring lock downs, restrictions, and a lack of basic facilities, which reflect an inhumane approach by India toward the region. Mushaal Mullick emphasized the need for a practical way forward in accordance with contemporary circumstances, cautioning against expending energy

without achieving tangible results. She said that India is systematically altering the region's dynamics through the genocide of Kashmiris and planned settlements. Kashmiris, she asserted, have rejected Indian elections, which she described as manipulated. She further stated that from Afzal Guru to Maqbool Butt and now Yasin Malik, Kashmiri leaders have faced severe persecution and sacrificed their lives for the cause, and their struggle will not be in vain. Ghulam Muhammad Safi, convener of the Hurriyat Conference, said that atrocities in Kashmir have become a routine, resulting in a persistent human rights crisis. He highlighted the use of rape as a weapon of war and the continuous denial of the right to self-determination. He urged

the United Nations to implement its Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and called upon the international community to act against what he termed the ongoing genocide in the region. He paid tribute to Kashmiri leaders, including Syed Ali Geelani and Yasin Malik, who, he said, have dedicated their lives to the cause. Abdullah Khan from the Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Strategic Studies stressed that Kashmir's resolution is a core commitment and fundamental right. He highlighted the role of educational institutions in raising awareness of the Kashmir cause and called for rigorous academic research on the subject to strengthen Pakistan's stance on international platforms.

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We extend our heartfelt welcome to the Türkiye President and hope that this visit will open a new chapter of prosperity, progress, and even stronger ties between our two countries.

URAAAN PAKISTAN
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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

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



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Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the President of Türkiye H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan plant a sapling at PM house.

ICCI lauds CDA for launching digitized One Window Facility

The event was also attended by several distinguished members of the ICCI, including Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, former President Ejaz Abbasi, executive members Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, Irfan Chaudhry, ICCI members Khalid Chaudhry, Naeem Siddiqui and other

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken a significant step toward improving public service delivery by introducing a fully digitized "One Window Facility" to streamline processes and offer a more efficient, accessible, and high-quality service experience for citizens and businesses in the capital city. The presentation, held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), was attended by a large group of ICCI executives, members, and local business leaders. The event provided valuable insights into the facility's features and benefits, marking a major milestone in the CDA's ongoing efforts to modernize and enhance its services. Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of ICCI, praised the CDA's leadership

for its commitment to modernizing public services, calling the digitization of the One Window Facility a "pioneering move" to better serve the public. President Qureshi also highlighted the importance of digitizing the ICCI itself, sharing that the Chamber is already implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, with plans to unveil a new mobile application in April. This app will allow members to complete all their Chamber-related

tasks from the convenience of their homes. The ICCI President emphasized the need for continued collaboration between the ICCI and CDA, underlining that stronger coordination between the two organizations will help address the challenges faced by the business community and facilitate a more conducive environment for business growth in Islamabad. Abdul Rauf Khan, Director of One Window Operations at CDA, spoke about the

Authority's commitment to serving the public and improving Islamabad's overall infrastructure, calling for collective efforts to "enhance the face of the city." Rashid Minhas, Deputy Director of IT, outlined the key features of the new facility, which will allow users to track their applications at each stage and make payments online. The event also included remarks from ICCI Executive Member Sardar Tahir Mahmood, who commended CDA's initiative and expressed hope that such efforts would continue to benefit Islamabad's business community. Senior Vice President of ICCI, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui said that the event provided valuable insights into the facility's features and benefits, marking a major milestone in the CDA's ongoing efforts to modernize and enhance its services. He

said that increased collaboration between CDA and ICCI would help resolve key business challenges and accelerate economic growth in the capital. The session concluded with a detailed presentation on the One Window Facility's digitization process, followed by a Q&A session. Mohammad Ishaq Sial, Executive Member of ICCI, moderated the event, commending the CDA for addressing a long-standing demand of the business community. The event was also attended by several distinguished members of the ICCI, including Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, former President Ejaz Abbasi, executive members Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, Irfan Chaudhry, ICCI members Khalid Chaudhry, Naeem Siddiqui and other.



Call for structured approach to construction dispute resolution

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engr Waseem Nazir, Thursday emphasized the need for a structured approach to dispute resolution in the construction industry. He highlighted four key fundamentals including capacity building, legislative support, a resolution framework, and awareness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Speaking at the International Alternate Dispute Resolution Conference 2025, organized by the Lahore High Court Bar Association, he addressed the critical role ADR plays in resolving commercial disputes. Chairman PEC Engr Waseem Nazir pointed out that Pakistan's construction industry lacks a culture of dispute resolution due to social pressure and other barriers, leading to prolonged legal battles. He hinted at the staggering amount involved in the cases that remain pending in courts, hampering industry progress. He stressed that contractors, consultants, and clients must develop trust in settlement mechanisms, as delays in construction disputes waste public funds, time, and resources. To address these challenges, Engr Waseem Nazir called for strategic interventions involving regulators, industry stakeholders, and the judiciary. He underscored the need for efficient reconciliation methods, stating that progress depends on the ability to streamline dispute resolution. The PEC, under its mandate, is actively working with the judiciary to establish ADR centers, aiming to make dispute resolution an integral part of the construction industry. Chairman PEC Engr Waseem Nazir said PEC is establishing Alternate Dispute Resolution centers, staffed by expert professionals to mediate disputes in large-scale projects. These centers will conduct hearings, involving all concerned parties, and provide expert opinions to facilitate resolution. He emphasized that ensuring national and international investment security is a priority, and these centers will play a crucial role in achieving that goal.—APP

Police arrest seven kite sellers with 1100 kites, string rolls

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police while conducting raids in different areas managed to arrest seven kite sellers and recovered 1100 kites and kite flying string rolls. According to a police spokesman, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani had directed the police officers to launch operations against kite flyers and kite suppliers. He informed in a joint operation conducted by CIA and Bani Police, an accused Nabil allegedly involved in supplying kites to the flyers was arrested with over 700 kites and string rolls. The accused had created a Facebook page, 'Balli Kites' through which he used to sell kites and kite flying string rolls.—APP

50 public sector schools to be upgraded by March

ISLAMABAD: Federal Education Secretary Muhiyuddin Ahmad Wani announced on Wednesday that 50 public sector schools in the federal capital will be upgraded and renovated by March 31 this year. The announcement was made during the inauguration ceremony of the newly upgraded Islamabad Model School for Boys in Sector F-6/2, marking a new chapter in the government's efforts to modernize public education. The Islamabad Model School for Boys, which had been in a dilapidated condition for over two decades, has now been transformed into a state-of-the-art institution. Equipped with modern facilities, including advanced electrical and plumbing labs, smart class room, computer lab, library, basketball court, newly renovated hall, the school stands as a testament to the government's commitment to providing quality education to all. Speaking at the ceremony, Secretary Wani emphasized that similar labs will be established in other schools undergoing upgrades, ensuring that students have access to cutting-edge resources. Wani highlighted the importance of making modern education accessible to children from underprivileged backgrounds, particularly those from slum areas. He also extended an invitation to students from religious seminaries, encouraging them to utilize the newly established facilities. "These labs are not just for one segment of society; they are for everyone. We want to ensure that no child is left behind," he said. The Education Secretary stressed the need for community ownership of these schools, urging local residents to take pride in and actively participate in maintaining the upgraded facilities. He also revealed plans to extend the initiative to Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, where schools will undergo similar transformations. Additionally, Danish Schools, known for their high standards, will soon begin operations in these regions. Wani expressed his gratitude to the officers and staff who worked tirelessly to bring the project to fruition. This is not just a government effort; it is a collective achievement. Everyone should own these projects.—DNA

Ayaz directs to transformation Parliament building

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday appreciated the efforts of Capital Development Authority (CDA) and National Assembly officers in improving Parliament's cleanliness and sanitation. He also directed the enhancement of banking services within the National Assembly, instructing officials to initiate negotiations with other banks to facilitate MNAs and employees better. The Speaker emphasized that all essential banking services, including credit card facilities, should be made available through renowned banks. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for separate parking arrangements for different categories of visitors and directed National Assembly security staff to implement stricter security checks at the entrance. He also urged the CDA to expedite the implementation of improved operational and infrastructural mechanisms for the Parliament. The Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also approved the establishment of a Parliament Museum, which will serve as a historical and educational centre for visitors. MNA Bilal Azhar Kayani proposed the establishment of separate entry lines for MNAs, guests, and staff of the National Assembly.—APP

Social media influence makes wedding events expensive

ISLAMABAD: In wake of high influence of social and digital media, a significant change in wedding traditions had been observed in the country. Due to increasing such influence, wedding culture had undergone a significant transformation in recent years with addition of many new trends. Now this simple celebration had evolved into a lavish, week-long extravaganza, complete with multiple events and excessive spending. The rise of new, elaborate traditions such as "Bride-to-Be" parties, Mehndi nights, and Dholki celebrations had contributed to the shift mainly due to having such trends in tv dramas and showbiz personalities in social media. These events, often characterized by lavish food, decorations, and entertainment, have become an integral part of Pakistani wedding culture. According to wedding planners and industry experts, the average cost of a wedding in Pakistan has skyrocketed, with some families spending upwards of Rs five million on a single event. Imtiaz Niazi a wedding planner said the wedding industry in Pakistan has become a multi-billion-rupee market as families willingly spend exorbitant amounts of money to make their wedding celebrations unforgettable not for just family members but for getting popularity.—APP

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Briefs

34 students receive Chinese Ambassador Scholarships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major boost to higher education in Balochistan, Pakistan, 34 students from the University of Gwadar (UG) received the Chinese Ambassador Special Scholarship Balochistan (CASSB) Phase II, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. This initiative, part of China's ongoing support for education in Pakistan, aims to reduce financial barriers and promote academic excellence among Pakistani youth. The awards were presented during a ceremony organized by UG's Financial Aid and Scholarship Office at the university's Seminar Hall. In addition to the Chinese ambassadorial scholarships, 55 female students were awarded scholarships from the Sahil Welfare Association in collaboration with the Pakistan Navy, covering their full four-year tuition.

HEC issues revised curricula for ADP, BS, MS in Physics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) has issued revised Curricula for Associate Degree, BS, and MS Programmes in Physics. According to the HEC, it was developed jointly by HEC and the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS), these updates aim to modernize Physics education and align it with industry and research advancements. The National Curriculum Review Committee, chaired by Prof. Dr. Mahmood-ul-Hassan from University of the Punjab, Lahore with Mr. Muhammad Ali Baig, Deputy Director at HEC as its Secretary, comprised senior academics from leading universities across Pakistan. The updated AD and BS Physics curricula now require a minimum of 68 and 134 credit hours, respectively, and have introduced new courses such as Medical Physics, Scientific Inquiry & Research Methods, and Artificial Intelligence in Physics, among others. For BS Physics, the revised curricula also allow universities to offer four electives that the universities may tailor to evolving scholarly and industry demands. To enhance practical exposure of students, a mandatory supervised internship and capstone project, each carrying three credit hours, have been incorporated in BS Physics. For MS Physics, the revised curriculum establishes a robust framework with six elective courses and a mandatory research requirement. Universities will offer elective courses based on their available faculty and academic resources, ensuring flexibility and specialization in diverse areas of physics.

Production oriented, market driven economy vital

There was a consensus on continued collaboration between China, Pakistan, and other regional partners to unlock the full potential of CPEC 2.0, ensuring it becomes a lasting engine of economic prosperity for Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) organized a talk on China Pakistan Economic Corridor 2.0: Impact, Challenges and Opportunities featuring a thought-provoking address by Mr. Haroon Sharif, Founder and Chairman of Pakistan Regional Economic Forum (PREF), and former Minister of State and Chairman of Pakistan's Board of Investment. Mr. Sharif shared his extensive insights based on years of experience in international development and economic diplomacy. The presentation delved into the evolving dynamics of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), its transformative impact on Pakistan's economy, and its future trajectory. The session was opened by Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the (IRS), who called the CPEC a game changer for Pakistan for building a foundation for fostering robust partnerships and driving key infrastructure and energy projects. He highlighted the remarkable achievements of the initial phase of CPEC, which has attracted \$25 billion in direct investment to Pakistan over the past 11 years. He further elaborated on the relocation of Chinese industries to Pakistan, stressing the critical role this will play in boosting Pakistan's industrial base. Additionally, Ambassador Saleem noted the potential of Pakistan's youthful population, particularly in the IT sector, which could become a major



asset in the growing digital economy. While providing a critical analysis of CPEC's impact, Mr. Haroon Sharif explained that many view CPEC as either a geopolitical shift or a massive infrastructure project, but in reality, it is an economic development approach based on connectivity. He stressed on understanding the concept of corridor which implies a connection between economic hubs in which large amount of economic resources and actors are concentrated along a defined geography. Mr. Sharif argued that connectivity alone is not enough; it must be complemented by trade expansion and private sector participation. About the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) he underscored that merely setting up infrastructure is not enough—there must be a comprehensive

policy framework, efficient governance, and adequate financing. Economic zones only thrive when there are joint ventures, investment-friendly policies, and structured governance models that attract investors. Mr. Sharif suggested overcoming the dependency mindset and adopt self-driven solution approach. Debt must be utilized to create productive assets. There was a consensus that Pakistan must transition from a debt-reliant model to private capital-driven economic activity. He argued that real economic progress will not come from government-to-government (G2G) agreements alone but from a market-driven approach where private investors and businesses lead. Pakistan must create an economic environment that attracts sustainable invest-

ment. People need to take ownership which will also help address the security challenges. Mr. Haroon suggested evidence-based policies by addressing the institutional and knowledge gaps and building financial institutions to support industrial growth. The importance of de-risking investments was also highlighted, particularly in areas like security, policy stability, exit strategies, and judicial clarity. One solution proposed was multi-country joint ventures involving China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, as well as corporate governance models that offer exit options to investors to make Pakistan a more attractive investment destination. The discussion was concluded with a suggestion to shift from input-driven policies to outcome-based strategies, ensuring the economic zones become productive. The key takeaway was that Pakistan must not repeat past mistakes but instead adopt a proactive, production oriented and market-driven approach to economic transformation. The session, moderated by Ms. Nabila Jaffer, Research Analyst for the China Program, brought together a diverse audience, including researchers, scholars, diplomats, and students. The hybrid session saw participation from universities, with many joining virtually via Zoom. There was a consensus on continued collaboration between China, Pakistan, and other regional partners to unlock the full potential of CPEC 2.0, ensuring it becomes a lasting engine of economic prosperity for Pakistan.

HBL, Int'l finance corporation sign \$80m agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: HBL Microfinance Bank (HBL MfB) has signed a US\$ 80 million Risk Sharing Agreement (RSA) with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group. This facility, which is supported by the Private Sector Window of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), will allow HBL MfB to share 50% of the risk on its microfinance loan portfolio of up to US\$ 80 million (in PKR equivalent) with IFC, on an unfunded basis. The collaboration between HBL MfB and IFC will significantly enhance access to finance for smallholder farmers and microenterprises across

the country, with a strong focus on women entrepreneurs. The signing of the agreement took place in Karachi in the presence of HBL MfB's and IFC's senior leadership including Maya Inayat Ismail, Chairperson of HBL MfB; Amir Khan, President and CEO of HBL MfB; and Makhtar Diop, Managing Director of IFC. As the pioneer and leader of microfinance in Pakistan, HBL Microfinance Bank has continuously led the industry in transforming financial inclusion. This RSA is another milestone, reinforcing the Bank's legacy of innovation and leadership in addressing the evolving financial needs of underserved communities. By being the first microfinance bank to establish an agreement on such a scale, HBL MfB is not only pushing bounda-

ries but also redefining industry standards, ensuring that microfinance remains a catalyst for empowerment and economic growth. This agreement also underscores the Bank's resilience in navigating the challenges of the microfinance sector. Amidst an evolving economic landscape, HBL MfB remains committed to developing forward-thinking solutions that enhance financial accessibility while mitigating risks. The RSA exemplifies this approach — leveraging strategic partnerships to strengthen financial resilience, expand lending capabilities, and maintain sustainable growth. Amir Khan, President & CEO, HBL Microfinance Bank, while sharing his views on the RSA, said, "This partnership with IFC is a testament to

Shaza engaging Huawei to advance Pakistan's cloud infrastructure

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, held a meeting with Barry Xu, Vice President of ME&CA Cloud at Huawei, to discuss the advancement of Pakistan's digital infrastructure under the government's Cloud First Policy. The discussions focused on the establishment of a dedicated Pakistan Cloud Region, aimed at enhancing public sector operations and accelerating digital transformation. Additionally, the Minister proposed the development of Pakistan's first GPU-based AI Cloud, designed to support large-scale AI models and deep learning applications. Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Shaza Fati-

ma Khawaja stated, "Pakistan is committed to embracing cutting-edge technologies that align with our vision for a robust digital economy. By collaborating with global leaders like Huawei, we aim to strengthen our digital infrastructure, empower startups, and foster innovation that benefits our youth and economy." Barry Xu reaffirmed Huawei's commitment to Pakistan's IT and AI sectors, recognizing the country's potential as a regional IT hub. Both sides explored avenues for enabling Pakistani startups to leverage Huawei's advanced resources. They agreed to finalize strategies and expand collaboration during the upcoming Digital Foreign Direct Investment Forum in Islamabad, according to an official statement issued here.

ANF recovers over 66 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducted five operations across the country, arrested six accused and recovered over 66 kg of drugs worth more than Rs 30 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 300 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a college in Mansehra. 12 kg hashish hidden in the shoulder bag of an accused was recovered near a university in Karachi. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. 22.2 kg hashish concealed in the travel bag of the accused was seized on Gulshan-e-Ravi Road in Lahore and the accused was arrested. 12 kg opium, 16 kg heroin, and 2 kg ice were recovered from the possession of two accused held near Shahrukh Alam in Multan. 1.964 kg ice was recovered from Jamrud in the Khyber district and an accused was arrested. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.—APP

Death anniversary of Zia Mohyeddin observed

ISLAMABAD: The second death anniversary of renowned Pakistani actor, broadcaster, and literary icon Zia Mohyeddin observed on Thursday. He was born on June 20, 1931, in Faisalabad. He had a distinguished career spanning acting, directing, broadcasting, and literature. He gained international fame with his role in the British film Lawrence of Arabia (1962) and worked extensively in theater and television in both Pakistan and the UK. Zia Mohyeddin was widely recognized for his deep, resonant voice and exceptional narration skills. He hosted the iconic Zia Mohyeddin Show in the 1970s and later served as the president of the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Karachi, where he played a key role in nurturing young talent. For his contributions to literature and performing arts, he was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2003 and the Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2012. He passed away on February 13, 2023, at the age of 91 after a brief illness.—APP

MoITT through PSEB establish 43 STPs

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), through the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), has established 43 Software Technology Parks (STPs) across the country, including in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. These parks host over 350 IT and IT-enabled Services (ITeS) companies, employing 18,000 professionals across a combined covered area of 1.9 million square feet. Notably, 20% of the workforce in these STPs consists of women, said an official of the Ministry of IT. These facilities, set up between FY 2022-24, are located in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Gilgit, Rahim Yar Khan, Faisalabad,

Swat, Quetta, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Gujrat, Jamshoro, Nawabshah, Gakuch, Bahawalpur, and Khuzdar. The STPs contribute significantly to Pakistan's economy, generating \$100 million annually in foreign exchange earnings and \$15 million in domestic revenue. To further enhance the country's ICT infrastructure, a state-of-the-art IT Park is under development in Karachi, covering 1.12 million square feet. Expected to be operational by 2027, the \$186 million project will create 13,400 jobs and is projected to boost IT exports by \$90 million. Similarly, an IT Park in Islamabad, covering

720,000 square feet, is currently under construction. Scheduled for completion in 2025 at \$88.4 million, it is expected to generate 7,500 jobs and increase IT exports by \$70 million. As part of its digital empowerment initiatives, the government plans to establish 250 e-Rozgaar centers across Pakistan over the next three years (by 2027) under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) project, "Prime Minister's Initiatives—Support for Startups, Specialized IT Trainings, and Venture Capital." These centers aim to support 25,000 freelancers and entrepreneurs, generating an additional \$18-20 million in revenue.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students enjoying swings in a funfair held at Islamabad Model College for girls Bharakahu on Thursday.—DNA

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KSA's response to Netanyahu

THE Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on Sunday in response to remarks made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during an interview with Israel's Channel 14. Netanyahu had stated: "The Saudis can create a Palestinian state in Saudi Arabia; they have a lot of land over there." The Saudi statement, despite its clarity and careful choice of words, which included precise and strong descriptions, intentionally refrained from granting Benjamin Netanyahu undue prominence. It did not commence with a direct response to him; rather, it began by expressing gratitude to "brotherly countries" for their "condemnation, disapproval and complete rejection" of Netanyahu's remarks. Furthermore, it emphasized that "the Kingdom values the positions that emphasize the centrality of the Palestinian issue among Arab and Muslim nations." This introduction highlights the supportive stances that emerged from several Arab and Islamic countries, including those that have treaties with Israel, such as the UAE, Egypt and Jordan. Despite their diplomatic relations, these nations issued clear statements condemning the extreme Israeli remarks and expressing their rejection of any actions that threaten the security and stability of Saudi Arabia, as well as the resolution of the Palestinian issue. The Saudi statement regarded Netanyahu's remarks as an attempt "to divert attention from the continuous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian brothers in Gaza," characterizing these actions as "ethnic cleansing." Saudi Arabia is aware of the cunning policies employed by the Israeli prime minister, who is accused by his opponents within Israel of engaging in deceit and manipulation. Consequently, the Kingdom has chosen not to fulfill Netanyahu's objectives, which aim to draw Saudi Arabia into trivial and pointless disputes. Thus, the Kingdom has declined to participate in verbal confrontations and has preferred to reaffirm its national principles regarding the Palestinian issue. Returning to the beginning of the statement, Saudi Arabia's expression of gratitude toward "brotherly nations" serves a dual purpose. It aims to foster a unified Arab public opinion regarding the rights of the Palestinian people, opposing their displacement from their homeland and emphasizing the importance of establishing an independent state. This Arab consensus is envisioned as the foundation for a broader Islamic stance, which would facilitate international support from influential capitals in the EU and other parts of the world. Notably, Riyadh is spearheading ongoing efforts by leading the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, as announced by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan at the UN General Assembly last September. This initiative is in collaboration with Arab and Islamic countries, as well as the EU and Norway. The objective is to develop a "practical plan to achieve shared goals for the desired peace," as stated by Prince Faisal, who affirmed that "we will exert our utmost efforts to establish a reliable and irreversible path toward a just and comprehensive peace."



China and USAID closing

RECENTLY, the US political circle has witnessed a "Game of Thrones" unfold over the fate of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), with both parties trading accusations and engaging in heated debates. What began as a US domestic issue has, as has often been the case in the past, turned into an opportunity to blame China when internal conflicts and disputes within Washington reach a stalemate. As anticipated, multiple US media outlets and certain politicians have collectively directed their narratives toward China, claiming that closing USAID would "hand a win to Beijing," provide China with a golden opportunity to fill the US "power vacuum," and even serve as a "great gift" to China, among other things. In essence, these arguments remain political rhetoric rooted in US partisan battles, primarily aimed at gaining political leverage, criticizing and blocking the Donald Trump administration's decisions. In recent years, the "China threat" narrative has become a convenient tool for both US parties to attack their political opponents. If one side wants to stop the other from doing something, they argue that it would benefit China and lead to failure in the competition with China. According to this script, regardless of whether one supports the continuation or the closing of USAID, there's always a way to bring China into the issue: supporting its continuation can be portrayed as a tool to counter China and compete for international influence while supporting its closure can be depicted as wasting money abroad and undermining the ability to compete with China in terms of national power. In short, for these US politicians, no matter the issue, they can always find a way to link it to the "China threat" narrative. Claiming that closing USAID is a "gift" to China reflects an outdated logic. However, this rhetoric exposes the deep-rooted hegemonic mind-set and arrogance of certain individuals in the US. They view developing countries as "blanks to be filled," reflecting a disrespectful attitude that treats these nations as mere pawns. Seeing foreign aid as an "engine of geopolitical influence abroad" reveals the reality that US assistance often comes with political conditions. Moreover, when defending USAID, these individuals are particularly familiar with how to "counter China's influence" in recipient countries. All of this has laid bare the true mind-set of the US to the international community and serves as a wake-up call for many countries. Whether or not USAID adjusts its global strategic layout has nothing to do with China. China has never participated, nor will it ever participate, in the internal political games of other countries, and we have no interest in how the US distributes its foreign aid or to whom it is given. As a responsible major country, China conducts itself with integrity and openness on the international stage, treating other nations with sincerity, fairness, and selflessness. We are committed to forging a new type of international relations based on cooperation and mutual benefit - a path that rejects the traditional geopolitical mind-set of "spheres of influence" and transcends the historical trap of zero-sum competition. China's foreign aid focuses on improving the well-being of local populations, adhering to a policy of no political strings attached, and respecting right of recipient countries to independently choose their development paths and models. We will never use aid as a tool to interfere in other countries' internal affairs or to seek political privileges. This approach is widely recognized and respected internationally, and voices that attempt to interpret China's global vision through a narrow lens will find no resonance on the global stage.

Welfare, development & festivities return to Punjab (Part-I)

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Punjab School Education Department's introduction of 04 new subject groups of health sciences, agriculture, information technology (IT) and entrepreneurship for matriculation examinations, besides the traditional science and arts streams; the establishment of Modern EdTech schools by the Punjab Education Foundation; and above all, the merit-based appointments of education officers are vivid examples...

IMPROVING macroeconomic indicators like lowering inflation and policy rates; growing GDP and foreign exchange reserves; rising remittances and exports; and shrinking twin deficits of trade and current account lead to microeconomic stability, resulting in increasing investors' confidence; accelerated economic activities; surge in GDP growth rate; and improving public spending in education, health and entertainment. Pakistan, in the first year of PML-N-led coalition government, has taken major strides in all sectors of economy, not only shielding the country from potential perils of impending default but ensuring quick takeoff through 'Uran Pakistan,' an ambitious 5E-based roadmap of economic transformation by focuses on improving exports, equity, energy security, environmental protection and e-governance. Government has reduced inflation from 38% to 4%, and policy rate from 23% to 12%; has increased GDP growth rate from 0.29% to 2.38%, projected to reach 3.5% in FY25; has improved foreign exchange reserves from \$4.4 billion to \$11.7 billion; has lowered trade deficit from \$27 billion to \$17 billion; and will save approximately Rs 1.7 trillion in Government expenditures over the next 10 years due to pension reforms (Pakistan Reforms Report 2025: Mishal Pakistan, Country Partner Institute of the World Economic Forum, 09 February 2025). All the above-mentioned initiatives along with several regulatory reforms under SIFC (Special Investment Facilitation Council) have invoked investors' confidence in the country's economic turnaround, translating into Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) crossing a record of 100K points to become one of the best performing stock markets in the world (CNN Business). The revival of CPEC Phase-II is another major breakthrough for the establishment of SEZs (Special Economic Zones), relocation of labor-intensive Chinese industries to Pakistan and mechanization of agriculture, leading to the creation of a number of employment opportunities and socio-economic development of the people. Perfectly in sync with the economic policies of the federal government, Punjab Government has introduced many projects for the development of infrastructure and wel-

fare of its almost 128 million people, more than 65% of which are below the age of 30 (7th Population & Housing Census, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics). Under the visionary leadership of its vibrant Chief Minister Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab is investing liberally in productive education and rewarding training of its youth, not only in the traditional skills but also in the cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, augmented and virtual realities (AR/VR), quantum computing, green technologies (solar and wind energy), semiconductor and new energy vehicles (EV). Government's schemes like Early Childhood Education (ECE); Lahore Kindergarten School, besides plans to establish kindergarten schools in other districts too; Chief Minister's School Nutrition Program which was started by providing tetrapack milk pack to more than four lakh students in 3527 schools of Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajpur and Muzaffargarh; launch of a special campaign to ensure access to education for out-of-school children; introduction of spoken English and character-building classes, besides 'Theme of the Month' in schools show Government's commitment to develop well-rounded personalities of its younger generation, because these initiatives will notably equip them with critical thinking and communication skills but with the ethical value too. Honhar Scholarship worth Rs 25 billion; prizes worth lakh-s of rupees for position holders of education boards, besides paying all their educational expenses; free Laptops worth Rs 10 billion, CM Skills Development Program to provide training to students in advanced IT courses in the fields like cloud computing, cyber security, data analytics, graphic designing, artificial intelligence, machine learning and game development are testament to Government's commitment to the capacity building of its human resources to turn them into productive asset for socio-economic development of the country. Punjab School Education Department's introduction of 04 new subject groups of health sciences, agriculture, information technology (IT) and entrepreneurship for matriculation examinations, besides the traditional science and arts streams; the establishment of Modern Ed-Tech schools by the Punjab Education Foundation; and

above all, the merit-based appointments of education officers are vivid examples of Government's sincerity to not only improve upon the quality of education system in the province, but to provide students with expanded career-oriented options as well. Public School Reorganization Programme (PSRP) which would not only save Rs. 40 billion but would create employment opportunities for 70,000 youth; establishment of 5,000 new classrooms in PSRP schools, besides setting up STEM, IT and science labs in 1,000 elementary schools of the province; installation of solar-powered charging stations in colleges; increase in the number of students in schools by several hundred percent by outsourcing them to well-reputed educationists and school chains; launch of a pilot project of satellite internet in DPS Model Town Lahore; launch of an internship programme benefiting 3, 527 schools in South Punjab, besides the biggest higher education innovation program in the history of Punjab under which 7354 college teacher-interns were recruited in government colleges of the province @ Rs. 50,000 per month for six months; provision of free e-bike to one lakh students, and busiest girls' colleges in every tehsil; plans to hold a school hockey league and Pakistan's biggest "School Olympics" in Punjab are some of the other flagship initiatives of Punjab Government for the improvement of learning outcomes of the younger generation. Pakistan's first 'Nawaz Sharif IT City' Lahore is nearing its completion. Major tech giants of the world are ready to join the project to spur IT revolution in the country, contributing a lot to the development of the IT industry and IT exports. During Chief Minister Punjab's recent visit to China in December 2024, Gobi Partners, a leading venture capital firm in Asia, announced the launch of a \$50 million fund to boost startup ecosystem to foster innovation and economic growth in the province. Besides her plan to offer international scholarships for Punjab's youth to pursue higher education at prestigious global institutions, Punjab Chief Minister has also announced to establish an education city in Nawaz Sharif IT City, aimed at attracting top global universities to set up their campuses there.

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Forced migration: A violation of human rights and international law

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The United Nations has established frameworks to address the plight of displaced populations. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines the rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect them, explicitly prohibiting their forced return to countries where they face persecution, a principle known as non-refoulement. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)...

THROUGHOUT history, nations have endured wars, occupations, and forced migrations, yet the idea of an entire population being asked to leave its homeland and settle elsewhere remains an extraordinary and deeply unsettling proposition. The notion of relocating a country's inhabitants to another land raises profound ethical, legal, and political questions. Such an act would not merely be displacement; it would amount to a forced eviction, a violation of sovereignty, and, in many cases, an outright usurpation. Forced migration, a tragic phenomenon that has scarred human history, continues to raise these questions on both humanitarian and legal fronts. Across the ages, countless nations have been compelled to leave their homelands due to war, persecution, or environmental calamities. These displacements leave deep marks on humanity, reminding us of the fragility of peace and the enduring struggle for justice. The question of whether a country or its people can be forcibly removed is not merely theoretical but a pressing issue that touches upon the very foundations of international law and morality. The United Nations, as the principal international body responsible for maintaining global peace and security, upholds the sovereignty of nations and the rights of peoples to live in their own land. The UN Charter explicitly forbids the forcible acquisition of territory and displacement of populations. The principle of self-determination, enshrined in international law, grants people the right to govern themselves without external coercion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, affirms the right of individuals to live freely in their homeland without fear of persecution or expulsion. It states that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality or exiled from their country. Any attempt to forcibly remove an entire population would constitute a gross human rights violation, contradicting fundamental international laws that protect people from ethnic cleansing and genocide. History provides numerous examples of forced migration, each a testament to the suffering and resilience of displaced populations. The Palestinian displacement, beginning in 1948 during the Arab-Israeli War, stands as one of the most enduring and contentious cases. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes, creating a refugee crisis that persists today. Many found shelter in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, while others scattered across the globe, forming a diaspora that

continues to yearn for a return to their ancestral lands. Similarly, the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 forced millions of Tutsis to flee their homes amidst unimaginable violence and loss. More recently, the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, has displaced over 12 million people, with 6.5 million fleeing the country entirely. These examples underscore the devastating consequences of forced migration: the loss of livelihoods, the erosion of cultural identity, and the creation of generations of refugees who struggle to rebuild their lives. The United Nations has established frameworks to address the plight of displaced populations. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines the rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect them, explicitly prohibiting their forced return to countries where they face persecution, a principle known as non-refoulement. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include targets aimed at reducing inequalities and addressing the needs of displaced populations. Goal 10 emphasizes the importance of safe, orderly, and regular migration, reflecting the international community's commitment to upholding human dignity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a critical role in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and advocating for their rights, ensuring that forced migration is addressed through legal and humanitarian channels rather than coercion or violence. At the heart of the issue lies the question of Palestine. For over seven decades, Palestinians have faced occupation, displacement, and systemic efforts to erase their identity. The idea that they could be forcibly relocated to another land is not only morally indefensible but also legally impermissible. Palestinians have a historical and legal right to their land, recognized by numerous UN resolutions and international legal instruments. Any attempt to evict them and resettle them elsewhere would not be a peaceful solution but rather a continuation of historical injustices. It would amount to a de facto annexation of Palestinian land, a policy that has been consistently condemned by the international community. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which governs the treatment of civilians in times of war, explicitly prohibits the transfer of populations under occupation, further underscoring the illegality of such actions. Would the world allow such an act of usurpation? History suggests that international responses to such situations are often dictated by political interests rather than moral principles. While international law is clear, enforcement is

selective, often depending on the will of powerful nations. The so-called "might is right" doctrine, where power dictates the fate of nations, has been seen throughout history, from colonial occupations to modern-day conflicts. The analogy of the "stick and buffalo" formula is apt in this context: those with power dictate the rules, regardless of legality or justice. In the case of Palestine, the equation of force and influence is heavily skewed, with powerful international players shaping the discourse. The support of major Western nations for Israel, despite repeated violations of international law, underscores this reality. If justice were to prevail, international law would be enforced uniformly, preventing any nation from forcibly displacing another. It is difficult to ignore the historical context in which the Jewish people, who suffered expulsions and persecution, particularly in Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe, now stand as the dominant force in displacing another people. The irony is profound and tragic. The pain of historical suffering should have engendered a commitment to justice and human rights, yet instead, history appears to be repeating itself - this time with Palestinians as the victims. It is not merely a case of historical vengeance but a political reality shaped by power dynamics, geopolitical interests, and ideological narratives. Ultimately, the forced migration of any population, whether Palestinians or others, represents a profound violation of human rights and international law. The global response to forced migration must be guided by a commitment to justice, compassion, and the rule of law. Diplomatic solutions, grounded in dialogue and mutual respect, offer the best hope for resolving conflicts that lead to displacement. Violence and coercion have no place in a world that aspires to peace and justice. The United Nations and the global community have a duty to prevent such actions and to ensure that displaced populations are protected, supported, and given the opportunity to rebuild their lives. History has shown us the devastating consequences of forced displacement. It is incumbent upon us to learn from these lessons and strive for a world where no one is compelled to leave their homeland against their will. The principles enshrined in the UDHR and other international treaties must serve as our guide, reminding us that the dignity and rights of every individual are inviolable. Only through a collective commitment to justice and humanity can we hope to prevent the tragedies of forced migration and build a more equitable and peaceful world.

Briefs

Pak, Turkiye
eye \$5 billion
trade target

FROM PAGE 01

"We encourage our investors, who are the driving force of economic cooperation, to engage more actively in Pakistan." Both countries signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs), protocols, and cooperation agreements across various sectors to further strengthen bilateral economic ties. Addressing a joint presser after the signing of the agreements, PM Shehbaz expressed hope that the visit would prove to be highly beneficial. The prime minister highlighted the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and Turkiye, emphasising that relations between the two nations span centuries. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Turkish Minister of Trade Omer Bolat exchanged the signed documents of the declaration on the MoU between the Export Credit Bank of Turkiye and the Export-Import Bank of Pakistan.

UK to
review PIA
flight ban...

FROM PAGE 01

The airline's management has already devised a plan to begin flights to London, Manchester, and Birmingham immediately upon receiving approval. A two-member PIA team recently returned to Pakistan after reviewing the preparations for flight operations in the UK. A month ago, PIA resumed its operations to Europe on Friday with a flight departing for Paris. The first flight, PK-749, took off from Islamabad International Airport (IAP) on Friday at 12:10 pm, utilising a Boeing 777 (APBGG) aircraft. The flight carried 330 passengers and 14 crew members.

Limits were
crossed
during...

FROM PAGE 01

concerned with Pakistan's legal framework and warned that unnecessary discussion on foreign laws would waste time. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar further pointed out that British law was related to military discipline, whereas the current case involves civilians. "How can such a law be applicable to civilians?" he questioned. To this, Raja responded that the British example was cited in the context of ensuring transparent and independent trials. During the hearing, Justice Hilali said that the pending appeals seek the restoration of annulled provisions. She emphasised that if the provisions are to be reviewed, international laws must also be considered.

COAS
denies
receiving...

FROM PAGE 01

election rigging allegations, saying "money launderers" were brought into power via manipulated polls. "The PTI founder, in his letter to the army chief, has raised the issue of giving preference to the minority over the majority through election fraud," his lawyer Faisal Chaudhry had said in a statement. Earlier, the 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician said he had penned two "open letters" to the army chief on Feb 3 and Feb 8, "because all democratic avenues had been obstructed".

Attempts
made to...

FROM PAGE 01

with journalists today, the JUI-F chief said: "Attempt was made to divide the opposition. Political games were played [in the country]." Reiterating his allegations about "fraud elections", Fazl said that representatives of the "dummy government" could not face the people. "People do not trust governments that lack public mandate," he added. Speaking on the occasion, the JUI-F chief also raised serious questions over the prevailing electoral system in the country.

Saud, Kamran, Shaheen fined for
breaching ICC Code of Conduct

Pacer Shaheen Afridi was fined 25% of his match fee for violating Article 2.12 of the Code

DNA

DUBAI: Pakistan's trio of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Ghulam has been penalised by the International Cricket Council (ICC) following their tri-nation series clash against South Africa in Karachi on Wednesday. The ICC has fined three players for violating Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the match. Pacer Shaheen Afridi was fined 25% of his match fee for breaching Article 2.12 of the Code, which addresses "inappropriate physical contact with a player, player support personnel, umpire, match referee, or any other individual (including a spectator) during an international match."

The incident took place during the 28th over of South Africa's innings, when Shaheen intentionally blocked batter Matthew Breetzke as he attempted a single. This led to physical contact and a heated exchange between



the two players. In a separate incident, Saud Shakeel and substitute fielder Kamran Ghulam were fined 10% of their match fees for celebrating too closely to batter Temba Bavuma after

his run-out in the 29th over. Both players were found guilty of violating Article 2.5 of the Code, which pertains to "using language, actions, or gestures that insult or could provoke an

aggressive reaction from a batter following their dismissal in an International Match." In addition to the financial fines, each of the three players was awarded one demerit point on

their disciplinary records. None of them had any previous offenses in the past 24 months.

All players have accepted the sanctions imposed, and no formal hearings will be held regarding the incidents.

Meanwhile, the Men in Green reached the final of the tri-nation series after defeating the Proteas by six wickets in a record-breaking 352-run chase, courtesy of exceptional centuries by skipper Mohammad Rizwan and deputy Salman Ali Agha.

The duo added a record 260 runs for the fourth wicket before Lungi Ngidi dismissed Salman on the fifth delivery of the penultimate over. Agha top-scored for Pakistan with 134 off 103 deliveries, studied with 16 fours and two sixes. Rizwan, on the other hand, carried his bat through the innings with an unbeaten 122 off 128 deliveries, laced with nine fours and three sixes. The hosts will now take on New Zealand in the final of the tri-nation series on February 14 at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi.

Sarfaraz predicts Champions
Trophy 2025 semi-finalists

'Pakistan have a really good chance of defending that title,' says Sarfaraz Ahmed

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has predicted the semi-finalists for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025, which is scheduled to take place in Pakistan and the UAE next week.

Despite the competitive nature of the event, the wicket-keeper batter ruled out the likes of England, South Africa and New Zealand, naming Pakistan, India, Australia and Afghanistan as the teams most likely to reach the knockout stage.

"If I had to pick four semi-finalists, I'd probably go for Pakistan, India, Australia and Afghanistan at this stage, but I would not rule anyone out," said Sarfaraz. The 2017 Champions Trophy-winning captain highlighted the pressure of playing on home soil for Pakistan, acknowledging the high expectations from fans, especially with the team being the defending champions. "There will be pressure. Pa-

kistan being at home, being the defending champions, there will be high expectations, but the fans will get behind them," he said. He also expressed particular praise for Afghanistan, a team he believes could be a strong contender in the tournament. "It is a stacked field, of course, every team can win it. I think Afghanistan have a really strong team, Australia and India as well. Their spin options are so good and you will need that to succeed in these conditions," he said. With an abundance of spin talent in their squad, Af-



and we're talking about some of the best - especially Babar Azam," he said. "He is a different Babar to the one that played in 2017, a more mature player and a dominant player in the game. His batting will be so important for Pakistan and so will Fakhar Zaman's," he added.

The former captain emphasised the importance of Pakistan's bowling attack, naming Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf as two of the best in the world right now. Both bowlers have been in sensational form, and their contributions will be crucial for Pakistan's success in the tournament. "With the ball, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf are brilliant bowlers and are playing well. The captain, Mohammad Rizwan, is also a wicket-keeper-batter, which worked pretty well for me back in 2017," he said. As always, the high-octane Pakistan-India encounter will be one of the most anticipated games in the tournament. Sarfaraz acknowledged the pressure and hype surrounding the match but stressed the importance of staying calm and playing with the same intensity as any other match.

Elena Rybakina
'disappointed' after
Vukov remains banned

Vukov was provisionally suspended by the governing body of women's tennis

LONDON: Elena Rybakina was disappointed at the WTA's decision to uphold a ban against her former coach Stefano Vukov following an investigation into a potential breach of its code of conduct, she said on Wednesday. Rybakina, who won the 2022 Wimbledon title under Vukov, ended their five-year partnership in August, days ahead of the U.S. Open. In January, Vukov was provisionally suspended by the governing body of women's tennis, after which Rybakina said he had "never mistreated her". Vukov denies wrongdoing and told The Athletic last month that he "never abused anyone" after the media outlet first reported the WTA's provisional ban. "The WTA confirms that the independent investigation into a potential breach of the WTA Code of Conduct by Stefano Vukov has concluded," the WTA said in a statement. "Following this process, the suspension remains in place. To protect the confidentiality and integrity of the investigation and its findings, the WTA will not provide further details. "We remain committed to ensuring that all matters are handled in a fair and objective manner in accordance with the WTA Code of Conduct." The WTA did not provide details on the length of the suspension. Ahead of last month's Australian Open, Rybakina said she would rehire Vukov to her team, but his suspension made him ineligible to obtain a credential for WTA tournaments. "I'm just disappointed with the situation, and how the process went. I'm not going to comment much on that any more," the 25-year-old world number seven told reporters after her win over Rebecca Sramkova at the Qatar Open. "I'm focusing on my matches, and when I go on the court I'm thinking only about the way I need to play, so I'm concentrating on myself, and also, of course, on the opponent. "Definitely, it's not the best time, but as I said, I'm always focusing on my matches and want to perform as best as I can." Rybakina briefly worked with Novak Djokovic's former coach Goran Ivanisevic, who departed her team after a fourth-round exit at the Australian Open. - Agencies

RCB appoint Rajat
Patidar as new captain

NEW DELHI: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) on Thursday announced rising Indian batter Rajat Patidar as their new captain for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season. While former captain Virat Kohli was initially considered to take over again, he declined the opportunity following the non-retention of Faf du Plessis in the IPL mega auction. The franchise held a press conference to put an end to the ongoing discussions regarding the new leader of the side. Kohli had captained RCB from 2011 to 2023, though the team never clinched an IPL title under his leadership. Nevertheless, 2016 was a memorable year, with RCB reaching the final, only for Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) to deny them IPL glory. Rajat Patidar, a dynamic and promising batter, has garnered leadership experience through his captaincy of Madhya Pradesh in domestic tournaments like the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) and the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Under his leadership, MP reached the final of the SMAT, showcasing his ability to lead effectively. With no clear leadership option picked in the IPL auction, Patidar was seen as the ideal candidate to succeed du Plessis and take charge of the RCB squad. During the press conference, Mo Bobat, RCB's team director, explained why Kohli was not offered another stint as captain. Bobat acknowledged Kohli as the "natural leader" of the team and stated that he was certainly considered for the role but emphasized that Kohli's leadership goes beyond the captaincy title. - Agencies

Indian cricket players to
travel without families

The BCCI's decision stems from relatively short duration of the tour

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) introduced a new travel policy that will come into effect for the first time during the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan and the UAE. Under the new guidelines, Indian cricket players will not be allowed to have their families accompany them for the duration of the tournament, which begins on February 15. The Indian team, led by Rohit Sharma, will kick off their campaign in Dubai on February 20 with a match against Bangladesh. This will be followed by a highly anticipated clash against arch-rivals Pakistan on February 23 and a final group-stage encounter with New Zealand on March 2. While the Indian squad will play their matches in Dubai, the rest of the tournament will take place across three venues in Pakistan from February 19. The BCCI's decision stems from the relatively short duration of the tour, which lasts just over three weeks, including the final on March 9. Under the new policy, families are permitted to travel with players only during tours lasting 45 days or more, and only for a

maximum of two weeks. A senior BCCI official confirmed to PTI, on the condition of anonymity, that no players would be accompanied by their wives or partners for this tour. "If anything changes then it is different but as of now, the players are unlikely to be accompanied by their wives or partners for this tour. One of the senior players had enquired about it and he was told that the policy decision will be followed," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "Since the tour is of less than one month, families won't be accompanying the players. But if exceptions are made, I think that individual will have to bear the full expenses as BCCI won't be covering any cost," he added. The BCCI's policy document clearly states: "Players absent from India for more than 45 days during overseas tours can be joined by their partners and children (under 18) for one visit per series (format wise) of up to a two-week period. "Any deviation from this policy must be pre-approved by the coach, captain and GM Operations. Additional expenses outside the visitors' period will not be covered by the BCCI." Notably, the BCCI is expected to make an exception for the upcoming five-Test series in England during the months of June, July, and August.

Inter eye Serie A summit ahead of Juventus match

Napoli have let Inter creep up on them with consecutive draws with Roma and Udinese

WEB DESK

ITALY: Inter Milan have top spot in Serie A in their sights as the Italian champions head to Turin on Sunday to take on fierce rivals Juventus just one point behind league leaders Napoli. Monday night's win over Fiorentina put Inter right on Napoli's heels as an intriguing Scudetto battle heats up with the pair facing off in Naples in two weeks' time. But this weekend's fixtures could also have a big say in the destination of the Scudetto as Napoli have a tough trip to fourth-placed Lazio to deal with on Saturday. Napoli have let Inter creep up on them with consecutive draws with Roma and Udinese, both of which came after going ahead, and Antonio Conte's team will be without Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's replacement David Neres who has picked up a thigh injury and will likely be out until early March. But no team would more like to derail Inter's title defence than Juve, bigger rivals than even AC Milan and in something of a



mini-revival after three wins in three in all competitions. For once Inter benefit from a near-full week's rest between matches thanks to their direct qualification for the last 16 of the Champions League, while Juve battled to a 2-1 first-leg win over PSV Eindhoven in the play-offs on Tuesday. That rest should help Inter as Marcus Thuram looks to be fit enough to start at the Allianz Stadium after being substituted early on against Fiorentina with an unspecified muscular issue. Should Thuram be

absent it would create problems in attack for coach Simone Inzaghi as Monday's match-winner Marko Arnautovic is also struggling with a thigh knock and Medhi Taremi has failed to make an impact since arriving from Porto. Juve have been relying on Thuram's France teammate Randal Kolo Muani who has scored five times in his first three Serie A matches after arriving on loan from Paris Saint-Germain and was unlucky not to net against PSV. Inter and Napoli having such tough away fixtures offers up an opportunity for Atalanta to force their way back into the title conversation when they host strugglers Cagliari on Saturday. Atalanta are five points behind Napoli in third and will step onto the field at the Gewiss Stadium still angered by the penalty decision which cost them a 2-1 defeat at Club Brugge in the Champions League on Wednesday. Gian Piero Gasperini's side will have star attacker Ademola Lookman out at the weekend, when the Bergamo-based outfit will no doubt have one eye on Tuesday's second leg of their Champions League play-off

No reference
against
SC judges

FROM PAGE 01

Sanullah, the prime minister's adviser on political and public affairs, hinted at filing a reference against two senior apex court judges two days ago, who were committing "misconduct" by "writing letters on every issue containing critical remarks" and "leaking it to the media". However, the premier's adviser clarified his statement while speaking on a private news channel programme, saying that his remarks of filing a reference against the judges were neither an announcement nor a threat. His remarks came amid strong opposition over the nomination of six judges to the Supreme Court by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) meeting, which was boycotted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers and two senior SC judges. The chief justices of all high courts, except the Lahore High Court (LHC) were among the six judges nominated.

Suicide
bomber
strikes...

FROM PAGE 01

insurgency in 2021, but the Islamic State (IS) group frequently stages gun and bomb attacks challenging their rule. A doctor from Kabul's Emergency Hospital, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that "five to six injured have been brought" to the facility after the blast. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Thursday's attack. However, IS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed the Taliban government's minister for refugees, Khali Ur-Rahman Haqqani, inside his Kabul office in December.

Security
forces killed
13 terrorists

FROM PAGE 01

In two separate encounters in North Waziristan District, fire exchange took place between the Security Forces and khwarij in general areas Dosali and Tappi. Resultantly, five khwarij were effectively neutralized by own troops. In another encounter that took place in Lakki Marwat District, two khwarij were sent to hell. During an engagement in general area Bagh, Khyber District, own troops effectively neutralized one more khwarij.

Trump to
meet Putin
in Saudi...

FROM PAGE 01

the "not too distant future," the US president said. He suggested the meeting would involve Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "We know the crown prince, and I think it'd be a very good place to meet." Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov earlier announced that Putin had invited Trump and officials from his administration to visit Moscow to discuss Ukraine. "The Russian president invited the US president to visit Moscow and expressed his readiness to receive American officials in Russia in those areas of mutual interest, including, of course, the topic of the Ukrainian settlement," Peskov said.

Israel-
Hamas deal
back on...

FROM PAGE 01

the prompt delivery of prefabricated homes, tents, heavy machinery, medical supplies, fuel, and the ongoing flow of humanitarian assistance, along with all other specified provisions. Hamas earlier warned that the release of Israeli captives could be delayed due to violations of the ceasefire by the Israeli military, which has engaged in deadly shootings, blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid and restricting Palestinian movement to northern Gaza. The truce that came into effect on January 19 has largely halted more than 15 months of genocide and seen Israeli captives released in batches in exchange for Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

Briefs

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 360 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday, losing, 360.86 points, a negative change of 0.32 percent, closing at 112,564.08 points as compared to 112,924.94 points on the last trading day. A total of 596,739,574 shares were traded during the day as compared to 669,597,325 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs30.965 billion against Rs27.904 billion on the last trading day. As many as 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 176 of them recorded gains and 221 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 48 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were B.O. Punjab with 79,317,612 shares at Rs.11.86 per share, Lotte Chemical with 72,104,503 shares at Rs.21.23 per share and Power Cement with 40,290,839 shares at Rs.10.03 per share. Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.90.97 per share closing at Rs.1,943.16 whereas runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with Rs.64.51 rise in its share price to close at Rs.1,025.10. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.441.45 per share price, closing at Rs.23,482.54, whereas the runner-up was Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs.63.50 decline in its per share price to Rs.7,366.50.—APP

Rupee sheds 01 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Thursday depreciated by 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.26 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.25. Pakistani cuisine recipes However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.80 and Rs 281.30, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.38 to close at Rs291.09 against the last day's closing of Rs289.71, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).—APP

Gold price ups by Rs.2,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.2,500 and was sold at Rs 304,000 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 301,500 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,144 to Rs 260,631 from Rs 258,487 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up by Rs.1,965 to Rs 238,920 from Rs 236,955. The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.55 to Rs.3,367 and that of ten gram went up by Rs.47 to Rs.2,886. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$2,913 from \$2,888 whereas the prices of silver in international market increased by \$0.55 to \$32.25, the Association reported.—APP

Majority of Americans reject Trump's plan to 'take over' Gaza

NEW YORK: A strong majority of American voters oppose President Donald Trump's plan for the U.S. to forcibly remove the Palestinians from Gaza and "take over" the besieged enclave, a new opinion poll shows. In a survey released late Wednesday, 'Data for Progress' found that 64 percent of US voters say they oppose Trump's proposal, while only 27 percent support it, a margin of 37 points. Nearly half of the survey's 1,201 respondents, accounting for 47 percent, also said they are "strongly" against the plan. 'Data for Progress' found that opposition was strongest among Democrats, with 85 percent disapproving of the proposal, including 78 percent "strongly" in opposition. A plurality of independents, 63 percent, disagreed to Trump's plan for Gaza, while Republicans



ISLAMABAD: President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witness exchange of MoUs and agreements signed between Türkiye and Pakistan with regard to cooperation in different fields.

1,400 killed in Bangladesh protests that toppled Hasina

The new interim administration, led by Nobel Prize-winning economist Muhammad Yunus, has pledged to cooperate with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure justice and accountability for all violence committed during the month-long uprising

DHAKA: At least 1,400 people were killed in Bangladesh during student-led protests last year with the majority shot dead by military rifles, the UN's human rights office has said in its latest report investigating the events leading up to the ousting of the country's long-serving prime minister. The initially peaceful demonstrations, triggered by the reinstatement of a quota system for the allocation of civil service positions, began in early July. Two weeks later they were met with a violent crackdown by security forces and a communications blackout.

In early August, as protesters defied nationwide curfew orders and stormed government buildings, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country, ending 15 years in power for her Awami League party-led government. The new interim administration, led by Nobel Prize-winning economist Muhammad Yunus, has pledged to cooperate with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure justice and accountability for all violence committed during the month-long uprising. UN investigators arrived in Bangladesh in late August

and, on Wednesday, released their first fact-finding report. "OHCHR assesses that as many as 1,400 people could have been killed during the protests, the vast majority of whom were killed by military rifles and shotguns loaded with lethal metal pellets commonly used by Bangladesh's security forces," read the document. "Thousands more suffered severe, often life-altering, injuries. More than 11,700 people were arrested and detained, according to information from the police and RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) provided to OHCHR." More than three-quarters of all deaths were caused

by firearms "typically wielded by state security forces and not readily available to civilians in Bangladesh." The number of casualties is at least double the initial assessment by investigators, who also indicated that around 3 percent of those killed were children subjected to "targeted killings, deliberate maiming, arbitrary arrest, detention in inhumane conditions, torture and other forms of ill-treatment." The UN's human rights office has concluded that between July 15 and Aug. 5, 2024, the former government and its security and intelligence apparatus, together with "violent

elements" linked to the Awami League, "engaged systematically in serious human rights violations and abuses in a coordinated effort to suppress the protest movement." A special tribunal in Dhaka, which in October issued arrest warrants for Hasina and her cabinet and began trial procedures in cases related to the killings, said it would rely on the OHCHR's findings and recommendations in its proceedings. "It will facilitate the ongoing trial in the International Crimes Tribunal. The information we have received through the investigation aligns with the UN report, which will also validate our findings. This will add

credibility to the results of our investigation," the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Tajul Islam, told Arab News on Thursday. Established in 2010 during Hasina's rule, the International Crimes Tribunal is a domestic court tasked with dealing with war crimes and crimes against humanity. The most important takeaway of the report is that identifies the ousted prime minister and her government as the "responsible authority" behind the rights abuses, Islam said. "The report clearly identified the attacks as widespread and systematic, targeting students and civilians. Sheikh Hasina.—DNA

Kuwait hosts high-level forum to discuss Int'l Islamic Court of Justice

KUWAIT: Kuwait hosted a two-day forum on Tuesday, bringing together representatives from member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the International Islamic Court of Justice. The forum aims to encourage member states to ratify the court's statute and strengthen cooperation between judicial institutions, said a UNA press release received here. In the opening speech, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, Justice Saleh Al-Raqdan, emphasized Kuwait's commitment to establishing the International Islamic Court of Justice as a judicial framework for resolving disputes among Islamic states. He expressed hope that the forum would produce practical recommendations to strengthen justice and consolidate principles of rights and equality in Islamic countries. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stated that the forum reflects Kuwait's firm commitment to activating the International Islamic Court of Justice. He emphasized the need for fruitful dialogue and sustained efforts to overcome common challenges and build a comprehensive Islamic legal system based on justice, fairness, and equality. The OIC General Secretariat, in coordination with Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized the forum, which features international experts in law and international and regional judicial affairs.—Agencies

Russia, Ukraine trade blame for IAEA disruptions

KYIV: Russia and Ukraine on Wednesday accused each other of blocking the rotation of staff from the International Atomic Energy Agency at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine. Moscow's troops seized the facility — Europe's largest nuclear power station — in the first days of its invasion of Ukraine, and both sides have repeatedly accused the other of risking a potentially devastating nuclear disaster by attacking the site. Staff from the UN nuclear watchdog have been based there since September 2022 to monitor nuclear safety. Fighting meant the IAEA staff could not be swapped out as part of a planned rotation on Wednesday — the second such delay in a week — both Kyiv and Moscow said, trading blame for the incident. Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman Georgiy Tykhy said in a statement: "Russia has once again deliberately disrupted the rotation of IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhia plant." Inspectors spend around five weeks at the plant in stints before being swapped out in a complex procedure that involves traveling across the front line under supervision from the Russian and Ukrainian militaries. Tykhy accused Russia's army of opening fire near where the planned rotation was taking place, saying Moscow's goal was to force the IAEA team to travel through Russian-controlled territory and "violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the Ukrainian army blocked the IAEA team from traveling to an agreed meeting point and were attacking the area with drones — at which point the Russian military withdrew its support team and returned to the station. "On their return, the convoy carrying Russian military personnel and IAEA experts... came under attack by drone and mortar strikes," Zakharova said in a statement.—DNA

RCCI hosts awareness session on single-use plastic product

These committees are tasked with overseeing enforcement, raising public awareness, promoting alternatives, and supervising the registration process

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) organized an awareness session on the Punjab Single-Use Plastic Product Regulations 2023. The event featured Ms. Maria Safer, Deputy Director Environment, as the keynote speaker. The session was attended by RCCI President Usman Shaikat, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, former presidents, and executive committee members. Discussions centered on the impact of the regulations, compliance measures, and the vital role of businesses in promoting sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics. Ms. Maria Safer, Deputy Director Environment, gave a detailed presentation and informed the participants about the Punjab Single-Use Plastic Product Regulations 2023.



She pointed out that the Punjab Single-Use Plastic Product Regulations 2023 have been amended in 2024 to incorporate administrative fines and penalties. Under these amendments, violators may face fines ranging from PKR 5,000 to PKR 50,000. Additionally, non-compliant establishments may be sealed and materials confiscated within seven days of receiving a violation notice. To ensure effective implementation,

district-level Plastic Management Committees have been established. These committees are tasked with overseeing enforcement, raising public awareness, promoting alternatives, and supervising the registration process. A significant addition to the regulations is the recognition of distributors as key stakeholders. Furthermore, a minimum size (12x16 inches) and thickness (40 microns) have been specified for

plastic bags, except for those used in the food and pharmaceutical industries. Prohibited plastic items under these regulations include plastic-stemmed earbuds, balloon sticks, candy sticks, plastic plates, cutlery, cigarette packs, and banners with a thickness of less than 80 microns. Pakistan generates approximately 3.9 million tons of plastic waste annually, with Punjab accounting for 50% of packaging-related waste.

Construction equipment awaiting Gaza entry from Egypt: Report

RAFAH: Dozens of bulldozers, construction vehicles and trucks carrying mobile homes lined up on Egypt's side of the Rafah border crossing on Thursday, awaiting to enter Gaza, state-linked Egyptian media reported. Al-Qahera News, with close ties to Egyptian intelligence services, said the equipment was positioned at the crossing in preparation for entry into the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. An AFP photographer also confirmed seeing the vehicles, including trucks carrying caravans, waiting at the border. However, an Israeli government spokesman said heavy machinery would not be allowed to enter the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing with Egypt. "There is no entry of caravans (mobile homes) or heavy equipment into the Gaza Strip, and there is no coordination for this," Omer Dostri, a spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote on X. "According to the agreement, no goods are allowed to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing," he added.—APP

Majority of Americans reject Trump's plan to 'take over' Gaza: US Poll

NEW YORK: A strong majority of American voters oppose President Donald Trump's plan for the U.S. to forcibly remove the Palestinians from Gaza and "take over" the besieged enclave, a new opinion poll shows. In a survey released late Wednesday, 'Data for Progress' found that 64 percent of US voters say they oppose Trump's proposal, while only 27 percent support it, a margin of 37 points. Nearly half of the survey's 1,201 respondents, accounting for 47 percent, also said they are "strongly" against the plan. 'Data for Progress' found that opposition was strongest among Democrats, with 85 percent disapproving of the proposal, including 78 percent "strongly" in opposition. A plurality of independents, 63 percent, disagreed to Trump's plan for Gaza, while Republicans

favoured the proposal by a small margin, with 46 percent supporting and 43 percent opposing. According to the poll, the proposal to forcibly expel Palestinian survivors of the Israeli genocidal war is more unpopular when American troops are involved. 'Data for Progress' found that nearly seven in 10 voters say they oppose sending US troops to the Middle East in order to take over Gaza, with 25 percent in favour. The poll was carried out from February 8 to 9, 2025, using web panels. The margin of error associated with the sample size is ±3 percentage points. European allies of the US, as well as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China and Russia say they all commitment to a two-state solution. On February 4, Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington, DC. At a joint press conference there, Trump

said he would take control of Gaza — possibly with the help of US troops — to create a "Riviera of the Middle East." He had earlier suggested that displaced Palestinians could be resettled in neighbouring Arab countries. Washington's European allies, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt have rejected Trump's plot, reiterating calls for the two-state solution. The new polling came as UN human rights experts warn that the proposal involves war crimes and threatens the very structure of international order. It is pertinent to mention that More than 30 UN human rights experts Wednesday condemned the "shocking" threats by US President Donald Trump to "take over" and "own" Gaza and relocate the Palestinian population elsewhere, using military force if necessary, saying such a move would be "manifestly illegal." "Such

blatant violations by a major power would break the global taboo on military aggression and embolden other predatory countries to seize foreign territories, with devastating consequences for peace and human rights globally," they said in a joint statement. "Implementing the US proposal would shatter the most fundamental rules of the international order and the United Nations Charter since 1945, that the US was instrumental in creating to restore peace after the catastrophic Second World War and Holocaust. It would return the world to the dark days of colonial conquest," the experts said. "It is manifestly illegal to invade and annex foreign territory by force, to forcibly deport its population, and to deprive the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to self-determination, including to retain Gaza within a sovereign Pal-

estian state," they said. "Such violations would replace the international rule of law and the stability it brings with the lawless 'rule of the strongest.' International law aims to stop predatory countries from violently colonising foreign lands and subjugating their populations, which inevitably leads to gross human rights violations," they said. "Just as over half a century of Israeli occupation of Palestine has not brought peace or security to Israel or Palestine, US occupation would be similarly ruinous and fuel perpetual war, death and destruction," they said. The mass deportation of civilians from occupied territory was recognized as a war crime under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 after the Second World War, to prevent the recurrence of acts such as Nazi Germany's expulsion of populations from European countries.—APP

Briefs

AGP differs with CJP on Justice Dogar's seniority

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan's opinion on the seniority of acting Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Sardar Sarfaraz Dogar has turned out to be different from that of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi. As per the opinion given by the AGP in writing at the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) meeting, "The transfer of a judge from a high court is not for a temporary time period. Justice Dogar was transferred from the Lahore High Court (LHC) in the public interest for which consultations were held with the president and the chief justice of the concerned high court." The attorney general added that Justice Dogar could not be placed at the bottom of the seniority list. "Neither he is a civil servant," he said, adding the rules, which pertained to the seniority of civil servants, did not apply in the case of high courts' judges.

China lauds Trump-Putin phone call

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China on Thursday lauded a phone call between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, emphasizing a peaceful end to the war in Ukraine, state media reported. "Russia and the US are influential major powers, and we are happy to see Russia and the US strengthen communication and dialogue on a series of international issues," Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told reporters in Beijing. The statement from Beijing came after Trump on Wednesday said he had a "lengthy and highly productive" conversation with Putin, and that their delegations agreed to "start negotiations immediately" to end the nearly three-year Ukraine war. He also spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Naqvi visits Pakistan Coast Guard headquarters

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the headquarters of the Pakistan Coast Guards in Karachi. DG Pakistan Coast Guards Major General Jawad Riaz welcomed Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. On this occasion, the officers of the Pakistan Coast Guards were introduced to the Federal Interior Minister. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also visited the Pakistan Coast Guards' memorial and laid flowers and offered Fateha for the martyrs and paid tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs. During his visit, an important meeting was held at the Pakistan Coast Guards headquarters under the chairmanship of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

COLOURS OF MALAYSIA



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Muhammad Azhar Mazlan take entry to the ramp along with Diplomats and Models after glorious Fashion Show as Organized by Embassy of Vietnam and Embassy of Malaysia at local hotel in Federal Capital. - Online

Afghans in Pak shouldn't pay the price for disputes

He said that foreigners or non-Pakistanis living in Pakistan who have children born in Pakistan should become Pakistani citizens whether they are Afghans, Rohingyas, or Bengalis

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: If we look at the refugee profile in Pakistan, for the most part, the country has been a model host for welcoming refugees from different countries. Pakistan has the largest number of refugees for the longest duration in modern history, not just from Afghanistan but also having the largest Rohingya and Bengali population, and Somalis as well. They are experiencing better conditions in Pakistan compared to many other countries in the region, in terms of the treatment they receive from host communities and authorities. These remarks were made by Former Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed during the dialogue on Human Trafficking in Pak-Afghan Region, organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). He underlined the need to look at the bigger picture of the issues of human trafficking and illegal migration to make sense of the scale and magnitude of the problem which has now become a global concern and having impact on the politics of and relations between several countries; noting that it was at the core of president trump's election campaign as the flagship issue. He said that foreigners or non-Pakistanis living in Pakistan who have children born in Pakistan should become Pakistani citizens whether they are Afghans, Rohingyas, or Bengalis. "I believe, if someone who has been living here for the last 30, 40 years, they are Pakistanis". "We must have problems with the regime in Kabul but the Afghans living in Pakistan should not pay



the price", he said while opposing the forced eviction of refugees on any pretext, noting that it was morally, legally, and politically wrong. Pakistan is a big enough country to accommodate people who come here for economic and so many other reasons. Afghans in Pakistan who worked with US forces in Afghanistan have been waiting for their visas for the last three years, face prolonged uncertainty, financial hardships, and legal challenges as they navigate bureaucratic delays and shifting immigration policies. The issue of Afghans living in Pakistan should be seen as both a legal and humanitarian problem and not just as the former. Afghan refugees are not an economic burden on Pakistan, in fact, they are self-sustaining, and contribute to our economy through their hard work.

The main issue in Pakistan is control over borders and border management where there should be an interprovincial task force at the central level. With the senior-most officials of the relevant security agencies sacked after the Greece boat incident, which had claimed the lives of several Pakistani nationals shows how seriously Pakistan believes in dealing with the issue of human trafficking. The executive director of CRSS, Imtiaz Gul said that the devastating back to back boat tragedies are because of the issue of human trafficking and the vulnerabilities of the displaced persons face. These incidents show that there are not enough checks at home. The issues like human trafficking should not be submerged with our absorption in and consumption by political issues. The human traffickers who play with the destinies and dreams of people should not get scot-free. The participants of the dialogue noted that the absence or weakening of the rule of law and corruption are major factors enabling human trafficking in Pakistan and the region. Tackling human trafficking requires a multi-faceted approach, including sustainable livelihoods, education, social awareness initiatives, and greater political and social cohesion. Human trafficking persists because the relevant authorities remain preoccupied elsewhere. It reflects the decay of human welfare and basic rights. Every moment of ignorance and negligence costs this region human lives and immense suffering. The recent tragedies involving migrant boats are not isolated incidents. We must dig deeper and ask ourselves: why do these individuals take such perilous risks?

India violating ceasefire along LoC: security sources

According to security sources, there has been a noticeable increase in India's subversive activities

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Indian sabotage activities along the Line of Control (LoC) have been exposed again. The details of Indian military and intelligence agencies' efforts to spread unrest in the peaceful areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan have come to light. According to security sources, India has a long history of unprovoked firing and sabotage activities targeting innocent civilians along the LoC. India is also attempting to carry out subversive activities through the transportation and use of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) along the LoC. Sources stated that evidence shows that since 2016, there have been 54 incidents of IED planting by India along the LoC, with increasing incidents of IEDs being found and detonated in areas such as Chakothi, Nezapir, Cherikot, Rakh Chakri,

Dewa, Battal, Kotkotera, and others. These IED explosions have resulted in the martyrdom and injuries of many innocent civilians. According to security sources, there has been a noticeable increase in India's subversive activities along the LoC over an extended period, including the transportation of IEDs, weapons, and drugs in areas like Bagh, Battal, Dewa, and others. Sources mentioned that between February 4-6, 2025, four Indian IEDs were discovered in the Battal sector and Rawalakot area, resulting in the martyrdom of one civilian. On February 12, 2025, Indian forces violated the ceasefire in the Dewa and Bagars sectors, leading to the injury of two soldiers. Security sources stated that Pakistan has lodged protests with India regarding the spread of unrest in areas such as Poonch, Bagh, Kotli, Mirpur, and Rawalakot, and has shared evidence of Indian subversive activities with UN officials in these regions. The report indicates that India has continued to carry out false flag operations and fake encounters to accuse the Pakistani military of infiltrations. The Indian military has also punished several officers, including 3 Rajputs, 12 Jats, and others, for using military resources to smuggle drugs and weapons.

Israel likely to strike Iran in coming months

The military intelligence report highlighted two potential strike options, each involving United States providing support including aerial refuelling, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Israel is likely to attempt a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear programme in the coming months to set its progress back but escalate tensions across the Middle East and renew fears of a wider regional conflagration, a US intelligence report says. Warnings about a potential Israeli strike were included in multiple intelligence reports between the end of the Biden administration and the start of the Trump administration, none more comprehensive than an early January report produced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff's intelligence directorate and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The report warned that Israel is likely to attempt a strike on Iran's Fordow and Natanz nuclear facilities within the first six months of 2025. Serving and former US officials told The Washington Post that the prediction is rooted in an analysis of Israel's planning following its bombing of Iran

last October, which degraded Tehran's air defences and left it exposed to further attacks. The officials spoke anonymously to discuss highly classified intelligence. The Israeli government, CIA, DIA and Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined to comment. Brian Hughes, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said that US President Donald Trump "has made it clear: He will not permit Iran to get a nuclear weapon. "While he prefers negotiating a resolution to America's long-standing issues with the Iranian regime peacefully, he will not wait indefinitely if Iran isn't willing to deal, and soon," Hughes told The Post. Hughes declined to comment on the underlying intelligence. The prospect of an Israeli strike poses an early test for Trump, who campaigned on restoring peace in the Middle East and Europe while also touting staunch support for Israel. The military intelligence report highlighted two potential strike options, each involving the United States providing support including aerial refuelling, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, said those familiar with the document. Reliance on the US in any strike on Iran underscores Washington's leverage over Israel's path forward. According to the intelligence report, a distance attack, known as a stand-off strike, would see Israeli aircraft firing air-launched ballistic missiles (ALBMs) outside of Iranian airspace. A stand-in strike by contrast would see Israeli jets enter Iranian airspace, flying near the nuclear sites and dropping BLU-109 "bunker buster" munitions. The Trump administration approved the sale of guidance kits for these weapons last week, notifying Congress that it had done so. The US assessment found that an Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear facilities would set back Tehran's activities by weeks or months, current and former officials said. Any attack also would incentivise Iran to pursue enriching weapons-grade uranium, they added. The six-month time frame for a potential operation and details on the two strike options were not previously reported. The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday that Israel is considering a strike on Iran this year. Some Israeli officials disagree with the US intelligence assessments on the potential impact of a strike on Iran's facilities, arguing that it could more substantially set back Tehran's capabilities.

Afghan asylum-seeker drives into Munich crowd, hurts 28

A passenger car drove into a street demonstration of striking workers from the Verdi trade union near the city center and was then shot at by officers

FOREIGN DESK

MUNICH: An Afghan asylum seeker was arrested after a suspected car ramming attack injured at least 28 people in the southern German city of Munich on Thursday, police said. The incident comes on the eve of a high-profile international conference in Munich and amid an election campaign in which immigration and security have been key issues after a spate of similar attacks. A passenger car drove into a street demonstration of striking workers from the Verdi trade union near the city center and was then shot at by officers, said the deputy head of Munich police Christian Huber. The driver, a 24-year-old Afghan asylum seeker, was arrested at the scene, Huber said. Earlier a fire service spokesman told AFP that several of those hurt were "seriously injured, some of them in a life-threatening condition." The state premier of Bavaria Markus Soeder told a press conference that the incident was "just terrible" and that "it looks like this was an attack." Soeder's Bavarian CSU party and its national sister party the CDU have demanded tougher curbs on migration after a series of similar attacks which have shocked the country.

IAEA chief visits Chashma power plant

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi visited under construction Chashma power plant Unit 5. He termed Pakistan's nuclear power generation program as "one of the most successful nuclear power generation programs". Emphasised the role of nuclear power towards more sustainable and de-carbonised electricity generation. He also inaugurated a radioactive waste incinerator at Chashma.

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