



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Portuguese author & journalist Teresa Nicolau visiting Pak

Detailed News On Page-03

Europe's security is at a turning point

Detailed News On Page-08



Eva Lys win 1R thriller at Dubai Open

Detailed News On Page-06



PM welcomes \$40b investment

Pak economic reforms journey progressing: WB

With \$40bn investment by WB, new chapter of progress to begin in Pakistan, says PM Shehbaz

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Lauding the government's ongoing initiatives, a delegation of World Bank executive directors on Monday said Pakistan's journey of economic reforms, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was progressing at pace. The remarks came during a meeting between PM Shehbaz and a nine-member WB delegation, which is currently visiting Pakistan after a hiatus of 20 years. "The positive outcomes of the government's ongoing reform initiatives are being felt which is a promising development," noted the delegation. Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said that with the cooperation of the WB, several key development projects were completed in Pakistan, which had played a vital role in the country's progress, according to a statement issued by PM Office. The premier welcomed the delegation on their visit to Pakistan and said the partnership between the WB and Pakistan spanned over seven decades. "Pakistan has greatly benefited from its partnership with the World Bank," he said, adding the WB provided substantial assistance to the people affected by the 2022 floods in Pakistan. PM Shehbaz observed that the recent Country Partnership Framework of the WB included an investment of \$40 billion in Pakistan which was highly encouraging. With \$20 billion allocated for various projects in health, education, youth development, and other social sectors, a new chapter of progress would begin in Pakistan, he added. The prime minister said that an additional \$20bn investment in Pakistan's private sector under the International Finance Corporation (IFC) would accelerate the country's economic growth. Appreciating the WB's trust in the government's policies, he said Pakistan's institutional and economic reform programme was moving rapidly.

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Pakistan eyes export expansion to KSA

Saudi Arabia's leadership in economic reforms offers important lessons for Pakistan as it embarks on its own structural changes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday underscored the potential for boosting exports from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia, especially in the skilled labor sector as the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 objectives drive up demand for skilled workers. In an interview with Arab News during the AIUla Conference for Emerging Market Economies, the minister noted that this aligns with the Kingdom's expanding workforce needs as it progresses toward its Vision 2030 objectives. The minister said, Saudi Arabia's influence in regional economic transformation is expanding, with Pakistan acknowledging the Kingdom's progress under Vision 2030 as a valuable model. He emphasized that Saudi Arabia's leadership in economic reforms offers important lessons for Pakistan as it embarks on its own structural changes. "Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been long-standing partners, one of the strongest partnerships that we have," Aurangzeb said.

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of World Bank Executive Directors called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Pak issues visas to Indian journalists for CT

The mega event would last for 19 days

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has issued visas to all Indian journalists coming to Pakistan for the coverage of the ICC Champions Trophy, sources said. In 2023, the Indian government denied visas to a large number of Pakistani journalists for the coverage of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup held in India, prompting the Pakistan Cricket Board to raise the issue with the International Cricket Council and recorded their protest against the actions of BCCI and the Indian government. The tournament starts from today

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Over 400 human smugglers arrested

Tarar says, human traffickers will not find any place to hide

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed today that over four hundred human smugglers have been arrested. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar told the house during question hour that the properties of these human smugglers have been seized and their bank accounts frozen. He said the government has taken strict notice of human smuggling, emphasizing that the human traffickers will not find any place to hide and will receive strict punishment.

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74 petitions against rigging

PTI urges judiciary to expedite cases related to poll rigging

Ayub asks ATC judges to take stand against injustice, demands release of Imran, Bushra, Qureshi, others

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) urged the judiciary on Monday to expedite cases related to rigging in the 2024 nationwide polls and the 26th Constitutional Amendment, seeking "wise decisions" for the betterment of the country. These demands were made at a joint press conference conducted by PTI's top leaders, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Omar Ayub Khan, Shibli Faraz, and Salman Akram Raja in Islamabad on Monday. "One year has passed after the nation gave the mandate to the PTI," claimed Gohar, criticising the fact that a "Form 47" government had been formed by bulldozing the majority. The former ruling party's chairman alleged that his party had filed 74 petitions against vote rigging during

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Nepra officials 'jack up their pay by 220%

Sources say Nepra chairman, members raised their salaries without lawful clearance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a shocking abuse of power, the chairman and members of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) have generously awarded themselves a whopping 220% pay raise without approval from the relevant authorities, including the federal cabinet.

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Briefs

Dar to attend UNSC meeting

The meeting has been convened by China under its rotating presidency of the Security Council

DNA

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has arrived in New York to participate in a high-level meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Dar was received by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram, and other officials at the airport. He will attend the UNSC meeting on "Practicing Multilateralism: Reforming and Improving Global Governance", scheduled for today 18th February 2025. The meeting has been convened by China under its rotating presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 2025. It will be chaired by the Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi.

Sharjeel blasts Punjab govt spoke sperson's

says, PML-N spokesperson, unaware of facts

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh's Information Minister Sharjeel Memon has blasted Punjab's counterpart, saying the provincial spokesperson is politicking on lives with a statement without factual support. He said Hyderabad-Sukkur Road belongs to the National Highway Authority. "The Sindh Government has paid seven billion rupees to the federal government for this road, which has been incomplete till now," he said. "It is the federal government's failure that Hyderabad-Sukkur Road has not been renovated," Sharjeel Memon said.

J. Mansoor, Munib excluded

CJP Afridi constitutes multiple SC committees

Top judge reorganises key committees and appoints judges for oversight roles

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Days after six judges were sworn-in as justices of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi has formed multiple administrative committees within the apex court. The top judge has restructured the six-member Case Management Committee, led by him, which includes Justice Naeem Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, and Justice Shafi Siddiqui, along with the Additional registrar and IT director. The development comes days after Balochistan High Court (BHC) chief Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, ex-Sindh High Court (SHC) chief Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, SHC senior puisne judge Salahuddin Panhwar, Peshawar High Court (PHC) judge Shakeel Ahmad, ex-Islamabad High Court (IHC) chief Justice Aamer Farooq, and ex-PHC chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim took oath as SC judges following the approval by President Asif Ali Zardari. Meanwhile, Justice Miangul Hassan was sworn-in as an

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Raja calls judicial review of elections

He explained the significance of Form 46, which details the number of ballots used, votes cast, and rejected ballots

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf general secretary and senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja has expressed strong concerns over the validity of Pakistan's 2024 general elections, alleging widespread irregularities and manipulation of results. He claimed that those who could have united the country were instead sidelined, and the events of February 8 represented a blatant act of electoral brutality. Referring to a report released by PATTAN, a non-government organization (NGO), Raja highlighted alarming findings

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Russia offers mediation between Islamabad, Kabul

On matters of security, the ambassador underscored Russia's active cooperation with Pakistan in countering terrorism, narcotics, and information security threats

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Russia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Albert P. Khorev, reaffirmed the strength of Russia-Pakistan relations in an exclusive interview with a private news channel. Addressing key diplomatic and strategic matters, he highlighted that modern Russia-Pakistan ties are based on mutual respect, equality, and a shared vision for regional stability, free from external influence. Khorev dismissed speculations of any hidden agenda behind the growing ties between Moscow and Islamabad, stating that their partnership is not directed against any third country. He emphasized that despite significant geopolitical shifts, the relationship between the two nations continues to thrive, contrary to Western expectations. On matters of security, the ambassador underscored Russia's active cooperation with Pakistan in countering terrorism, narcotics, and information security threats. He highlighted the robust collaboration in multilateral forums such as the United Nations (UN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),

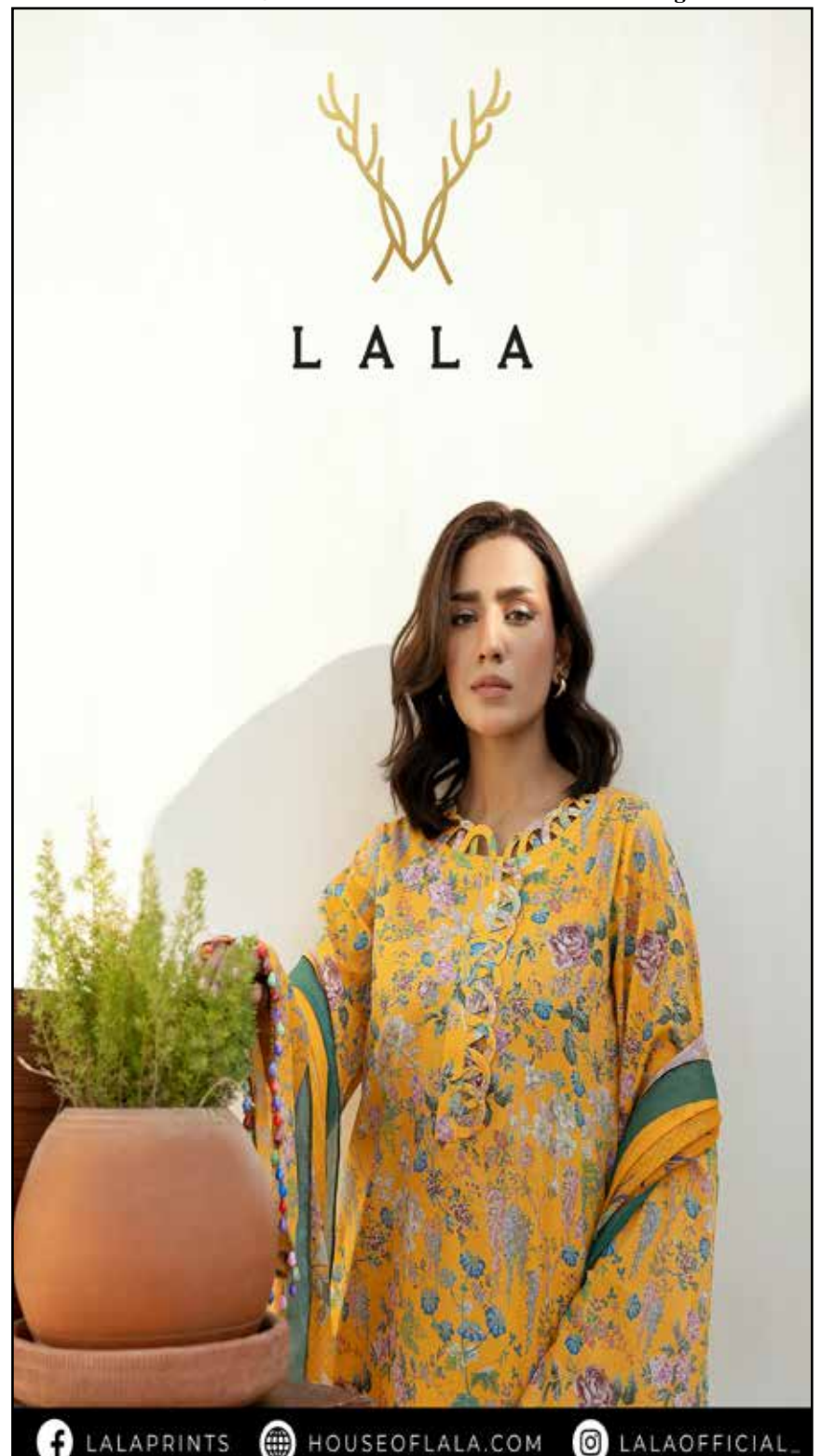
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Attack on Kurram convoy triggers clashes

SHAMIM SHAHID

KURRAM: Clashes erupted between the miscreants and the law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) personnel in Lower Kurram on Monday after a gun attack on the 64 vehicles, carrying relief items for the people of Kurram. The gun attack left a driver injured and led to a worse traffic jam on the road, resulting in a long queue of vehicles. Drivers of as many as 12 vehicles, however, managed to get out of the traffic mess. Firing was still going on till last reports came in while miscreants also tried to torch some of the vehicles. Despite the signing of a peace deal by warring factions, violence still erupts in the area as miscreants open fire to scuttle the deal. On January 31, a senior government official trying to broker

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Police Academy to be upgraded on modern lines: Naqvi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has announced a comprehensive plan to upgrade the National Police Academy (NPA) on modern lines, bringing it in line with the standards of Military Academy Kakul. The decision aims to enhance police training facilities and improve law enforcement capabilities. During his visit to the National Police Academy, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi presided over a high-level meeting where he was briefed on the NPA's upgrade plan. The minister emphasized

the need for state-of-the-art training facilities to ensure that officers receive the highest level of professional training. As part of the plan, an Elite Force Training School will be established at the academy. Additionally, Technical Training Centers, Indoor and Outdoor Firing Ranges, and a modernized Parade Ground will be developed to meet the evolving needs of law enforcement. Naqvi directed officials to prioritize the construction of residential blocks for under-training officers, ensuring they have proper living arrangements. He also instructed that the Master Plan be revised and resubmitted after

necessary modifications. "The goal is to transform the National Police Academy into an internationally recognized institution, where officers from abroad can also come for training," Naqvi stated. The restructuring of the NPA will be implemented in phases, with a focus on enhancing infrastructure and training modules. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Commandant NPA Muhammad Idrees Ahmed, Chairman CDA, IG Islamabad, and DC Islamabad. This initiative marks a significant step towards modernizing Pakistan's police force and aligning it with global policing standards.



SEHWAN: Acting Governor and Speaker Sindh assembly Syed Owais Qadir Shah laying wreath on the grave of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar on the occasion of 773rd Urs celebration.

Minority Card distribution ceremony held

SARGODHA: The Punjab Chief Minister's Minority Card distribution among Christians held at Faisal Hall, on Monday. Dr. Liaquat Ali Khan (former MPA) was chief guest of the ceremony while Mushtaq Gul, a member of the Minority Wing of Pakistan Muslim League-N, along with several distinguished guests were also present. During the event, Rs 10,500 and a minority card were distributed among each Christian individual aiming to provide them with financial support and social benefits. Assistant Director of Social Welfare, Asma Manzoor, warmly welcomed the guests and highlighted the initiative's importance. She stated that Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz has fulfilled her commitment to the minority communities by turning her words into action, emphasizing that "minorities are the crown of our heads." This initiative is expected to empower minority communities by ensuring their inclusion in various welfare programs and financial assistance schemes across the province.—DNA

12 Female Students of SAU awarded Scottish scholarship

HYDERABAD: 12 female students of Sindh Agricultural University (SAU) Tandojam have been awarded the Scottish scholarship for female students for the academic year 2024-25, facilitated by the British Council Pakistan. The SAU spokesperson informed "APP" that a scholarship distribution ceremony was held at the senate hall, reaffirming the university's commitment to promoting academic excellence and female empowerment. SAU Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Altaf Ali Siyal distributed scholarship cheques among the recipients, accompanied by Registrar Gulam Mohiuddin Qureshi and Director of University Advancement and Financial Assistance Dr. Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar. Addressing the gathering Prof. Dr. Altaf Ali Siyal underscored the significance of dedication, research and academic excellence in navigating today's competitive landscape. He urged students, particularly young women in Sindh, to actively pursue higher education and research, stressing that education was the key to securing opportunities in both public and private sectors. Dr. Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar described the efforts of the student financial aid office, which provides scholarship facilitation, awareness sessions and student support services. He also invited philanthropists and sponsors to contribute towards funding scholarships for deserving students. Syed Nauman Ali Shah, Deputy Director of University Advancement and Financial Assistance, elaborated on the scholarship award framework and noted that the directorate has introduced e-services for student support, following in-house training under USAID's higher education system strengthening.—APP

PEC setup desk to facilitate engineers

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is establishing special desks at various universities to assist fresh graduates in obtaining their engineering titles, under its flagship project "Pathway to Practice". This initiative is part of PEC's broader effort to streamline the process and enhance career prospects for young engineers. The project has been designed to ensure that engineering students begin their professional journey from the first day of graduation. This initiative aims to facilitate the transition of graduates into the engineering profession by ensuring they receive their engineering titles without

unnecessary delays.

Talking to APP, Chairman PEC, Engineer Waseem Nazir said that so far, 30 universities have approached PEC to implement this facility, which will streamline the registration process and enhance career prospects for fresh graduates. He said that so far PEC Desks have been established at the University of Engineering & Technology (UET), Lahore and Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUTEMS) while the PEC Desk at CECOS University of IT and Emerging Sciences, Peshawar will be inaugurated soon. These desks will

serve as dedicated facilitation centers, guiding graduates on obtaining their engineering titles and ensuring they meet the necessary professional standards. Engineer Waseem Nazir reaffirmed PEC's commitment, saying that obtaining an engineering title is a crucial milestone, as it validates a graduate's professional standing and significantly enhances their career opportunities. By implementing the Pathway to Practice project through establishing PEC Desks nationwide, PEC aims to empower young engineers, equipping them with the necessary credentials to excel in their professional careers from day one.—APP

Call for equitable resource distribution for economic growth

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in his meeting with a delegation from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) led by its Country Representative, Dr. Luay Shabaneh agreed that the formula for the National Finance Commission (NFC) award should take into account factors such as income disparity, demographic performance, human development, tax efforts, and forest cover. The meeting was held at the CM House on Monday and was attended by Health and Population Minister Dr. Azar Fazaal, Secretary to the Chief Minister Raheem Shaikh, and Secretary for Population Hafizullah Abbasi. The UNFPA team included Dr. Ashfaq Khan, Director General of NUST, head of UNFPA Sindh Muqaddar, and Program Analyst Renuka Swami, a CM House communique said. In a significant step toward ensuring the equitable distribution of financial resources and promoting sustainable economic growth, the chief minister and UNFPA visiting team analysed the NFC Award. CM Murad Shah said that, for the first time, multiple criteria have been adopted for the distribution of resources under the 7th NFC Award. He emphasised that since 2008, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has advocated for provinces to have full authority over sales tax collection to improve revenue generation. Pakistani cuisine recipes Mr. Shah explained that provinces are closer to consumers, which makes them more efficient in tax collection. Dr. Ashfaq Khan, Director General of the NUST Institute of Policy Studies, presented a comprehensive overview that highlighted the historical evolution of the NFC, existing fiscal imbalances, and the need for a reformed approach to revenue sharing. The National Finance Commission (NFC) is a constitutional body responsible for distributing tax revenue between federal and provincial governments. Under the Constitution, the NFC is formed every five years to devise an appropriate mechanism for financial allocation. Pakistan's revenue-sharing framework traces back to the Niemeyer Award (1935), which was later modified after independence in 1947. The first formal NFC Award (1951), introduced by prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan, was known as the Raisman Award. Several subsequent awards were introduced, but early awards (1961, 1964, 1970) were inconclusive. A significant shift occurred after 1971 when population became the primary factor for resource allocation, a trend that persisted until the 7th NFC Award, which introduced multiple criteria. During the discussion, it was pointed out that unlike many countries where population plays a minimal role in financial distribution, Pakistan has historically based resource allocation primarily on population size. The 7th NFC Award (2009) was the first to adopt a multifactor formula, reducing the population's weight from 100 per cent to 82 per cent and incorporating factors like poverty levels, revenue generation, and inverse population density.—DNA

Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's Urs begins

ISLAMABAD: The 773rd annual Urs celebrations of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar began in Sehwan Sharif on Monday. According to a private news channel, the three-day event features traditional rituals, including the ceremonial ghusal of the saint's shrine, the qawali performances and dhama. Devotees gather to pay tribute to the revered Sufi saint, seeking blessings and spiritual solace. The authorities have said that the special security and administrative arrangements have been made to accommodate the large number of visitors.—APP

Power issues, implementation of solar energy projects discussed

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Chief Executive Officer QESCO, Sayed Yousaf Shah Monday discussed power issues and execution of solar projects to address power shortage and ensure electricity supply to the consumers across the province. During the meeting, the chief minister emphasized the need for long-term solutions to address power shortages and improve electricity distribution in the region. Chief Minister Bugti directed the QESCO chief to take concrete measures to resolve the power issues faced by the people of Balochistan. He stressed that adopting renewable energy sources in the agricultural sector is a critical step to reduce challenges for farmers and increase agricultural production. He said, "The adoption of renewable energy is necessary to ensure a more sustainable and efficient use of resources, especially for our farmers." Sayed Yousaf Shah briefed the chief minister on the challenges in the power transmission system and the measures being taken to resolve it. He assured the chief minister that efforts are underway to improve the electricity network and address the electricity distribution challenges, particularly in remote areas. The chief minister instructed QESCO chief to formulate a comprehensive and clear strategy to eliminate the power-related difficulties faced by the public. Sarfraz Bugti emphasized the need for immediate execution of power schemes proposed by members.—APP

KP cabinet vows to restore peace efforts in Kurram

PESHAWAR: A provincial cabinet meeting, chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday underscored the government's commitment to restoring peace and stability in Kurram district through comprehensive security and development measures. According to an official statement, the cabinet was briefed on the implementation of government decisions aimed at ensuring sustainable peace in Kurram district. The briefing revealed that since October last year, 189 people have lost their lives due to various incidents of unrest in Kurram. However, the provincial govern-

ment's efforts have led to a peace agreement to restore normalcy in the region. To ensure the availability of essential goods, nine convoys comprising 718 vehicles have been dispatched to Kurram so far, and there is currently no shortage of basic necessities in the area. Additionally, under the Chief Minister's special directives, the provincial government has launched a helicopter service for Kurram. Since its inception, 153 helicopter flights have taken place, providing air transport to approximately 4,000 individuals and delivering 19,000 kilograms of essential medicines. As per the peace agreement and

cabinet decisions, efforts are underway to dismantle illegal bunkers in Kurram. So far, 151 bunkers have been demolished, with a deadline set for March 23 to remove all remaining bunkers. The cabinet was also informed that a special security force is being established to safeguard the Kurram Road. Temporary and permanent security posts are being set up along the route, with a total of 120 security posts planned. The cabinet has approved the recruitment of 407 personnel for these posts, which will be equipped with essential gear worth Rs 764 million.—APP

Randhawa reviews Spring Tree Plantation drive

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa chaired a meeting on Monday regarding Spring Tree Plantation Drive 2025 at CDA headquarters. The meeting was attended by the Member Environment, DG Environment, and other senior officers, along with representatives from the corporate sector, brands, and companies, including Nestle, Centaurus Mall, Garara, Imarat Group of Companies, Agency 21 as well as representatives of various NGOs and other companies. During the meeting it was decided that Spring Plantation Drive 2025 will be launched on a large scale in Islamabad. During the briefing, Chair-

man CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa was informed that the Spring Plantation Drive 2025 will be formally launched on February 19 at IMCB F-8. He was briefed that the Spring Tree Plantation Drive 2025 will include massive tree plantation in F-9 Park, Shakarparian, along the nullahs, as well as in urban and rural areas. The meeting also decided that a large number of seed balls for the plantation drive will be dropped using helicopters and drones for plantation at Margalla Hills National Park. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that the Spring Plantation Drive 2025 should involve the active participation of civil society, private, and corporate sectors. He directed that the corporate sector

and brands play their role for the welfare of citizens and the environment. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa further directed that areas be allocated for tree plantation to various companies and brands. He also directed that students from educational institutions, as well as the general public, be included in the plantation campaign. To promote the Spring Plantation Drive 2025, Chairman CDA directed that stalls be set up in all major parks, and commercial areas of Islamabad to distribute plants. He also instructed that a digitized system be introduced for better monitoring of the plants planted under the campaign, and an online plant tracking system for the planted trees should be established.

The role of parents and teachers in shaping the character of children

In conclusion, parents and teachers must recognize their responsibilities and work together to shape the character of children. By doing so, they can create a brighter future for their children and the nation

RAHIL ANAR ABBASI

Allah, the Creator of the universe, sent humans to the world as the best of creatures and also sent prophets to guide them. This blessed series started from Prophet Adam (AS) and ended with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Allah sent prophets and messengers to guide humans at different times. After the demise of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Companions (RA) continued the mission

of guidance, followed by the Tabi'in and Taba' Tabi'in. Since guidance is a fundamental need of humans, Allah continued this series of guidance through different people. Allah entrusted parents and teachers with the responsibility of guiding and shaping the character of children. This is why one relationship is called the real parents and the other is called the spiritual parents. Allah assigned specific responsibilities to both parents and teachers, and the fulfillment of

these responsibilities shapes generations. Unfortunately, for the past few decades, parents and teachers have been neglecting their responsibilities and leaving the character development of children to each other. Parents send their children to school in clean uniforms, expecting teachers to shape their character, while teachers teach books and expect parents to take care of character development. It is essential to remember that parents and teachers have their own

spheres of responsibility, which require mutual cooperation. Children are influenced by what they see and experience at home and school. If parents disrespect teachers in front of their children, use abusive language, and neglect their children's emotional needs, no teacher can shape their character. Similarly, if teachers only focus on teaching books and neglect character development, children will suffer. Teachers should not only teach academic subjects but also play a

role in shaping children's character. If parents and teachers work together and fulfill their responsibilities, they can shape children's character and create a better future for them. If all parents and teachers start working together today, our country will become a role model for peace, love, and harmony. In conclusion, parents and teachers must recognize their responsibilities and work together to shape the character of children. By doing so, they can create a brighter future for their children and the nation.

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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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Marriott.....051-2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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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



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Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092



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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

Portuguese Journalist & Author Teresa Nicolau visiting Pakistan

Teresa Nicolau, a distinguished journalist and author known for her compelling storytelling and deep insights into culture, and media's influence on public discourse, has made significant contributions to Portuguese journalism and literature



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Acclaimed Portuguese journalist and author, Teresa Nicolau, is arriving this week to Pakistan at the invitation of the Portuguese Embassy, to participate in events and activities in Islamabad and in Lahore, where she will also be participating in the incoming 2025 LLF- Lahore Literary Festival. Teresa Nicolau, a distinguished journalist and author known for her compelling storytelling and deep insights into culture, and media's influence on public discourse, has made significant contributions to Portuguese journalism and literature. She is currently the Director of Culture at the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, in Lisbon. With a solid career in journal-

ism, Teresa Nicolau authored the regular media column "A room that is yours", in the "Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias" (the most impactful Portuguese print media on art and culture), in which she deeply reflected on social and cultural topics. With RTP (Radio Televis o Portuguesa) she worked as Art and Culture Editor between 1996 and 2023, being the author and coordinator of a landmark cultural daily program "As Horas Extraordinárias (The Extra Hours)", broadcasted by RTP from 2015 to 2023, achieving great recognition and vast audience. Her career was recognized with the Pro-Author Award from the Portuguese Society of Authors, in 2017, and with the Cultural Journalism Award, conferred by the same institution, in 2020.

Death anniversary of poet Shabnam Romani observed

ISLAMABAD: The 16th death anniversary of prominent Urdu poet, writer and columnist Shabnam Romani was observed on Monday. Born in 1928 in Badaun city of Uttar Pradesh, his real name was Mirza Azim Beg Chughtai. He wrote a number of books, including Jazeera, Doosra Himala, and Tohmat. Shabnam Romani also wrote a literary column in the daily 'Mashrik' under the name 'Hyde Park' for a long time. In 1989, Shabnam Romani brought out the literary journal 'Aqdar' which was well received in literary circles. Romani died on February 17 in Karachi in 2009 at the age of 81.—APP

Pakistan's Birmingham Acting Consul General passes away

ISLAMABAD: Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Birmingham, United Kingdom Kamran Ahmed Malik passed away following a protracted illness. "It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our esteemed colleague, Mr Kamran Malik, Acting Consul General Birmingham, who departed peacefully on 16 February 2025 after a courageous battle with cancer," Foreign Office announced on Monday. He was survived by his wife and three young children. Malik has been serving as Acting Consul General at Pakistan Consulate in Birmingham since July, 2024. Prior to that, he served in Pakistan diplomatic missions in France and the Czech Republic. He joined the government service in 2007 and the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 2014. "Kamran Malik served Pakistan with unwavering dedication, integrity, and distinction throughout his career. His diplomatic acumen, compassion, and commitment to duty left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of working alongside him. Even in the face of adversity, Kamran exemplified resilience and grace, inspiring peers and partners alike." Foreign Office spokesperson Shafiqat Ali Khan said in a statement. He also extended condolences to Malik's family and friends and prayed for them to find solace in the enduring legacy of Kamran's contributions to diplomacy and the countless lives he touched. Pakistan's High Commission in the UK also remembered Kamran Malik as an outstanding diplomat and a devoted family man. "Officers and staff of the Pakistan High Commission and Consulates join High Commissioner Dr Mohammad Faisal in extending their sincere condolences to the bereaved family," the High Commission said in a statement.—APP

Gwadar Kitab Mela to promote culture, literary enthusiasts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar played host to the vibrant four-day "Gwadar Kitab Mela 2025", bringing together writers, scholars, and literary enthusiasts from Balochistan and beyond. The festival, a dynamic fusion of literature, art, and intellectual discourse, featured thought-provoking debates, book launches, poetry recitations, art exhibitions, and theatrical performances, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage and intellectual engagement. The festival

thrived as a platform for open dialogue, addressing key issues such as the history of the Makran Coast and climate challenges in Gwadar. Female participation was a notable highlight, with dedicated sessions amplifying women's voices in theater and discussions. Traditional music and short film screenings further enriched the experience, making the festival a true celebration of knowledge and artistic expression. The festival commenced on Thursday with eight diverse events, including the opening ceremony, a tabloid theatre performance,

book launches, a panel on environmental challenges, and short film screenings. The second day featured the "Balochi-Urdu Poetry Symposium (Mushaira)", held outdoors at GDA Padizar Park, and "Khawateen Time", which featured a theater performance and an engaging discussion. Discussions were also organized on books, including "Yat Geri Dewan" by Mir Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati and "Gwadar's Historical Heritage: Past, Present, and Future." The third day featured ten events, including the launch of "Journey Through Chaos"

by journalist Mazhar Abbas. In addition to critical book reviews, panels held discussions on the climate challenges facing Gwadar and the history of Makran. The festival concluded with eight diverse events on its final day, attracting enthusiastic participation. According to event organizers, books worth Rs. 2.8 million were sold during the festival—setting a new record compared to previous editions. Notably, Balochi-language books accounted for Rs. 1 million in sales, reflecting a growing interest in regional literature.

Kids' excessive screen time effects health

ISLAMABAD: Excessive use of mobile phones among children had become a pressing concern for parents, educators, and health experts. With the widespread availability of smart phones and tablets, kids were spending increasing amounts of time glued to their screens, sparking fears about the impact on their physical and mental health. Many parents report that their children were spending hours each day playing games, watching videos, and chatting with friends on their mobile devices. This excessive screen time was leading to a range of problems, including sleep deprivation, eye strain, and decreased attention span. A mother of 10-year-old Sabrena expressed her deep concern about her child's phone addiction saying, "I have noticed a significant change in my child's behavior since they started using a smartphone and they are constantly glued to the screen, and it's affecting their mood, their grades, and their overall health." She said that children have become inseparable from their device adding that they can't seem to put it down, even during meals or family time. "She feel like I have lost control over my child's phone use which is affecting my child's grades and they are not focusing on their schoolwork like they should be, they are constantly on it, and I don't know how to limit their screen time, she stated. Health experts warned that excessive mobile phone use could have serious long-term consequences for children, including increased risk of obesity, decreased physical activity, and impaired cognitive development. A pediatrician Saira Jabeen said "Children need a balanced diet of physical activity, social interaction, and mental stimulation to develop properly adding that excessive mobile phone use can disrupt this balance and have serious consequences for their health and wellbeing. She advised to limit screen time to 1-2 hours daily to ensure a healthy balance adding that encourage kids to engage in outdoor games and sports to promote physical activity and teamwork. She recommended monitoring children's mobile phone use to set responsible boundaries and limits, while also encouraging social interaction to foster essential communication skills and emotional intelligence.—DNA

FGCTA elects new leadership

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government College Teachers Association (FGCTA) elected its new elected central body. Dr. Fida Ul Mustafa, the chief election commissioner of the association officially declared the results during a ceremony held at Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H-8. The newly elected leadership is set to take charge of the association, with Mr. Muhammad Akram, Associate Professor at H-8 College, elected as the President of FGCTA. Ms. Ayesha Kiran, Lecturer at F-7/2 College, will serve as the Senior Vice President, while Ms. Bushra Kauser, Assistant Professor at G-10/4 College, has been elected as the Vice President. Moreover, Mr. Tahir Bhutti, Assistant Professor at H-9 College, has been elected as the General Secretary, Mr. Danish Yaseen Lecturer at H-8 College was elected as the Joint Secretary, while Mr. Zubairuddin, Assistant Professor at F-10/4 College, took the position of Finance Secretary. Furthermore, Ms. Sobia Masood, Assistant Professor at F-7/2 College, has been elected as the Press & Information Secretary.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A large number of the employees demonstrate protest outside Utility Store Head Office at Blue area as In a major move, the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) has initiated a large-scale restructuring, resulting in the termination of nearly 3,000 employees in a single day.

Official delegates, students nominated for foreign trainings

ISLAMABAD: The official delegates and students, nominated for trainings in different countries, will get briefing from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) prior to their departure. The MoFA in a recent circular has informed all ministries, divisions, provincial governments and the Higher Education Commission to ensure that all such nominees get the briefing. The modalities are being worked out in consultation with the HEC, and would be shared in due course, the document said. The circular is in line with the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and has been issued for strict compliance by the departments.—APP

'A Palette of Dreams' Art Exhibition attracts art lovers

ISLAMABAD: The art exhibition titled 'A Palette of Dreams' continues to attract the visitors through showcasing over 100 art works of emerging artists belonged to the different parts of the country on its second day. The exhibition was inaugurated in a grand ceremony held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Sunday, bringing together an impressive display of artistic talent from across Pakistan. The exhibition highlights the creative expressions of young artists, with a special showcase of Sidra Babar's art and emerging talent. The event was meticulously curated by Sidra Babar and Adeela Shahid. The inauguration ceremony was attended by esteemed guests from the political, media, and business sectors. The chief guest, Mr. Mohammad Rashid, General Manager of Rudn Enclave, graced the occasion alongside distinguished foreign dignitaries, political figures, and representatives from Islamabad's business community. The officials from the Prime Minister's Youth Club office also participated in the event. A major announcement was made during the ceremony, as Mr Rashid pledged his commitment to supporting young artists. He revealed plans to establish a welfare trust for artists within Rudn Enclave in collaboration with Sidra Babar. This initiative aims to provide a sustainable platform for emerging artists, offering resources and fostering artistic growth. Sidra Babar, the curator and a renowned visual artist, expressed her gratitude to M Ayoub Jamali, Director General of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts PNCA, and the Visual Arts Division for providing young artists with this platform. She acknowledged the overwhelming participation from artists across the country and emphasized the importance of such exhibitions in nurturing creativity and giving recognition to new talent.—APP

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Briefs

Govt to strengthen digital connectivity: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Monday that Pakistan set to become a major player in the digital landscape with enhanced internet connectivity and the launch of 5G technology. Speaking at the event titled "Shaping the Future of Connectivity Beyond 5G," she announced the government's target to increase IT exports from \$3.2 billion to \$15 billion. She said that 5G deployment will significantly contribute to the country's GDP growth, while addressing existing internet connectivity challenges. She assured that spectrum allocation is expected by May or June, which will lead to improved services. She said that Pakistan is currently assessing investment and cost estimates for the 5G rollout, studying global best practices to ensure a smooth and cost-effective deployment. She also revealed that the world's largest optical fiber cable has now reached Pakistan and will soon be operational, further enhancing digital infrastructure.

Pakistan is working on a project to connect with Central Asia through the Wakhan border, strengthening its role as a regional connectivity hub. The minister noted that over half of Pakistan operates on a 274 MHz spectrum, underscoring the need for expansion to meet future digital demands. She reaffirmed the government's commitment to achieving a \$25 billion IT sector target through better connectivity and strategic investments. Reflecting on the country's economic turnaround, Fatima Khawaja highlighted that two years ago, Pakistan was on the verge of default, but today, the economy has stabilized, markets are steady, inflation is declining, and GDP is on an upward trajectory.—APP

AIOU holds 72nd meeting of its Board of Advance Studies and Research

ISLAMABAD: The first session of the 72nd meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) was held on Monday at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The session was conducted and facilitated by the Director of BASR, Professor Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad. A report on the implementation of previous decisions and the agenda for the current meeting were presented. The meeting was attended by the university's deans, professors, subject specialists, and PhD scholars. During the first session, 15 scholars from the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, including the Department of Quran and Tafseer, Shariah, and Islamic Thought and Culture, presented their research papers. The subject specialists meticulously reviewed the students' research topics, approved the presented papers, and suggested some modifications. The board also agreed that students should complete their research following the approved format.—APP

Nasir calls for CDA Facilitation Desk at ICCI

Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry urged unity within the business community to work together toward resolving their challenges and fostering an environment conducive to business growth

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has emphasized that the business community is the true backbone of the country's economy and that resolving its challenges should be a top priority for all concerned departments. Addressing the visiting trade leaders, Qureshi highlighted several key problems faced by the

business community, including high electricity tariffs, excessive FBR taxes, CDA's trade change charges, security concerns, inadequate parking facilities, sanitation problems, long-awaited market refurbishments, and removal of encroachments. He stressed that addressing these issues is essential for facilitating ease of doing business and achieving overall economic betterment. President Qureshi assured that the ICCI remains committed to supporting the business commu-

nity and has been actively working with relevant authorities to resolve these issues. He noted that the Chamber is ready to provide space for the establishment of facilitation centers, such as those for TDAP, NADRA, FTO, police verification, and the Medication Council, to ease business operations. He also urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to set up a facilitation desk at the ICCI, as many of the business community's challenges are directly linked to CDA regulations.

"The ICCI is always ready to assist in resolving the issues of the business community. If the CDA takes the initiative to establish a facilitation desk at our premises, it would go a long way toward solving many of the challenges faced by businesses in Islamabad," added Qureshi. Qureshi expressed optimism that CDA Chairman Mohammad Ali Randhawa would recognize the urgency of the situation and personally visit the ICCI to engage with industry and trade representatives to gain first-hand

knowledge of the issues related to the authority. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui also spoke on the Chamber's ongoing efforts to improve the business environment, emphasizing that the country is on the right path toward economic prosperity. Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry urged unity within the business community to work together toward resolving their challenges and fostering an environment conducive to business growth.



ISLAMABAD: Strengthening economic ties: Pakistan-Australia Business Council delegation calls on Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan.

Minister emphasizes on Industry-govt collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday emphasized for Industry-Government Collaboration at Pre-Budget 2025-26 Seminar. Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, while addressing the Pre-Budget Seminar 2025-26, highlighted the crucial role of industry-government collaboration in stabilizing the economy and shaping future trade policies. The seminar, organized by the Ministry of Commerce, provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss economic challenges and the roadmap for tariff rationalization. The minister acknowledged the difficulties faced in recent

years but appreciated the resilience of the industry. "We have been partially successful despite many challenges. The industry has survived tough times, and I congratulate all stakeholders for their efforts. Their contributions have been effective in steering the economy towards stability," he stated. Reflecting on the economic turmoil of two years ago, Jam Kamal Khan pointed out the severe challenges, including 38% inflation, high interest rates, and an uncertain investment climate. However, he credited joint efforts between the government and the private sector for bringing stability. "If we compare today's situation with two years ago, it is evident that stability has returned. This

achievement is the result of industry's contribution alongside government initiatives," he remarked. The Federal Secretary for Commerce, Jawad Paul, welcomed participants to the seminar, emphasizing its importance in shaping economic policy and fostering export-led growth. He highlighted the role of tariff rationalization in reducing production costs, boosting competitiveness, and attracting foreign investment. Lower import duties on essential inputs have strengthened domestic industries, leading to increased exports and job creation. Transparent tariff policies enhance investor confidence and economic integration through trade agreements. The National Tariff Policy (NTP) 2019-24

successfully rationalized 85.75% of tariff lines, providing Rs. 92 billion in relief to businesses. The new NTP 2025-30 aims to further support SMEs, green initiatives, and emerging technologies like AI and robotics. The Ministry of Commerce remains committed to stakeholder engagement and targeted reforms to ensure sustainable economic growth and global trade integration. He emphasized the importance of proactive policy discussions ahead of the budget. "We have decided to initiate extensive consultations well before the budget. This is just the first session, and within two to three months, we will be in a stronger position to make informed decisions," he stated.

OGRA holds seminar on regulatory framework & safety in CNG sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) conducted a seminar on regulatory framework and safety in CNG Sector, emphasizing the importance of safety to minimize incidents at CNG stations. The event held at OGRA's Auditorium, was graced by the presence of the senior government officials alongwith DG Gas, Chief Engineer HDIP and All Pakistan CNG Association. The event was chaired by Chairman OGRA, Mr. Masroor Khan, alongside Member Oil and Finance. In his address, Mr. Khan emphasized the importance of safety in CNG Sector and said that he was part of the discussions before the start of CNG station in year 1995. "This sector is very close to my heart and I would like to say that the sec-



OGRA, Chief Engineer HDIP and the representatives of CNG sector have also shared their views.

Rawalpindi's water emergency

A Looming crisis for the twin cities

FILZA FATIMA

ISLAMABAD: The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) has declared an emergency in Rawalpindi due to a severe water crisis triggered by drought. According to MD WASA, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf, the city's water shortage has worsened, with daily demand standing at 68 million gallons against a mere 51 million gallons available. He warned that the situation will become even more dire if February and March pass without any rainfall. The Meteorological Department has also predicted scarce rainfall, exacerbating the crisis. The constant increase in population and commercial activities has led to a depletion of water resources. WASA has launched an awareness campaign

to encourage water conservation and has warned of stern action against those found wasting water. The drought has severely impacted dams and groundwater levels, which have dropped to alarming levels, with the water table plummeting to 700 feet below ground. To address the shortage, WASA is relying on water from the Rawal Dam, Khanpur Dam, and tubewells. In light of the crisis, WASA has cautioned citizens against unnecessary water usage and has already issued challans to two residents found wasting water. The agency has appealed to citizens to cooperate and reduce their water consumption. Additionally, the cleaning of Khanpur Dam will result in a temporary suspension of water supply until February 22. Earlier, the Lahore

High Court (LHC) imposed fines for wasting water during car washes inside homes. LHC Justice Shahid Karim, while hearing petitions related to smog and environmental pollution, ordered a fine of Rs10,000 for individuals found wasting water by washing vehicles at home. The court also directed the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) to submit a comprehensive report on traffic-related pollution. With Rawalpindi and Islamabad facing a worsening water crisis, long-term solutions must be prioritized. The reliance on groundwater extraction, coupled with unchecked urban expansion, has placed immense pressure on existing water resources. Pipeline leakages, illegal water connections, and lack of proper waste management contribute to wastage and contamina-

tion of the already limited supply. While short-term measures such as rationing and awareness campaigns are necessary, sustainable water management policies are crucial to ensure long-term water security. Investments in rainwater harvesting, better waste treatment systems, and public awareness campaigns are vital to mitigating the crisis. Policymakers must prioritize sustainable urban planning and conservation initiatives, as failure to do so could leave the twin cities on the brink of an irreversible water disaster. The WASA emergency declaration is a stark reminder that water scarcity is not a distant threat—it is a present reality that demands urgent and decisive action.

—Email: filzafatima009@gmail.com

Pak eyes export expansion to KSA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday underscored the potential for boosting exports from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia, especially in the skilled labor sector as the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 objectives drive up demand for skilled workers.

In an interview with Arab News during the AIUla Conference for Emerging Market Economies, the minister noted that this aligns with the Kingdom's expanding workforce needs as it progresses toward its Vision 2030 objectives. The minister said, Saudi Arabia's influence in regional economic transformation is expanding, with Pakistan acknowledging the Kingdom's progress under Vision 2030 as a valuable model. He emphasized that Saudi Arabia's leadership in economic reforms offers important lessons for Pakistan as it embarks on its own structural changes. "Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been long-standing partners, one of the strongest partnerships that we have," Aurangzeb said. "As we go through our own structural reforms at this point in time, on the back of the macroeconomic stability that we have achieved, there's a lot to learn from Vision 2030," the minister said. He also stated that the Kingdom is well ahead of its targets of Vision 2030, "so there's so much to learn in Pakistan from our partners in Saudi Arabia." The finance minister also highlighted the growing Saudi investments in Pakistan, particularly in the business-to-business sector. He pointed to recent developments such as Saudi Aramco's foray into the downstream petroleum industry and ongoing talks concerning government-to-government agreements. "We've already had a few investments coming through from Saudi Arabia in the Business to Business (B2B) space, and then of course, we have just seen Aramco coming into downstream, so these are all very, very good investments," Aurangzeb said. "There are a number of G2G transactions which are underway at this point in time to be announced later in the year," he added. "Meanwhile, we remain grateful for the support that we have received from Saudi Arabia, especially with respect to our IMF program," he added and noted that the conference serves as an important multilateral platform to discuss economic resilience and cooperation among emerging economies.—

Romina calls for dialogue to tackle climate challenges

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to working together on initiatives that promote climate awareness, environmental education

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the necessity of establishing platforms for public dialogue to collectively address Pakistan's pressing climate challenges. In a meeting with Sikander Rashid Choudry, Executive Member of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), who called on her on Monday, Romina underscored the critical need for cross-sectoral cooperation among regulatory bodies, the government, and media platforms to promote sustainable practices and climate-conscious initiatives. "Pakistan is facing significant environmental challenges, from water scarcity to rising temperatures. The media has a vital role in ensuring that these challenges are understood and acted upon by citizens and decision-makers alike," she said. They discussed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) soon between Ministry of Climate Change and Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to collaborate on raising awareness and advocating for sustainable practices across Pakistan through various media channels for environmental sustainability. Romina highlighted the government's commitment to climate action and the importance of a whole-of-society approach to environmental sustainability. "Climate change is an existential threat to Pakistan, and all stakeholders, including the media, must actively engage in educating the public and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship," she added. The discussion covered various topics, including the role of media in advocating for green energy, waste management, water conservation, and biodiversity protection. Both parties agreed on the need for comprehensive media campaigns and public service messages to inform citizens about sustainable practices and climate adaptation measures. Romina reiterated the government's dedication to tackling climate change and the importance of collaborations like the one with PEMRA in amplifying their message and broadening the reach of their efforts. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to working together on initiatives that promote climate awareness, environmental education, and climate action across Pakistan, aiming to foster a more informed, responsible, and environmentally conscious society.

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Peace in Ukraine

AFTER listening to US Vice-President J.D. Vance's speech on the first day of the Munich Security Conference, European colleagues of mine expressed confusion, disappointment and concern. Vance barely mentioned specific policies about Ukraine. Instead, he seemed to lecture Europe on building democracy, protecting free speech and increasing defence spending. As a participant in the Munich Young Leaders programme, I joined several discussions throughout the conference and sensed European concerns about the Trump administration and transatlantic relations. While Europe has braced for a second wave of the "Trump shock", shifts in US policy have still caught many off guard. Some European colleagues told me that Vance's speech was not only directed at Trump's political base but also at Europe's right-wing forces. Others even suspected that the US was intervening in Germany's coming elections. Europe's mindset toward the US appears to be undergoing a more lasting shift, placing transatlantic relations at a crossroads. Yes, the US and many European countries remain allies, but Europe is beginning to question whether Washington's new policies will outlast Trump. If so, this would signal a fundamental paradigm shift in US domestic politics and foreign policy – one that not only widens economic and security rifts between the two sides but also erodes their once-strong consensus on shared values. From a more immediate and pragmatic perspective, how the US and Europe respond to the Russia-Ukraine war will be a critical test for transatlantic relations. The US, Russia, Ukraine and Europe each have distinct considerations and strategic objectives. Washington is pushing for negotiations, reduced aid and more security responsibilities from Europe. Moscow is likely to be focused on ensuring its geopolitical security, its interests regarding Nato's eastward expansion and at least partial sanctions relief. J.D. Vance says 'threat vis-a-vis Europe is not Russia, it's not China' Ukraine's priority is to reclaim lost territories and ensure national security, although it may have to make more concessions as the US recalibrates its strategy. Meanwhile, internal divisions persist within Europe over the war. Many European leaders worry that US-Russia talks could come at the expense of European interests. Trump's "America first" approach to the Ukraine war may push Europe towards greater unity on security matters. However, given that some countries still lack full defence autonomy in the short term, the possibility of Europe accepting a Trump-brokered peace plan for Ukraine cannot be ruled out. While the conflict may not escalate further, achieving lasting peace will take time. If the US pressures Europe to accept any peace proposals, Washington will need to find new common ground on security and economic issues to maintain or reshape the transatlantic alliance. If Washington and Moscow can find some level of common ground in the long run and European countries are involved in reshaping the continent's security framework, this could contribute to a peaceful resolution of the war. From a pragmatic perspective, the prolonged conflict is a burden not only for Europe and Russia but even more so for Ukraine. A peaceful resolution would align with the interests of most stakeholders. However, the key factors determining when and how the Ukraine crisis will be resolved include the extent of concessions Kyiv is willing or forced to make, whether Russia will demand more after achieving its strategic objectives, how European nations position themselves towards Ukraine and the evolving stance of the US.



Assault on the belt and road

PANAMA'S recent withdrawal from the Belt and Road Initiative underscores the obstacles China encounters in maintaining the momentum of its ambitious global infrastructure project. While Panama's exit was anticipated given sustained pressure from the Trump administration, its decision raises concerns about potential ripple effects in Latin America. The initiative has significantly bolstered China's global trade network since its establishment in 2013. According to the Ministry of Commerce, trade in goods between China and other nations in the initiative rose to 22.1 trillion yuan (US\$3 trillion) in 2024, a notable increase from the previous year's 19.47 trillion yuan. The belt and road strategy's scope transcends trade to encompass a diverse array of infrastructure and financial investment undertakings, including railway, highway and port development, as well as investments in green energy. This initiative stands as one of the most expansive infrastructure projects ever undertaken by a single nation. Having conducted study visits to more than 30 belt and road participant countries, I see evidence of the initiative's substantial impact. Projects such as the Peljesac Bridge in Croatia to bypass a strip of Bosnian territory that separates Dubrovnik from the rest of Croatia, a highway in Montenegro to connect the underdeveloped northern regions of the country with the capital city of Podgorica and a railway linking Mombasa to Nairobi in Kenya, illustrate the transformative influence of belt and road investments across various regions. Given the shifting global dynamics driven by Trump's aggressive tactics, China must adapt and formulate a new strategic approach to address the challenges confronting the initiative. First, it should consider shifting its strategy towards establishing project-specific agreements rather than relying solely on broad country-level memorandums of understanding within the belt and road framework. China has signed more than 200 belt and road cooperation agreements with upwards of 150 countries and 30 international organisations. However, a more targeted approach focusing on project-based cooperation could enhance the resilience of participating nations against external pressures, thereby enabling countries to navigate geopolitical challenges more effectively. Panama formally exits China's Belt and Road Initiative as US claims 'victory' in decision. The positive impacts of China's infrastructure projects have been widely observed across various countries. According to the London-based Centre for Economics and Business Research, the initiative is forecast to contribute to a US\$7.1 trillion annual increase in global gross domestic product by 2040, with substantial benefits derived from improved infrastructure facilitating smoother global trade. During a recent visit to Georgia with my executive students, one prevailing topic was China's upcoming construction of a new deep water port in Anaklia, a city along the Black Sea. This is poised to facilitate the potential development of a "Middle Corridor" as a new link from China to Europe, reducing dependence on Russian transport routes.

Faceless dictatorship in the USA and Europe

Qamar Bashir



The president's statement carries multiple connotations. One interpretation is that the U.S. media, having been challenged by Trump and his team, reacted with hostility after losing the unchecked power to dictate narratives and control political agendas. Unlike past leaders who sought media appeasement, Trump confronted it head-on, refusing to be blackmailed or intimidated. The media's backlash can be seen as a defeatist response – an attempt to spin his words by stripping them of context to fit their own agenda

TWO major headlines shook the U.S. and the world. First, President Trump's defiant tweet: "One who saves his country does not violate any laws." Second, Vice President JD Vance's blistering rebuke of European leaders, accusing them—without exception—of betraying democratic values and suppressing free speech. Both statements sent shockwaves, exposing the widening chasm between political rhetoric and the reality of governance in the West. Trump's statement invited a flood of criticism across both traditional and social media. Many social media users harshly criticized him, branding him a dictator and authoritarian, and even comparing him to Mussolini, Hitler, and Napoleon. However, such comparisons overlook key historical facts. While Mussolini and Hitler rose to power through a mix of political maneuvering and suppression of opposition, and Napoleon seized power in a coup in 1799 and later declared himself Emperor, Trump was elected through a transparent, free, and fair democratic process. The president's statement carries multiple connotations. One interpretation is that the U.S. media, having been challenged by Trump and his team, reacted with hostility after losing the unchecked power to dictate narratives and control political agendas. Unlike past leaders who sought media appeasement, Trump confronted it head-on, refusing to be blackmailed or intimidated. The media's backlash can be seen as a defeatist response—an attempt to spin his words by stripping them of context to fit their own agenda. Secondly, democracy in both the USA and Europe appears to have come full circle. Over prolonged democratic rule, the bureaucracy—both military and civilian, judiciary, and media—oiled by filthy rich multinational corporations, has been buying lawmakers to enact scores of laws, rules, and regulations that serve their vested interests, further augment their wealth, protect their privileges, and secure their hefty perks and perquisites. Over the years, elements of this dirty nexus have amassed such overwhelming influence and have occupied so much space in governance that little remains for democratically elected representatives. This alliance ensures that any political challenge is swiftly neutralized before it crosses acceptable limits. Together, they have transformed democracy into a modern, unelected dictatorship.

The elected leadership, soon after assuming power, finds themselves powerless. Instead of enacting meaningful reforms, they are reduced to a mere figurehead—a toothless showpiece—who spends their tenure justifying the failures of the bureaucracy and defending crimes committed by the unelected elites. When they try to resist, the faceless dictatorship often coerces them into committing transgressions themselves. Once compromised, the de facto dictators tighten their grip, stripping the politician of power, humiliating them, and ensuring their downfall while keeping their power intact, securing their privileges, and perpetuating the flow of dirty money into their coffers while, in their private conversations, relishing their vanquishing of the political elites. This faceless dictatorship has reduced ordinary citizens to mere laborers, maybe a little over slaves, who toil day in and day out, barely earning enough to sustain themselves or provide food at their tables. Conversely, the elements of the faceless dictatorship enjoy a lifestyle akin to royalty, lavishing millions on individual events, acquiring airplanes, helicopters, private islands, and expansive estates that were previously exclusive to monarchs. This form of dictatorship, widespread in both the USA and Europe, might have gone unnoticed had it not been for the rapid rise of nations once dismissed as inferior—those ruled by monarchies, like in the Middle East, or quasi-democracies such as South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, as well as socialist China. These countries, once seen as struggling under supposedly flawed systems, have now surged ahead, surpassing the USA and Europe in nearly every major national and international domain. When the Western powers finally woke up to this reality, they were stunned to find that China, Middle Eastern states, and other quasi-authoritarian regimes had quietly bought up their assets and outpaced them in industries and sectors that were once considered exclusive Western monopolies. Panic-stricken, the USA and Europe responded with extreme protectionist measures—passing emergency laws to block foreign acquisitions of their assets, shutting their economies off from outside influence, and building legislative fortresses around their institutions. Desperate, they banned foreign media outlets, enacted sweeping laws against "hate speech" and "fake news," empowered

law enforcement agencies to profile their own citizens, clamped down on diversity, pushed aggressive anti-immigration policies, and, in a complete reversal of their long-preached values, embraced white supremacy under the guise of "protecting their cultural identity." Ironically, these are the same nations that once used their economic and military might—alongside their control of international institutions—to force other countries into opening their economies, respecting free speech, upholding judicial independence, making immigration-compliant laws, preaching diversity, and selling off their national assets to foreign investors. Yet, with stunning hypocrisy, while utterly ignoring the suffocating grip of faceless dictatorships on Americans, U.S. Vice President JD Vance took the stage at the Munich Security Conference on February 14, 2025, to deliver a scathing critique of European leaders. He accused them of stifling free speech and religious liberties under the convenient banner of combating "misinformation." His remarks, dripping with condescension, painted European leaders as hypocrites masquerading as champions of democracy while, in his view, systematically silencing dissent and eroding fundamental freedoms. Vance's address, far from a diplomatic overture, landed as a direct insult to Europe's leadership, branding them as elitist, oppressive, and hopelessly out of touch with the democratic ideals they claim to uphold. Though delayed, this realization exposes the deep fault lines within democratic systems. The unelected, faceless dictatorship that has engulfed both the USA and Europe has tightened its grip over time, leaving ordinary people struggling and disillusioned. Meanwhile, socialist regimes, monarchies, and quasi-dictatorships have uncovered a simple but powerful truth—empower the people, improve their quality of life, and, in turn, secure long-term stability and influence. By doing so, they are not only consolidating their hold at home but also positioning themselves to dominate regions where governments have failed to uplift their own citizens, leaving them weak and resentful. The political leaders, both in Europe and the USA, are struggling to reclaim their space from the elements of faceless dictatorship, but it is a long-haul war, not just a battle.

Ravians forever: Memories, mentors, and the legacy of GCU

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



A fundamental part of this enduring connection is the Old Ravians Union, an association dedicated to preserving the spirit and camaraderie of former students. Since its inception, the Union has served as a platform for alumni to contribute to their alma mater, promoting academic and extracurricular excellence. Its elections, conducted with great zeal and fervor, ensure the continuation...

BEFORE the partition of the Sub-Continent, Lahore was illustrious not only for its historical and cultural richness but also for its esteemed educational institutions. Among these, Government College Lahore stood as a beacon of intellectual brilliance. Alongside other distinguished institutions such as Aitchison College, Forman Christian College, Islamia College, Kinnaird College, King Edward Medical College and Punjab University, it was regarded as a bastion of academic excellence, where admission was the cherished dream of countless students. Before I had the privilege of stepping through its grand entrance, I would often gaze wistfully at its towering structure, deeply aware of the luminaries who had once graced its halls, including the great poet-philosopher, Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The long-awaited day finally arrived when I stepped through the majestic gates of Government College Lahore, situated opposite Nasir Bagh, embarking upon my own academic journey towards that iconic tower. Accompanied by my father Chaudhary Muhammad Iqbal, I secured the admission form, completed the formalities, and paid the required fee at the bank situated across the road from the college. Thus, I was formally inducted into the M.A. History program, an achievement made possible by the unwavering support of my father and maternal uncle Mehmud Fakhri—an indebtedness I shall always hold close to my heart. Government College Lahore, now revered as Government College University (GCU), was established in 1864 under British colonial rule. Initially affiliated with Calcutta University before becoming a part of Punjab University, it has since evolved into one of the premier seats of learning in South Asia. Over the decades, its reputation has been cemented by the brilliance of its alumni—visionaries, statesmen, poets, scientists, and artists—who have made remarkable contributions to various fields. Among them stand Nobel laureate Dr. Abdus Salam, literary giant Faiz Ahmed Faiz, astute politician Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan, iconic Bollywood actor Dev Anand, and numerous others who have left an indelible mark on history. The faculty of Government College has also been graced by illustrious scholars such as Pitras Bukhari, Dr. Muhammad Ajmal, and Dr. Nazir Ahmad, whose erudition and pedagogical prowess have illuminated the intellectual landscape.

Over a period of almost 16 years, I studied under many educational institutions and teachers, but Dr. Amjad Butt, head of History Department was unique among them all. Amjad Butt, who received his doctorate from Oxford University, spoke English like Shakespeare in class, and the words would fall like pearls from his lips. Outside the class, he spoke in pure Punjabi, as he belonged to Gawalmandi, Lahore and was a "Puckey Lahori". During this time, his retirement was approaching, so the then Chief Minister of Punjab offered him a five-year extension in his service, which he declined with thanks, saying that I had played my innings. He was a principled and dignified personality, although it was known during that era that no teacher agreed to retire from Government College. My days at this venerable institution remain among the most cherished of my life. Whether braving the dense fog of Lahore's winter or the relentless heat of summer, my eagerness to immerse myself in the pursuit of knowledge never waned. The college's academic environment was profoundly enriched by the presence of extraordinary teachers, including Dr. Amjad Butt, Prof. Masood Raza, Dr. Farhat Mahmood, Amanullah Virk, and Muhammad Sadiq—scholars whose intellectual rigor and inspiring mentorship shaped my perspective in profound ways. During my tenure at the college, I was fortunate to witness the grand celebrations marking its 125th anniversary. The occasion was a magnificent convergence of Old Ravians from across the world, including the legendary Indian actor Dev Anand, a testament to the college's far-reaching influence and the deep-seated connections it fosters among its alumni. A fundamental part of this enduring connection is the Old Ravians Union, an association dedicated to preserving the spirit and camaraderie of former students. Since its inception, the Union has served as a platform for alumni to contribute to their alma mater, promoting academic and extracurricular excellence. Its elections, conducted with great zeal and fervor, ensure the continuation of this noble legacy. This year, the elections for the 2025-27 term are set to take place on February 23, 2025. Among the candidates for the esteemed position of President is my valued classmate, Sajid Goraya. Even during our college days, Sajid Goraya distinguished himself through his deep involvement in extracurricular activities, complementing his academic pursuits with an

active presence in student affairs. Clad in his signature white cotton shalwar kameez, he exuded an air of humility and commitment—a trait that remains a hallmark of his personality even today. His candidacy for the presidency of the Old Ravians Union is a reflection of his unwavering dedication to the welfare of his fellow alumni and the advancement of GCU. Should he secure victory, I have no doubt that he will discharge his responsibilities with diligence and integrity, further strengthening the ties between past and present Ravians. As I reflect upon my time at Government College Lahore, I am reminded of the friendships that shaped my journey. The names of my classmates—Sheikh Aamir Rashid, Raja Fakhar Sultan, Ansar Moin, Hammad, Ijaz Boxer, and many others—resonate in my memory, each one an integral part of my college experience. Our camaraderie, our passionate intellectual debates in the corridors, and our collective aspirations formed the fabric of a remarkable chapter in our lives. Even now, I can hear the echoes of our laughter, the fervent discussions we held, and the moments of youthful ambition that bound us together. Music, too, was an inseparable aspect of GCU's cultural vibrancy. The melodies that once echoed through its halls still linger in my mind, none more evocative than the song rendered by Ali Ahmed Sayan—Ashiqaan-TooSohnaMukhra Lukan Lai, Sajna Ne BoheUtteChikh Tan Lai—a tune that continues to stir nostalgia and an enduring sense of belonging. As the Old Ravians Union election approaches, I am drawn to a deeper reflection on its significance—not merely as an administrative entity but as a guardian of traditions, a bridge between generations, and a steadfast custodian of the values instilled within these historic walls. Government College University Lahore is not merely an institution; it is an enduring legacy, an emblem of intellectual distinction, and a sanctuary of enlightenment. As Old Ravians, it is both our privilege and our solemn duty to uphold its grandeur, ensuring that its luminous heritage continues to guide and inspire the generations to come. Finally, I request the administration and the future elected body to remove the word "University" from the name of this institution because the name Government College Lahore is a name of identity and legacy.

Briefs

Pak economic reforms...

FROM PAGE 01

"The country's economy is on the right path and moving towards growth," the premier added. He also stressed that sustainable economic development required further efforts. The country's chief executive said that the credit for economic turnaround went to the hard work of the government's economic team. The prime minister observed that Pakistan's exports and remittances were increasing, adding that a reduction in interest rates was boosting investment in the production sector.

Pakistan eyes export..

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"As we go through our own structural reforms at this point in time, on the back of the macroeconomic stability that we have achieved, there's a lot to learn from Vision 2030," the minister said. He also stated that the Kingdom is well ahead of its targets of Vision 2030, "so there's so much to learn in Pakistan from our partners in Saudi Arabia."

Russia offers mediation...

FROM PAGE 01

where Moscow and Islamabad have historically demonstrated solidarity. "We are quite positive about our counterterrorism and counter-narcotics cooperation with Pakistan," said Khorev. "Regular bilateral expert dialogues, including the Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism and Other Contemporary Threats, play a vital role in strengthening our strategic partnership."

Attack on Kurram...

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peace in Kurram came under a gun attack. Upper Kurram Assistant Commissioner Abdul Manan was heading to Boshra village to persuade the warring sides to cease fire when his convoy was ambushed on the way. He was seriously injured and was rushed to a nearby hospital on a cot. Earlier, in January, Kurram District Deputy Commissioner Javed Allah Mehsud was also ambushed by gunmen in the Baggan area when unknown assailants opened fire on a convoy of government vehicles.

CJP Afridi constitutes..

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acting apex court judge. In his latest administrative move, CJP Yahya has appointed several judges to oversee anti-terrorism courts in different provinces. Justice Musarrat Hilali will supervise anti-terrorism courts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, whereas Justice Malik Shahzad will do so in Punjab, Justice Hashim Kakar in Balochistan, Justice Panhwar in Sindh, and Justice Aamer Farooq in Islamabad.

Raja calls judicial...

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regarding the electoral process. While acknowledging that voters came out in great strength to cast their ballots, he pointed out that election-day proceedings were largely smooth, but irregularities surfaced post-voting. "Ballot boxes were opened at every polling station, and Form 45—used to record polling results—was altered," he alleged.

Over 400 human...

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He said legislation has also been enacted to make human trafficking a non-bailable offense. He said anti-human trafficking cell has been activated and an awareness campaign has also been launched. He expressed the firm commitment to eradicate this menace. To a question, the Information Minister said Safari Park will be constructed in Islamabad at a cost of ten billion rupees. He said the project is currently in the planning phase.

German envoy hosts reception for the German hockey Team

The Khawaja Junaid Academy spearheaded by Olympian Khwaja Junaid looked after the visiting teams in Pakistan. While in Islamabad the Rising Stars Hockey Club was entrusted with the responsibilities of coordination etc



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, His Excellency Grannas, hosted a warm reception in honour of the German hockey team Wiesbadener Tennis- und Hockey-Club (WTHC), which is currently visiting Pakistan to participate in friendly matches under the Prime Minister Youth Programme. The event, was attended by prominent political figures and members of the sports fraternity, further underscoring the significance of sports in strengthening German-Pakistan relations. Ambassador Grannas expressed his deep appreciation for the visit, calling it an excellent initiative that provides a unique platform to strengthen bilateral ties between Germany and Pakistan through sports. He highlighted the importance of such exchanges, noting how they foster goodwill, cooperation, and mutual understanding. The Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy, known for its active role in promoting hockey, has arranged matches in Lahore and Islamabad as part of the visit. The event reflects a growing trend of diplomacy through sports, where international teams, such as WTHC, have the opportunity to showcase their skills, share experiences, and develop long-lasting connections with local communities. The Wiesbadener Tennis- und Hockey-Club (WTHC), founded in 1910, is renowned for its commitment to excellence and its contributions to the development of hockey in Germany. This 32-member contingent, led by German hockey legend Stefan Blöcher, includes players from the Men's 1 team, officials, and several businessmen from the Frankfurt region. The team is in Pakistan from February 10 to February 18, 2025. The visit represents a significant opportunity to foster collaboration, cultural exchange, and sportsmanship, aligning with the goals of the Prime Minister Youth Programme. It also provides a unique avenue for showcasing the talents of the athletes while promoting the friendship between Pakistan and Germany. The Khawaja Junaid Academy spearheaded by Olympian Khwaja Junaid looked after the visiting teams in Pakistan. While in Islamabad the Rising Stars Hockey Club was entrusted with the responsibilities of coordination etc.



Doping ban impacts Sinner as little as possible - Broady

LONDON: Britain's Liam Broady believes Jannik Sinner's three-month ban for doping has been timed to impact the world number one's career "as little as possible". The Italian accepted an immediate three-month ban from the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) on Saturday after reaching a settlement over his two positive drug tests last year. The 23-year-old, who won the Australian Open in January, is suspended from 9 February until 4 May, so will be eligible to play at the French Open - the next Grand Slam of the year - which begins on 19 May. "I do think a lot has been put into when the ban would take place, to impact Jannik's career as little as possible," Broady told BBC Sport. "The ban ends the day before the Rome Masters, which is the biggest tournament in his home country and the perfect preparation for him to then go and play the French Open. "I don't think he loses any [ranking] points or his number one spot either, so it's an interesting ban. "I was speaking to some people earlier and they said it's kind of like a Premier League footballer being banned over the summer. It's a difficult one." Sinner was cleared of any wrongdoing by an independent panel after testing positive for the banned substance clostebol in March. Wada had been seeking a ban of up to two years, having launched an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) following the

2024 decision by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) not to suspend Sinner. However, it reached a deal after accepting the player was inadvertently contaminated by a banned substance and "did not intend to cheat". World number 766 Broady said he was a "little bit upset at the verdict", adding that "it doesn't seem like there's much being lost from this ban". "It does appear to be favouritism towards the better players on the tour," Broady added. "I wouldn't say that he's done it on purpose, but if that had happened to another player, would we be treated the same way? Would we be afforded the same sort of dignity?" Broady is the latest player to question Sinner's ability to navigate the system by employing a high-powered legal team. "This is how the system is supposed to work, but obviously he has a multi-million pound lawyer team to exploit that and to make the system work correctly, whereas the rest of us don't," Broady said. "In tennis, we're all sort of self-employed and a lot of us don't make millions of pounds a year to be able to fight this sort of stuff. "I would like to see, I don't know if it's even possible, the ATP to provide legal teams for everybody, good legal teams, that everybody has to use, be that Jannik, be that Tara Moore when she was banned or Mikael Ymer when he got banned. - Agencies

Neymar nets first goal since Santos return

Neymar's last goal came in Oct 2023 for Al-Hilal

LONDON: Neymar scored for the first time in 16 months after his penalty set Santos on the way to a 3-1 win over Agua Santa in the Paulista Championship on Sunday and the Brazil forward said he was happy to be playing again after a long injury absence. The 33-year-old converted from the spot in the 14th minute, with Thaciano adding a second and Guilherme sealing the win with his 70th minute strike after an assist from Neymar. Neymar's last goal came in October 2023 for Al-Hilal. A serious knee injury restricted him to only seven appearances after joining Saudi side in 2023. "I'm happy to be playing again. I feel I'm improving," he said. "Obviously I'm not going to be 100% physically, it's only my fourth game but I'm getting better and better. - Agencies

Haris 'satisfied' with his fitness ahead of Champions Trophy

LAHORE: Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf has expressed confidence in his fitness ahead of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025, set to commence on Wednesday in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Rauf returned to a practice session days after suffering an injury scare during the recently concluded tri-nation series against New Zealand and South Africa. While talking to the media on the sidelines of the practice session, Rauf appeared confident about his fitness, stating that the team management would decide whether he would play against New Zealand in the tournament opener. "I am feeling better than before. I have practiced for two days and bowled today," said the pacer. "Personally, I am satisfied with my fitness and not feeling any pain, but the final decision rests with management whether I will play against New Zealand or not," remarked Rauf. The fast bowler reflected on Pakistan's bowling unit and the strategy of playing with three fast bowlers and one front-line spinner. "Our bowling unit is not limited to only one spinner. We also have Khushdil Shah and Agha Salman, who play a part in the match as spinners depending on the conditions," explained the speedster. For the unversed, the pacer sustained a muscular sprain in the lower chest wall region during their opening game of the tri-series against New Zealand. Later, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) called up left-arm fast bowler AkiJaved to replace Haris Rauf in the tri-nation ODI series. "The replacement is only for the tri-nation ODI series, as Haris Rauf is expected to be fully fit and available for selection for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025," a PCB spokesperson said at the time of the announcement. - DNA

PTI urges judiciary..

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the Feb 8 polls, however, the courts have failed to announce any verdicts till today. Subsequently, he also criticised the 26th Constitutional Amendment - a judiciary-centric legislation passed by both houses of parliament in October last year.

Nepra officials 'jack up...

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According to Nepra sources, the salary hike, ranging from Rs2 million to Rs2.2 million, was made without following the mandatory protocol. Sources disclosed that in some cases six-figure salaries were raised to seven digits without obtaining the required approval from the federal cabinet, increasing them under the headings of ad-hoc relief and regulatory allowance.

Dubai: Eva Lys win 1R thriller as qualifier

Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk moved into the second round of the Dubai Open by winning against qualifier Katerina Siniakova 6-3, 6-4 at The Aviation Club Tennis Centre on Monday

WEB DESK

DUBAI: Qualifier Eva Lys survived a marathon and thriller in the Dubai first round as the rising German tennis star came back from a set down to beat fellow qualifier Irina Begu 5-7 7-5 6-3. After making her best-ever Grand Slam run at this year's Australian Open, the 23-year-old also won two qualies matches this past weekend to secure her first main draw spot at the WTA 1000 tournament in the United Arab Emirates. And today, she also bagged her first main-draw win in Dubai after surviving a battle that lasted two hours and 35 minutes. Now, Lys is set to play against No. 4 seed Jasmine Paolini, who had a first-round bye at the tournament. Last month, the current world No. 87 also had a chance to play IgaSwiatek at Rod Laver Arena after reaching the Australian Open round-of-16 as a lucky loser. When she meets Paolini - who made two Grand Slam finals last year - it will be another great oppor-



tunity for the 23-year-old to potentially make some noise and continue her breakout 2025. The rising German was 5-3 up in the first set and had two consecutive set points on her serve. But then, she stunningly lost the next four points and got broken back. Two games later, Begu broke the world No. 89 once again to go 6-5 before serving out for the first set in the following game. In the second set, something similar happened when Lys missed out on a set point on her serve at 5-3 and the Romanian managed to get back to 5-5. But this time, the 2025 Australian Open sensation didn't panic and she broke Begu again in the 11th game before closing out the second set on her serve in the following game. After forcing a decider, Lys won three games in a row from 3-3 in the third set to complete her win. Meanwhile, Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk moved into the second round of the Dubai Open by winning against qualifier Katerina Siniakova 6-3, 6-4 at The Aviation Club Tennis Centre on Monday. Kostyuk, ranked No 21, will play American wildcard Sofia Kenin next.

Pak issues visas to Indian...

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(Wednesday) in Karachi with the first match between Pakistan and New Zealand. One of the most anticipated clashes between Pakistan and India would occur on February 23 in Dubai. The mega event would last for 19 days, with exciting cricket matches hosted in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Dubai. The final of the tournament is scheduled for March 9, with the winning team set to receive \$2.24 million while the runner-up would earn \$1.12 million.

Briefs

PSX witnesses bearish, loses 341 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing, 341.76 more points, a negative change of 0.30 percent, closing at 111,743.53 points as compared to 112,085.30 points on the last trading day. A total of 511,194,686 shares were traded during the day as compared to 457,049,928 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs19.635 billion against Rs23.215 billion on the last trading day. As many as 435 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 130 of them recorded gains and 235 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 70 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were B.O. Punjab with 184,433,032 shares at Rs.12.17 per share, Power Cement with 38,642,821 shares at Rs.10.76 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 33,028,658 shares at Rs.1.47 per share.—APP

Rupee sheds 06 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 06 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.26 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.20. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.75 and Rs 281.25, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 45 paise to close at Rs292.71 against the last day's closing of Rs292.26, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.83, whereas an increase of 71 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs351.74 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs351.03. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal went up by 02 paise each to close at Rs 76.03 and Rs 74.46, respectively.—APP

Pine nuts exports to China cross \$18m

BEIJING: Pakistani pine nut exports to China have surpassed \$18.78 million in 2024, according to official data from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC). From January to December 2024, China imported 981.64 tons of pine nuts from Pakistan, with a total value of \$18.78 million, up from \$8.22 million in 2023. This makes China one of the largest markets for Pakistani pine nuts, accounting for 35% of the total \$53.71 million worth of pine nuts imported by China in the year. Yar Muhammad Niaz, the Chief Executive of a food company in Hangzhou, told China Economic Net that Pakistani pine nuts have gained immense popularity in China due to their exceptional taste and quality.—APP



SAUDI ARABIA: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb engages in a high-level group discussion with Finance, Economic, and Development Ministers from the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and other GCC countries on the sidelines of the AIUa Conference. Key discussions on regional economic cooperation and growth strategies.

Morocco reaffirms commitment to African Union at Fe 2025 Summit

Eight years have passed since Morocco returned to its African institutional family. A short time in the life of multilateral institutions, but one that was sufficient for Morocco, thanks to an enlightened and proactive Royal Vision, to reassert itself as a key player within the pan-African institution, whose actions and initiatives enjoy collective support, and whose credibility has earned it the confidence of the Union's driving forces in various respects

DNA

ADDIS ABABA: Morocco remains committed to joint African action at the service of Africa's noble causes and the vital interests of its citizens. The February 2025 African Union (AU) Summit addressed several issues, including peace and security, continental integration, health security and climate change, as well as renewing the leadership of the AU Commission. The agenda was also marked by the absence of the Moroccan Sahara issue, much to the dismay of opponents of the Kingdom's territorial integrity. As such, the pan-African organization confirmed its stance of concentrating its efforts on dealing with urgent, priority issues for Africa, and thus breaking with its instrumentalization as a platform dedicated to serving the narrow agendas and unhealthy political aims of some. As in previous years, Morocco's participation in this session of the Conference was marked by a substantial, high value-added contribution to the high-level meet-

ings and events covering several themes. Morocco took part in the AU Peace and Security Council meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government on the situation in Sudan and the crisis in Eastern DRC, during which the PSC unanimously endorsed Morocco's proposal to observe a humanitarian truce in Sudan during the holy month of Ramadan, to allow access to humanitarian aid without restriction or discrimination. Morocco also took part in the high-level meeting on health financing, at which it announced a substantial contribution to strengthening health security on the continent. Eight years have passed since Morocco returned to its African institutional family. A short time in the life of multilateral institutions, but one that was sufficient for Morocco, thanks to an enlightened and proactive Royal Vision, to reassert itself as a key player within the pan-African institution, whose actions and initiatives enjoy collective support, and whose credibility has earned it the confidence of the Union's driving forces in various respects.

In 2018, for example, the African Union designated His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, as Leader on the issue of Migration, and chose Rabat to host the African Migration Observatory. Also, the Royal initiatives on climate issues, launched in 2016 at the African Summit for Action, still represent a success story and a clear reference point for African countries in their collective quest to build an African model of climate resilience. In addition, African countries elected Morocco as a member of the Peace and Security Council for two terms, 2018-2020 and 2022-2025, during which the Kingdom held the chairmanship of this important body on three occasions and launched innovative, groundbreaking and concrete initiatives inspired by the Royal Vision aimed at serving the vital interests of African citizens in terms of peace, security and development. In this respect, the Tangier Declaration, which emerged from the Tangier Conference on Promoting Peace, Security and Development, was unanimously endorsed by the

AU Conference and represented a pivotal moment on the road to revitalizing the peace-security-development nexus approach as a comprehensive, integrated and relevant response to the challenges of peace and security on the continent. In addition, this initiative has federated the efforts of all stakeholders, including member states, financial bodies and institutions, regional economic communities, UN agencies and civil society organizations. Morocco has also set up a specialized training program for AU election observers, with the aim of promoting the democratic process on the African continent. The Kingdom has also succeeded in ensuring the presence of highly qualified profiles at the level of the various structures of the African Union Commission, such as the position of Director General of the AUC, which constitutes a key managerial position within the latter, as well as other positions of strategic importance. On another front, Morocco has assumed the presidency and vice-presidency of important bod-

ies within the Union. It held the chairmanship, at ministerial level, of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on economic issues, and the vice-chairmanship of the STC on the civil service, local authorities, urban development and decentralization. It also held the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Economic Issues and vice-chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Environmental Issues. On the strength of its historical anchorage in the African institutional edifice, as one of its founding members, and of its resolute and constant commitment to the noble causes of the African continent, Morocco will resolutely and with determination pursue its constructive and high value-added contribution to joint African action within the framework of the intergovernmental process, to meet the challenges that persist within the pan-African organization in terms of strengthening good administrative and financial governance, and to thwart all attempts to halt the momentum of reform within the African Union.

UAE president reaffirms support for Ukraine peace efforts

KYIV/DUBAI: UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday. During the meeting, Sheikh Mohammed reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to supporting efforts for a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict and continuing initiatives to ease its humanitarian impact, state news agency WAM reported. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday he had arrived in the United Arab Emirates for a visit with a "large humanitarian program," ahead of an expected meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Zelensky posted a video of him getting off the plane in UAE and holding talks with officials. "An official visit with the First Lady to the United Arab Emirates," Zelensky said on Telegram. "The priority is to bring even more of our people home from captivity. As well as investment and economic partnership. A large humanitarian program," he added. Official visit to the United Arab Emirates together with the First Lady @ ZelenskaUA. Our top priority is bringing even more of our people home from captivity. We will also focus on investments and economic partnership, as well as a large-scale humanitarian program. pic.twitter.com/r1vBT38TIV—APP

Syria's new leader visits former Assad strongholds

Despite reassurances from Syria's new authorities that minorities will be protected, members of the Alawite community in particular fear reprisals because of the minority's link to the Assad clan

DAMASCUS: Syrian interim President Ahmed Al-Sharaa visited Latakia and Tartus on Sunday, his office said, making his first official trip to the coastal provinces formerly known as strongholds of ousted ruler Bashar Assad. Sharaa met with "dignitaries and notables" during his visit, the Syrian presidency said on Telegram. It published images of Sharaa meeting with dozens of people, some apparently religious figures, in the two provinces' capital cities. Earlier Sunday, Latakia province's official Telegram channel published footage showing thousands of people gathered in the city, some taking photos, as Sharaa's convoy passed through. Sharaa's Islamist group Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham led the rebel offensive that ousted Assad in December, and he was appointed interim president last month. Assad's hometown is located in Latakia, which along with neighboring Tartus is home to a large number of the country's Alawite community, a branch of Shiite Islam to which Assad's family belonged. Assad had presented himself as a protector of minorities in multi-ethnic, multi-confessional Syria, but largely concentrated power in the hands of his fellow Alawites. Latakia and Tartus are also home to Assad ally Russia's only two military bases outside the former Soviet Union. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor, Latakia saw violence after Assad's fall that has since eased somewhat, though occasional attacks are still carried out on checkpoints. State news agency SANA, citing the interior ministry, said Sunday that a security patrol had been attacked in the province, wounding two patrol members and killing a woman. Latakia has also seen reprisals against people seen as linked to the former government, though such incidents have also decreased recently, the Britain-based Observatory added. Security operations have previously been announced in the province in pursuit of "remnants" of the ousted government's forces. Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said that "there are still thousands of officers from the former regime present in Latakia and who haven't settled their status" with the new authorities. Sharaa's visit could be a message that there is "no possibility for the regime of Bashar Assad to move in Latakia or on the Syrian coast," he told AFP. Despite reassurances from Syria's new authorities that minorities will be protected, members of the Alawite community in particular fear reprisals because of the minority's link to the Assad clan. Sharaa's visit followed trips to Idlib, the rebels' former bastion, and Aleppo a day earlier.—Agencies

France tries five for holding reporters hostage in Syria

PARIS: Five men went on trial in France on Monday charged with holding four French journalists hostage for Daesh in war-torn Syria more than a decade ago. Daesh emerged in 2013 in the chaos that followed the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, slowly gaining ground before declaring a caliphate in large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq. The extremists abducted a number of foreign journalists and aid workers before US-backed forces eventually defeated the group in 2019. Reporters Didier Francois and Edouard Elias, and then Nicolas Henin and Pierre Torres, were abducted 10 days apart while reporting from northern Syria in June 2013. The journalists were held by Daesh for 10 months until their release in April 2014. They were found blindfolded with their hands bound in the no-man's land straddling the border between Syria and Turkey. More than a decade later, jailed extremist Mehdi Nemmouche, 39, is among five men accused of their abduction at a trial to last until March 21. Nemmouche is already in prison after a Belgian court jailed him for life in 2019 for killing four people at a Jewish museum in May 2014, after returning from Syria. "I was never the jailer of the Western hostages or any other hostage, and I never met these people in Syria," Nemmouche told the Paris court, breaking his silence after not speaking throughout the Brussels trial or during the investigation. All four journalists told investigators they were sure Nemmouche, then called Abu Omar, was their jailer. Henin, in a magazine article in September 2014, recounted Nemmouche punching him in the face and terrorizing Syrian detainees. He described him as "a self-centered fantasist for whom jihad was finally an excuse to satisfy his morbid thirst for notoriety. A young man lost and perverse."—APP

Singapore opposition leader fined for lying to parliament

SINGAPORE: Singapore's opposition leader was fined on Monday for lying to parliament while helping a fellow party member cover up a false witness account, but narrowly avoided being barred from contesting upcoming national elections. Pritam Singh, 48, secretary-general of the Workers' Party, was found guilty on two counts of lying to a parliamentary committee probing a fellow MP. The conviction comes as the Southeast Asian nation's struggling political opposition is seeking to challenge the overwhelming dominance of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) in elections expected within months. The PAP has ruled the wealthy city-state since 1959. District court judge Luke Tan said that contrary to what Singh told the committee, he had not done enough to get rookie MP Raeesah Khan to admit to her lie in parliament.—APP

The opium war against China

TANVEER HUSSAIN



CHINA had been the undisputed king of trade for centuries. From the 6th to the 14th century AD, Chinese merchant ships sold goods across the world. Despite internal wars and conflicts, China's trade with the world continued. One key difference that set China apart from Western countries was that, despite its power, China never sought to conquer other nations or territories. The Chinese saw themselves as civilized and regarded others as uncultured,

so they were not interested in annexing regions and making them part of China. In the 18th and 19th centuries, due to rapid Western development, people's purchasing power increased, greatly benefiting China. The Chinese exported precious silk and beautifully decorated household items to Western countries. Within a few decades, exports from China to Europe reached millions of dollars. The Chinese only accepted silver coins in return for their goods, leading to the accumulation of a large stockpile of silver in China. This caused a trade imbalance for Britain, as the silver outflow disrupted its economic stability. In response, Britain decided to cultivate opium on a large scale in its colonies and smuggle it into China, seeking to extract wealth from China. Thus, large-scale opium smuggling began under government sponsorship. King George III of Britain sent a delegation to China with valuable gifts to congratulate the Chinese emperor on his birthday. The delegation requested that the British be given control of the Yangtze

port for trade, with full control of the port going to British traders. The Chinese emperor rejected the request, which the British government saw as an insult. In retaliation, Britain increased the smuggling of drugs into China. At the same time, Britain began to use its colonial territory in India, forcing farmers in Bengal to grow opium. The opium was processed into blocks and packed in wooden boxes before being sent to China via maritime routes. British traders only accepted silver coins in exchange for opium. At this time, opium became a highly profitable business, with trade reaching one million dollars. The British even bribed investors and distributors to increase the opium trade. Christian missionaries in China also played a role, giving free opium to children to create addiction. They collected donations from the Chinese people for the church and then used the sacred institution for their selfish purposes. The drug problem devastated China. Workers and laborers abandoned their jobs and lay in the streets. The unemployed and poor turned to theft to buy

drugs. Street crime soared, agricultural production decreased, factories were shut down, and commercial activity slowed. As a result, the government's tax revenue drastically reduced. When the government tried to increase tax collection, the already suffering farmers revolted. Buddhists seized the opportunity and added a religious touch to the protests, leading to a civil war. To suppress this, the government had to use military force, resulting in further casualties. To rid China of opium, the emperor announced the death penalty for those found consuming or selling opium in 1830. Millions of people were sentenced under this law, and the country's prisons filled up, but the opium trade did not stop. The flaw in this law was that it applied only to Chinese citizens, while British traders were exempt, as China could not afford to go to war with Britain. Thus, the British continued selling opium with impunity. When a silver shortage emerged in China, the British began buying silk, tea, and spices in exchange for opium. Excessive trade goods

were leaving the country, but the government received no taxes in return. Meanwhile, the Chinese emperor wrote a letter to the 20-year-old British Queen Victoria, pointing out that opium was prohibited in her religion, and opium trade was punishable by death in her country. He asked why Britain was smuggling it into other countries. At that time, Britain was in high spirits after defeating Napoleon, and the queen's response was arrogant. She did not bother to reply to the letter but instead ordered an increase in opium smuggling. In 1839, China decided to launch an operation to stop the opium smuggling. The police warned foreign traders to hand over their opium immediately to government officials, or face severe action. The British traders ignored the orders with contempt. The authorities then captured some smugglers and executed them. This created tension in the region, and the military had to be called in. The military laid siege to the coast. After fierce resistance, the military seized the warehouses and destroyed

all the opium in them. This led to large-scale protests in "civilized" Britain. The British government and public saw this as an insult to their traders. The British government threatened China with war, demanding compensation for the destroyed trade goods, as well as reparations for losses incurred during the operation, and that Chinese ports be put under British control, giving British traders full freedom to trade. When China did not respond positively, Britain sent a naval fleet to attack China. The British ships were equipped with modern weapons and steel hulls, while China had old wooden ships with outdated weapons. Within hours, the British attackers destroyed Chinese ships and inflicted significant casualties. People began to flee from coastal cities, and Chinese commanders found themselves in dire situations. They either died in battle or were captured and sent to India. Any commander who retreated was punished by the emperor and often executed, with a new commander sent to the front lines. The Chinese military silently

watched the destruction. The British navy also captured the vital trading city of Nanjing. After three years of conflict, in 1842, China surrendered and agreed to all British demands. China handed over six ports and coastal cities to Britain, paid millions of dollars in reparations, and declared Britain the Most Favored Nation, granting full trade freedom. It was also decided that Chinese law would not apply to the British. Additionally, Britain forced China to lease the vital island and trading hub of Hong Kong for 100 years. Despite all the tactics of the West and wars with neighboring countries, China never compromised on its interests and overcame its difficulties. Instead of considering its population as a burden, China taught them skills and transformed them into useful craftsmen. With their help, China became the world's largest economy. Through its unwavering determination and tireless efforts, China proved that it was once the undisputed king of trade and remains so today.

Briefs

Khattak meets with JUI-F's Fazl

The meeting was held at the residence of Maulana Fazlur Rehman in Islamabad

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Pervez Khattak on Monday called on Jamia-Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. The meeting was held at the residence of Fazl in Islamabad. Both the politicians discussed the overall situation of the country. The meeting was also attended by Liaqat Khattak, Maulana Asad Mehmood and Muhammad Aslam Ghauri. Earlier, it was reported that former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Pervez Khattak has decided to join politics again. According to family sources, the seasoned politician is in contact with the PPP and other parties. He also held several meetings with key political leaders during the last few days. Speaking to media, the veteran politician said he would take a decision after analysing the political situation. "I am silently observing the performance of the government nowadays," he said. "I am away from mainstream and social media these days but can take decision to enter politics again soon," he added. Khattak had stepped down as chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary (PTIP) days after his party showed dismal performance in the general elections 2024. Pervez Khattak had suffered defeat in NA-33 Nowshera constituency, which was earlier considered his stronghold.

China anger as US amends wording on Taiwan

BEIJING: The US State Department has dropped a statement from its website which stated that Washington does not support Taiwan's independence - a move which has sparked anger in China. China said the revision "sends a wrong... signal to separatist forces advocating for Taiwan independence", and asked the US to "correct its mistakes". The department's fact sheet on Taiwan-US relations earlier included the phrase "we do not support Taiwan independence" - this was removed last week as part of what it said was a "routine" update. A US spokesperson was quoted as saying that it remains committed to the "One China" policy, it said, where US recognises and has formal ties with China rather than Taiwan. China sees self-governed Taiwan as a breakaway province that will eventually be part of the country, and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve this. But many Taiwanese consider themselves to be part of a separate nation, although most are in favour of maintaining the status quo where Taiwan neither declares independence from China nor unites with it. - Agencies

Afghanistan's Taliban makes debut diplomatic trip to Japan

Delegation says Taliban seeks 'dignified' global interaction as it builds 'strong' and 'developed' Afghanistan

NEWS DESK

TOKYO: A Taliban delegation has arrived in Japan on what is the first visit by the group that rules Afghanistan, according to media in the East Asian country. The delegation, consisting of foreign affairs, education, economy and health officials, arrived on Sunday for a weeklong visit, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported. The visit is a rarity for the Taliban, whose diplomatic trips have previously remained close to Afghanistan since regaining power in 2021. The Taliban representatives are expected to seek humanitarian support and potentially discuss diplomatic ties with Japanese officials. Latif Nazari, a deputy minister at the Taliban's economy ministry, described the visit as part of the group's efforts to become an "active member of the international community". "We seek dignified interaction with the world for a strong, united, advanced, prosperous, developed Afghanistan and to be an active member of the international community," Nazari, who is part of the delegation, wrote in a post on X on Saturday. Citing Afghan diplomatic sources, Japan's public broadcaster NHK said the Taliban representatives plan to "exchange views with Japanese government officials". While the Taliban government makes regular visits to neighbouring and regional countries, including Central Asia, Russia and China, it rarely travels outside the region. It has officially visited Europe only for diplomacy summits in Norway in 2022 and 2023.



Japan's embassy in Kabul temporarily relocated to Qatar after the fall of the previous foreign-backed government and the takeover by the Taliban in 2021. But it has since reopened and resumed diplomatic and humanitarian activities in the country. The Taliban's visit to Japan comes just days after ISIL (ISIS) claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide bombing outside the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing in Kabul, the latest in a series of attacks by the group. Japan's embassy condemned the attack, posting on X on Sunday that "these attacks of terror must cease immediately". Meanwhile, UK Special Forces (UKSF)

have rejected over 2,000 asylum claims from Afghan commandos who had credible evidence of serving alongside British forces in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has confirmed. The MoD revealed that no applications from members of the Afghan 'Triples' units, which supported the SAS and SBS in Afghanistan, were approved for resettlement, despite the dangerous conditions they faced after the Taliban took control of the country in 2021. The Triples - Afghan special forces units trained and paid by UK Special Forces - fought alongside British troops on high-risk missions. When the Taliban regained pow-

er, many were at grave risk of reprisal, and they were entitled to apply for resettlement to the UK. However, UK Special Forces blocked all resettlement applications despite the fact that the Afghan commandos had shown credible proof of their service. The MoD had previously denied the existence of a blanket policy to reject these applications, but subsequent court hearings confirmed that no resettlement applications from the Triples were supported by UKSF. In court proceedings, it was revealed that the MoD knew that the rejections made by UKSF were potentially flawed and would need independent review. However, many Afghan commandos are still waiting for decisions, and some have been killed or tortured by the Taliban while waiting for responses. The rejections are controversial, particularly given that UK Special Forces are currently under investigation for alleged war crimes in Afghanistan, with the Triples potentially holding crucial evidence related to these claims. MPs and former British officers have criticised the decision, with some alleging that UKSF blocked the applications to prevent former Afghan commandos from providing evidence to the inquiry. Former Conservative MP Johnny Mercer, who served alongside the SBS, noted that there was a pool of evidence among Afghan commandos that could contribute to the inquiry. Despite the delays and rejections, the MoD is conducting a review of the 2,022 applications, but this process has been plagued by lengthy delays and a lack of clarity on the review criteria.

Indian opp slams Trump's F-35 offer

NEW DELHI: India's opposition parties have criticised US President Donald Trump's offer to sell F-35 fighters to the country, citing their high costs, even as Russia has discussed producing its most advanced jets locally in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goals. The offer from both US and India's long-time defence partner Russia comes at a time when the Indian Air Force's squadrons have fallen to 31 from an approved strength of 42 and it is seeking to acquire more jets to counter China, which is rapidly building its military. After meeting Modi in Washington last week, Trump said the US will increase military sales to India starting in 2025 and will eventually provide the fifth-generation F-35 fighters made by Lockheed Martin LMTN. India's main opposition Congress party has used Trump ally and billionaire Elon Musk's past criticism of the fighter to target Modi's government. "The F-35, which Elon Musk has described as 'junk', why is Narendra Modi hell-bent on buying it?" asked a post on Congress's official X account this weekend, saying that the aircraft was expensive and had high operational costs. US government estimates that an F-35 costs around \$80 million. - Agencies

New airline seeks license to operate flights

KARACHI: A new private airline, 'Air Karachi' has submitted an application to the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) for a Regular Public Transport (RPT) license to launch operations in various cities of the country. Sources within the PCAA, the authority will decide to issue the RPT license to Air Karachi after approval from the federal government. Upon receiving the license, Air Karachi will commence its flight operations. The airline has already been registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). The business community of Karachi had earlier announced the launch of the new airline. Businessman Hanif Gohar announced that Air Karachi will begin operations with an initial investment of Rs 5 billion, with each shareholder contributing Rs 50 million. - Agencies

Nawaz fires fresh salvo at PTI in meeting with Punjab MPAs

CM Maryam Nawaz, present in meeting, said she is just following the 'Shehbaz Speed' model

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) saying the so-called change was just known for corruption, disrespect and economic instability. Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz, PML-N leader Senator Parvez Rasheed and Punjab senior minister Mariyum Aurangzeb. "It is unfortunate that a developing country was derailed, politics was ruined by introducing filth, and rudeness, arrogance, hatred, and revenge were turned into politics," said Nawaz Sharif while talking to the MPAs including those from Sahiwal, Khanewal, Multan, Lodhran, Vehari and Bahawalnagar Divisions on Monday. The PML-N chief said the IMF has signed multiple agreements with Pakistan and with the continuity of policies, the economic stability would be very certain. "Corruption, economic instability, inflation, and disrespect were the 'hallmark' of the so-called 'change' led by the PTI," he opined. The PML-N supremo said they had bid adieu to the IMF

and the country was on the direction of progress but then the PTI came to power with its ill-prepared team and it created the same difficulties again. He said the PML-N's narrative focused on the development of the country and freeing the people from inflation to make them prosperous. The promises made, by the grace of Almighty, are now being turned into reality for the people. Meanwhile, the MPAs said "Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif are symbols of fulfilling promises and proving their loyalty to the country as they both have always put aside personal hardships to ease the suffering of Pakistan and its people. They also mentioned the "Shehbaz Speed" for the economic stability of Pakistan. Through his personal efforts, the IMF program was restored, and the country was saved from default. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has asserted that the country was in position to "take off" despite the opposition's outcry as she castigated PTI "for its politics of chaos and destroying the country's economy". "People of Pakistan are fed up by violence and chaos...they are witnessing improvement in their lives," the provincial chief executive said while addressing the cheque distribution ceremony of CM Punjab Ahsan Karrobaar Programme. She further criticised the previous government for taking the country's inflation to 38%, saying that the foreign investment flew away when they were in power.

Senate passed bill declares DNA testing mandatory

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate approved the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) (Amendment) Bill on Monday, declaring DNA testing of rape victims mandatory. The bill now also includes jail time and a fine on the police officer, responsible for the investigation, over failure to comply with the new changes. The bill was presented by Senator Humayun Mohmand, stating that police officials would arrange DNA tests of the rape victims from the laboratories recognised by the government preferably within 72 hours after the crime. Over failure to comply with the law, the concerned police official will face up to three years in jail and a fine. The approval for fresh tweaks was given in today's session conducted by Senate Deputy Chairman Syedaal Khan Nasar. Earlier, the Senate's Standing Committee on Interior gave the nod to amendments to the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, proposing mandatory DNA testing of rape victims and imposition of penalty if police fail to comply with the new order. The amendments were presented to the upper house by Senator Mohmand via a private member bill, the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) (Amendment) Bill, 2023, seeking modifications in the prevailing law's section 2, insertion of new sections 13A, 13B, and 13C and amendment of section 21. Under the new sections, the Senate body proposed making it "compulsory for every police officer to get the rape victim tested through the laboratories recognised by the federal government or the provincial government, as the case may be".

SHC orders exhumation in Mustafa Amir murder case

Court has also ordered the prime suspect to be presented tomorrow

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has approved the judicial magistrate's request for the exhumation of Mustafa Amir's body in connection with his murder case in Karachi. The court has also ordered the prime suspect, Armaghan Qureshi, to be presented tomorrow. During the hearing on the appeal filed by the Prosecutor General of Sindh, the court directed the production of Armaghan at 9:30 AM tomorrow and adjourned the session. The Sindh High Court has also sought records from the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC). The Prosecutor General has requested the annulment of an order dismissing the case against a police team and permission for Armaghan's physical remand. In City Court, police submitted an exhumation request to the judicial magistrate, which was granted. The court has ordered the formation of a medical board to conduct a post-mortem and collect DNA samples from Mustafa's remains. Earlier, The police have filed a request for the exhumation of Mustafa Amir's body, stating that it is essential

for conducting a post-mortem and DNA analysis. He had been missing since January 6 and was allegedly murdered by his childhood friends, who later burned his body along with his car. Further revelations have come from Armaghan's friend, Shiraz, who claimed that Mustafa and Armaghan had a dispute over a girl during New Year's Eve. The disagreement led to Armaghan luring Mustafa to his house under false pretenses on January 6, where he violently killed him. The suspects then transported his body in the car's trunk to Hub in Balochistan, where they set the vehicle on fire. Initial investigations indicate that Armaghan and Shiraz were responsible for burning the car and disposing of the body. Meanwhile, police recovered modern weapons from the suspect's residence, and the Counter-Terrorism Department has been assigned to trace their origin. The AVCC police have also requested FIA assistance in analyzing data from a laptop seized from Armaghan's bungalow. Additionally, a disturbing audio recording has surfaced, reportedly Mustafa's last, in which he tells a friend that he was heading to Armaghan's house and suggests that his friend should join him after finishing his work.

Zelensky warns Kyiv won't recognise outcome of US-Russia talks in Riyadh

Poland's PM says it will not send troops to Ukraine But Warsaw will continue to give Kyiv support as it has through the war, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk tells reporters

FOREIGN DESK

DUBAI: Any agreement reached during bilateral talks between the United States and Russia in Riyadh on Tuesday will not be recognised by Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters at a press conference on Monday. Stressing that his officials "knew nothing" about the meeting, which was announced by Trump on Thursday, Zelenskyy said that Kyiv regarded "any negotiations about Ukraine without Ukraine to be meaningless". Currently on an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, Zelenskyy is due to travel to Riyadh on Wednesday, a coincidence that he said had "no connection" with the planned Russia-US meeting, to which Kyiv will not be sending a delegation, despite US President Donald Trump saying that Ukraine would "be a part of

it too". The first official high-level meeting between representatives of Russia and the United States for three years was confirmed on Monday by Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, who said one of the aims of the talks was "to negotiate a settlement in Ukraine". The Saudi leadership said it had also invited Ukrainian representatives to attend the talks, according to Bloomberg, though Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and his office denied receiving an invitation. Despite growing concerns that the US appears to be sidelining Ukraine in its negotiations with Russia, Trump told reporters Zelenskyy would be "involved" in the peace talks, and reiterated his position.



ous claims that Vladimir Putin "wants to stop fighting". The German Defence Ministry says it would be premature to talk about its contribution to a possible peacekeeping force in Ukraine. The ministry said there must be a joint US-European approach on the issue, adding that Berlin would not shy away from it if there was a framework. The statement came after British PM Keir Starmer said he was ready to send troops to Ukraine to ensure peace if needed. A team led by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will visit Ukraine next week in a show of support for Kyiv on the third anniversary of the conflict. "Next week, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the war of aggression against Ukraine, there will be a college visit to the country," a European Commission spokesperson said at a news conference in Brussels. Ursula von der Leyen has arrived in Paris ahead of what she described as "crucial talks" on Ukraine. "Europe's security is at a turning point," she wrote on X. "Yes, it is about Ukraine - but it is also about us." "We need an urgency mindset. We need a surge in defense," she wrote. "And we need both of them now." Poland's PM says it will not send troops to Ukraine But Warsaw will continue to give Kyiv support as it has through the war, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk tells reporters before flying to an informal summit in Paris on Ukraine and European security.

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