



Islamabad POST

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

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EU to suspend Syria banking, energy, sanctions

Detailed News On Page-08



Pak-Turkiye ties a model for Muslim Nations

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Launches new CMS

PM Shehbaz urges swift, speedy justice

“This initiative will go a long way to address their grievances and provide justice in a reasonable time frame,” says PM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of his effort to modernise the country's judicial system, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday launched the Case Assignment and Management System to provide transparent, efficient, and speedy justice for litigants. Addressing the launching ceremony in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz said that the system was long overdue because litigants and applicants from all over the country wanted transparent and speedy justice. He said: “This initiative will go a long way to address their grievances and provide justice in a reasonable time frame.” The premier said trillions of rupees had been wasted for decades due to blatant collusion and corruption and lack of modern technology, Radio Pakistan reported. He also called for collective efforts to transform Pakistan on modern lines and compensate for past losses and gain dividends in future. Referring to his recent meeting with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi, the premier said that he requested the top judge for speedy decisions based on merit in the pending cases. Earlier this week, the premier visited CJP Afridi's residence, at his invitation, to share the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the National Judicial Policymaking Committee (NJPMC). Addressing the event today, the premier expressed the resolve to recover each and every penny that was due for the betterment of the people of Pakistan. He also thanked all the stakeholders, including the international partners, the United Nations (UN)

Continued on Page 06

PM presented 3 year plan for professional training of youth

NAVTC should blacklist the training institutions which had bad performance and encourage those showing good results, he added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday chaired an inter-ministerial meeting on a three year plan regarding professional training of youth and their employability. During the meeting, he was presented the plan about professional training of manpower in the fields of information technology, industry, nursing and other areas for seeking jobs in Pakistan and abroad. He said the capable manpower of Pakistan was a real asset. It was priority of the government to equip the youth with professional training according to the demand at the international level, he added. He directed an increase in the institutions for training of nurses. He said training of nurses

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presents certificates of appreciation to the professionals who aided the development of Case Assignment and Management System. – DNA

6 terrorists killed in Karak IBO: ISPR

Security forces of Pakistan determined to wipe out menace of terrorism from country, vows military's media wing

SHAMIM SHAHID

KARAK: Security forces on Friday killed at least six terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district, said the military's media wing. According to a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was conducted on the reported presence of terrorists. “During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwaraj location, resultant, six khwaraj were sent to hell,” read the statement. It further said that a sanitisation operation was conducted to eliminate any other militant found in the area as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country. The country witnessed a sharp increase in terror attacks in January 2025, surging by 42% compared to the previous month, according to data released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), a think tank. The data revealed that at least 74 militant attacks were recorded nationwide, resulting in 91 fatalities, including 35 security personnel, 20 civilians, and 36 militants. Another 117 individuals sustained injuries, including 53 security forces personnel, 54 civilians, and 10 militants. KP remained the worst-affected province, followed by Balochistan. In KP's settled districts, militants carried out 27 attacks, resulting in 19 fatalities, including 11 security personnel, six civilians, and two militants. The tribal districts of KP (erstwhile Fata) witnessed 19 attacks, leading to 46 deaths, including 13 security personnel, eight civilians, and 25 militants.

PTI meeting with CJP

'Judiciary being used as tool for political gains'

Party takes up issue of cases faced by Imran Khan; complains of “state terrorism” in Punjab

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has complained to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi that the judiciary is being used as a tool for political gains and being made a mockery of. “The entire justice system has been made a joke. We [told] the CJP that the judiciary was being used as a tool [politically],” remarked PTI Secretary-General Salman Akram Raja

Picture on Page-08

while speaking at a presser following the meeting with the CJP. The former ruling party's press conference comes against the backdrop of the chief justice's meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to share the agenda of the upcoming National Judicial Policymaking Committee (NJPMC) meeting.

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IMF confirms visit to Pakistan to review \$7bn loan program

The technical team will assess potential arrangements for climate financing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has confirmed that a delegation will visit Pakistan in mid-March to review the country's \$7 billion loan program. According to IMF representative, Mair Benitez, the delegation will hold discussions with

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Briefs

Govt plans to cut power prices

The plan aims to address the issue of circular debt

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has unveiled a revised plan to reduce the baseline power tariff by Rs 8 to Rs 10 per unit. The plan aims to address the issue of circular debt, which will be reduced through the reduction of the debt amount. Under this plan, a reduction of Rs130 billion in debt repayments will create financial space, and the savings will be used to lower electricity prices. The move is also expected to help reduce ongoing financial losses in the electricity sector.

Opp alliance leaves for Sindh

Opposition grand alliance will meet Jai Sindh leader Ayaz Latif Palejo

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: Opposition grand alliance has decided to expand their alliance as Tehreek-e-Tahafuz Ain-e-Pakistan will leave for Sindh on three-day tour to meet GDA Alliance. Opposition grand alliance will meet Jai Sindh leader Ayaz Latif Palejo. Opposition grand alliance will comprise PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, Mahmood Achakzai, AsadQaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Akhuzada Hussain, BNP Mengal and MWM leaders will also become part of the delegation.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

Gen Munir witnesses AI tech COAS briefed on British Army's modernization

General Asim Munir visits UK's Warminster and Larkhill garrisons

STAFF REPORT

Rawalpindi: Army Chief, General Asim Munir, visited the Warminster and Larkhill garrisons in the United Kingdom as part of his official tour. The visit was made at the invitation of the British Army Chief, General Sir Roland Walker. During the visit, General Munir was briefed on several projects, including those related to the British Army and the Deep Recce Strike Brigade. The Army Chief was also given a detailed demonstration of new military technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which are being developed for future military operations. The visit comes shortly after General Munir's participation in the 7th Regional Stability Conference held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the UK, where he further engaged in discussions about global military strategy and stability.

Few days ago, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General AsimMunir arrived in the United Kingdom for an official visit to attend the 7th Regional Stabilisation Con-

ference at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The conference, a key platform for Pakistan-UK military dialogue, brings together senior policymakers, military officials, and experts from both countries to discuss regional security dynamics.

The army chief will deliver a keynote address on “The Emerging World Order and Pakistan's Future Outlook”, outlining Islamabad's perspective on evolving global and regional challenges. Upon arrival, the army chief received a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the historic Royal Horse Guards Parade Ground, underscoring the importance of Pakistan-UK defence ties. During his visit, the army chief will hold high-level meetings with British officials, including Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, the UK's Chief of Defence Staff, and General Sir Roland Walker, the British Army's Chief of the General Staff. Discussions will cover strategic cooperation, counterterrorism efforts, and regional security. The army chief will also meet UK National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell and Home

Continued on Page 06

Imran wanted army to be PTI's subsidiary body

“PTI's politics is centred on one individual; they have no concern for the country,” says defence minister

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has launched once again a scathing attack on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founding chairman, Imran Khan, alleging that he sought to turn the army into a “subsidiary” of his party. Speaking to the media, Asif criticised PTI's political conduct, accusing the former ruling party of prioritising personal gains over national interests. “The PTI founder wanted the army to become a subsidiary of his party,” Asif said, adding that the party's frustration had intensified due to the country's recent successes. He further claimed that the PTI, after losing power, is now “licking its wounds” and resorting to conspiracies. Asif also highlighted Pakistan's longstanding diplomatic, military, and economic ties with the United Kingdom, calling the relationship “exemplary” across various sectors. He added that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir was on an

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'Politicians breaking principles for power'

Public has lost faith in three major political parties, claims former PM

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Awam Pakistan Party head ShahidKhaqanAbbasi, accused politicians of breaking all principles in their pursuit of power. Addressing a gathering in the twin cities, Abbasi lamented that governance cannot be sustained through constitutional violations and coercion. He asserted that Pakistan's parliament no longer represents the people, claiming that two-thirds of its members have secured their seats through financial means rather than public mandate. “It is unfortunate that such individuals are making

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KP CM vows to make varsities self sufficient

CM Gandapur congratulated the graduates, their parents, and the faculty. He expressed pride in UET Peshawar, highlighting its reputation as a prestigious institution not only in the province but throughout the country

DNA

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Friday expressed the government's commitment to stabilize the public sector universities financially to achieve self-sufficiency. Addressing the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar, convocation 2025, as Chancellor, he noted that upon assuming office, universities faced arrears of 72 billion rupees, which had been reduced to 24 billion rupees. He said that plans were underway to establish a system ensuring timely payment of salaries and pensions, aiming for universities to achieve self-sufficiency and emerge from financial crises. Gandapur announced

an increase in scholarship funds and initiatives providing students with opportunities to study abroad. He revealed plans to offer free education for female students in the province, stating that an educated mother is pivotal to building an educated society. During the ceremony, a total of 555 graduates received their degrees across Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programs. Additionally, 23 top-performing graduates were honored with gold medals for their outstanding academic achievements. In his address, CM Gandapur congratulated the graduates, their parents, and the faculty. He expressed pride in UET Peshawar, highlighting its reputation as a prestigious institution not only in the province but throughout the country. He acknowledged the

university's significant contributions to the fields of engineering and technology. The CM also commended UET Peshawar for adapting to contemporary needs by introducing new programs. He encouraged graduates to pursue advancements in research and technology, noting the vast opportunities available in these sectors. Gandapur highlighted ongoing efforts to create employment opportunities for graduates by promoting the industrial sector. He announced the introduction of loan schemes for doctors and engineers in the upcoming budget, enabling graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. The event was attended by Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, university officials, faculty members, graduates, and their families.



ISLAMABAD: Commuters stuck in traffic jams due to closed Srinagar Highway.

Youth key to Pakistan's progress: Rana

SIALKOT: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said on Friday students in Pakistani universities, colleges, and schools represent the nation's future. Addressing the 'Technology and Entrepreneurship Summit and Expo 2025' at the Government College Women University Sialkot (GCWUS) as the chief guest, he expressed confidence in Pakistan's bright future, as reflected in the enthusiasm and potential of its youth. He highlighted that the first youth policy was introduced by Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in 2010. Under this initiative, one million laptops were distributed across Punjab and Pakistan, propelling the country to the third or fourth position globally in entrepreneurship. He noted that Pakistan had made significant technological advancements, recalling that in 1997, Nawaz Sharif introduced optical fiber, and by 1998, Pakistan had emerged as an 'Asian Tiger'. However, due to policy discontinuity and abrupt government changes, progress was hindered. He stressed the need to move forward and achieve national goals through hard work and dedication. Rana Mashhood underscored the critical role of youth in Pakistan's development, noting that 70pc of the population comprises young people. To compete globally, he urged students to focus on research, assuring them that the government is taking strong measures for their welfare. He encouraged young minds to take advantage of federal and provincial startup schemes.—APP

Governor KP, BISP chief join hands to combat poverty

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, and Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Rubina Khalid, in a collaborative effort to enhance support for the underprivileged, have pledged to work together to strengthen initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation. During a meeting held at Governor House on Friday, both leaders discussed the importance of BISP in providing financial assistance to poor and deserving families, emphasizing its role in empowering women, promoting education, and improving health outcomes. The Governor expressed his commitment to expanding the program's reach and ensuring transparency, so that more people benefit from this critical social welfare initiative.

By joining hands, the Governor and BISP Chairperson aim to create a more inclusive environment where vulnerable communities can access the support they need, thereby contributing to the broader goal of reducing poverty in the province. They underscored their shared dedication to uplifting the lives of the less fortunate through sustained, impactful efforts. During the meeting, Chairperson Rubina Khalid provided an overview of the ongoing programs under BISP and highlighted its key role in providing financial support to poor and deserving families. She emphasized that BISP is not only offering financial assistance but is also empowering women, promoting children's education, and having a positive impact on the health sector. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised the role of BISP, acknowledging it as a vital initiative in reducing poverty and promoting social welfare in the country. He added that the program

reflects the vision of the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and steps are being taken to improve its scope and transparency so that more deserving individuals can benefit from it. He also suggested establishing BISP model offices across the country. The meeting also discussed the acquisition of land for the BISP office in Peshawar, with the Governor assuring the Chairperson of his full support in this regard. Meanwhile, the Head of Polio for Rotary International Club, Tayeba Gul, met with the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, to discuss the rising number of polio cases in the province, particularly in the southern districts. Tayeba Gul informed the Governor about Rotary's ongoing efforts to eliminate polio and emphasized the need for stronger local awareness campaigns and more effective vaccination processes.—APP

Family of three crushed to death as truck overturns

QADIRPUR RAN: Three members of a family were killed on the spot when a truck loaded with stones overturned into their house in Mauza Tataypur, Qadirpur Ran, on early Friday morning. As per initial report, rescue officials informed the accident proved fatal for three family members, a father, his daughter, and son who were killed instantly in the devastating incident, private news channel reported. Rescue 1122 and local emergency responders, rushed to the scene to provide assistance. The rescue teams worked diligently to recover the bodies and provide support to the grieving family. An investigation into the incident has been initiated to determine the cause of the truck's overturning.—APP

Steel mill incident claims 4 lives, injures 2

GUJRANWALA: At least four workers lost their lives instantaneously while two others suffered catastrophic injury when a torrent of scorching molten iron came crashing down on them at a steel mill near Aimanabad in Gujranwala on Friday. According to preliminary reports, rescue sources revealed that the devastating accident was caused by a mechanical failure, specifically an imbalance of the boiler, as reported by a private news channel. Further details indicate that the burned workers, suffering from severe injuries, were promptly rushed to a nearby hospital in critical condition.—APP

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Lahore Literary Festival kicks off with cultural, literary grandeur

LAHORE: The 13th edition of the Lahore Literary Festival (LLF) commenced at the Lahore Arts Council, Alhambra, marking the beginning of a dynamic three-day celebration of arts, literature, history, and civilisation. The opening ceremony was attended by various dignitaries, including LLF Chairman Iqbal Z. Ahmed, LLF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairman Alhambra Razi Ahmed, Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bukhari, British Council Director James Hampson, UNESCO Officer-in-Charge in Pakistan Karahang Anthony Tom, and Alhambra Executive Director Tauqeer Haider Kazmi, among others. A highlight of the event was the special recognition of LLF CEO Razi Ahmed, who was honored with France's pres-

tigious 'Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' award for his outstanding contribution to arts and cultural exchange. The announcement by Chairman LLF Iqbal Z. Ahmed was met with resounding applause, celebrating Razi Ahmed's dedication to promoting literary and artistic endeavours on both national and international platforms. The festival opened on a patriotic note with a stirring rendition of the national anthem by a student from the Alhambra Academy of Arts. Razi Ahmed, in his address, expressed heartfelt gratitude to national and international delegates whose support has elevated the LLF into a premier literary event. Alongside British Council Director James Hampson, he presented the 'Lok Dastan Prize

2025' to its winners, while esteemed scholar Rashid Ahmed and acclaimed writer Ikramullah were honored with 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for their remarkable contribution to literature and scholarship. Razi Ahmed emphasized that the 13th edition of LLF was a celebration of literature, culture, and the power of ideas. "This festival continues to bring together voices from around the world, fostering dialogue and enriching minds," he remarked. Alhambra's Executive Director Tauqeer Haider Kazmi commended the dedication of the Alhambra team, stating, "The success of this festival is a testament to their unwavering commitment. Their support has been instrumental in creating a platform where art and literature converge.—APP

Chairman CDA chairs 17th IESSI meeting

ISLAMABAD: The 17th meeting of the Governing Body of the ICT Employees Social Security Institution (IESSI) was held on Friday at the CDA Headquarters, chaired by the Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by members of the Governing Body, including ICT administration, Commissioner Social Security and other senior officials. Various agenda items were discussed during the 17th meeting of the Governing Body of the ICT Employees Social Security Institution. The Commissioner of Social Security briefed the meeting on various agenda items. According to the details, the meeting approved amendments to the Social Security Act. Additionally, the meeting decided to establish a Staff Welfare Fund for employees, including death grants, marriage grants and benefits for disabled individuals for the families of employees who passed away during their service. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, directed that transaction advisors be hired for joint ventures for various projects. The meeting also decided to approve the Hajj policy, considering the agenda for workers. Under this policy, workers who have been employed for over seven years will be eligible to apply. Furthermore, the meeting decided to include the city's top and high-quality hospitals on the panel for the treatment of employees and their families. The hospitals included on the panel are PAF, Fauji Foundation, Nescom, KRL and Punjab Security Hospital. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa also directed the Member Finance to review the contract rates and discounts to all hospitals. Later, the meeting approved the hiring of staff for the recently constructed Social Security Medical Center in Humak Model Town.—DNA

ISSI hosts lecture on Southeast Asia, ASEAN between U.S and China

ISLAMABAD: The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted Dr. Thitinan Pongsudhirak, Director Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, as part of its Distinguished Lecture Series. Dr. Pongsudhirak deliberated on the topic of "Southeast Asia/ASEAN between the U.S. and China: Dynamics and Prospects." The event was attended by former federal ministers, senior diplomats, practitioners, academicians and members of civil society. In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted Dr. Thitinan's intellectual and academic contributions to strategic

thought in Thailand and ASEAN region and his role in influencing the research



and policy discourse. On Pakistan-Thailand relations, he noted that these have evolved over decades and embraced myriad sectors such as trade, investment, education, science and technology, culture, and tourism. Both countries are also bound together by civilizational linkage tracing back to the ancient Bud-

dhist Gandhara heritage of Pakistan. In the past, Pakistan and Thailand worked

together in SEATO. Today, Pakistan counts Thailand among steadfast supporters of Pakistan's elevated partnership with ASEAN. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood said it is important to understand perspective on contemporary Southeast Asia and ASEAN from Thailand. He noted that while in previous decades

ASEAN's growth trajectory had benefited from stable major-power relations, the region was now facing strong headwinds owing to sharpening contestation between the U.S. and China. It remained to be seen how ASEAN would navigate this complex and treacherous geopolitical landscape. He said that there was no better qualified scholar than Dr. Thitinan to speak on the subject with real knowledge and insight. Dr. Thitinan Pongsudhirak, during his lecture, emphasized that the world is in transition. This has been even more pronounced since the inauguration of the second term of President Donald Trump in the United States. He noted that Donald Trump's policy features

two prominent themes: nationalism and economic nationalism. This means that the United States shall not be interventionist any more, however, the country shall be increasingly protectionist and adopt policies that put greater onus on U.S. allies. Regarding China, Dr. Pongsudhirak noted that the country is on a trajectory of "manifest resurgence" due to its historical role in the world and its ongoing geostrategic projects like the Belt and Road Initiative. The so-called "new Cold War" is merely a continuity of the Cold War with the difference being economic alteration, he noted. The pressing question is how long a geo-economic conflict can last until it transforms into confrontation and hostility.—APP

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- 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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Rescue (Police).....15
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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Melody Market sets to shine to boost business in capital: Zafar

Zafar Bakhtawari said that Islamabad and Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, are sister cities, and considering this relationship, the Azerbaijani government is playing a significant role in the upgradation of Melody Market

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Secretary General of UBG (FPCCI), Zafar Bakhtawari, stated that Melody Market in Islamabad is set to become a modern and model market, which will not only boost business activities but also positively impact the city's economy. The development of Melody Market and the provision of modern facilities will be greatly supported by the business community of Islamabad and the market's traders. He expressed these views during a visit to the market on the invitation of Melody Market President, Azhar Iqbal. Zafar Bakhtawari further said that Islamabad and Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, are sister cities, and considering this relationship, the Azerbaijani government is playing a significant role in the upgradation of Melody Market. The uplift work of the market is ongoing with Azerbaijan's support. However, it is also the responsibility of traders to improve the internal infrastructure of their shops and modernize the shopping



culture to provide better facilities for customers and increase foot traffic in the market. He mentioned that the development work of Melody Market is expected to be completed by April 2025, and a grand inauguration ceremony will be held in this regard. He also expressed special gratitude to CDA Chairman, Muhammad Ali Randhawa,

whose keen interest and efforts have accelerated the completion of development work, equipping an important market in the city with modern facilities. On this occasion, Melody Market President, Azhar Iqbal, stated that they are fully cooperating with CDA to develop Melody Market along modern lines. He welcomed the initiatives taken with

Azerbaijan's support for the improvement of the market and expressed gratitude to the CDA Chairman for his dedication to completing this project as soon as possible. Azhar Iqbal also demanded that the Food Mall in Melody Market be upgraded, reorganized, and provided with more modern facilities. He emphasized the need for designated

parking areas and improvements in water supply, sewerage, and other basic infrastructure to provide maximum convenience for shoppers and traders. On this occasion, ICCI Executive Committee members Rohail Anwar Butt, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Khalid Chaudhry, Babar Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Melody Market General Secretary

No threat to USC employees: Rana

Sugar to be provided at Rs 130 per kg during Ramzan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday told the Senate that there was no threat to the rights of regular and contractual employees of the Utility Stores Corporation (USC). Taking to the floor of the Upper House of the Parliament, he assured that the government was not going to close USC, however, proposals were under consideration to restructure, privatize or run the affairs of USC on public-private partnership with the consultation of government allies parties. He said that the government provides a subsidy of Rs 50 billion to USC to facilitate the public to provide cheaper daily used items and last year the govt had provided an amount of Rs 17 bln to USC under the Ramzan relief package, however, the amount was not used properly to facilitate the people. He said that the federal govt had increased the Ramzan package amount to Rs 20 bln this year while the provinces were also providing substantial amounts through cash to the needy accounts. Tanveer said that govt were shutting down only non-profitable USC stores which were opened in needlessly locations. He said that country was moving towards the right direction under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sahrif and Pakistan's position had been strengthened at the global level and the trust of international financial institutions and big powers showed the best economic policies of the government. Meanwhile, Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday directed Chief Secretaries of all provinces to establish sugar stalls at the municipal council level and ensure uninterrupted supply of the commodity at Rs.130 during the holy month of Ramazan. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Industry, the minister was chairing the Sugar Advisory Board meeting here. Tanveer emphasized that the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) and provincial governments must ensure that sugar is accessible to the poor masses. Around 230 sugar stalls will be set up in Sindh with the cooperation of provincial governments, while 405 selling points have been identified for sugar stalls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Hundreds of sugar stalls will also be set up in Punjab and Balochistan. Provincial governments have been given the responsibility for security, cleanliness, and crowd management while the federal government will form a committee to resolve any.—DNA

FJWU stands in firm solidarity with Kashmir

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) reaffirmed its unwavering support for the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) by organizing a full day of activities to raise awareness and advocate for their rights. The event, led by the Student Affairs Office, the International Relations Department, and the Department of Computer Arts, brought together students, faculty, and staff in a collective effort to highlight

the Kashmir issue and urge global action. The event featured the address by Mushaal Hussein Mullick, a prominent advocate for Kashmir, who strongly condemned the ongoing human rights violations in the region. She emphasized the need for the international community and human rights organizations to take a firm stand against the oppression of Kashmiris. She urged global leaders to break their silence and recognize the struggle of the

Kashmiri people. Prof. Zafar Iqbal Sindhu reinforced her message, stating that Kashmir remains an unresolved issue from the partition of the subcontinent, contributing to instability in South Asia. A seminar was also held, where faculty members and students discussed the political and historical context of the Kashmir dispute. Dr. Sobia Hanif, Assistant Professor at the International Relations Department, provided an in-depth analysis of

human rights violations, demographic changes, and restrictive laws imposed in the region. She emphasized the role of diplomatic engagement and public awareness in advocating for a peaceful resolution. Students actively participated by presenting speeches, posters, and poetry, expressing their solidarity and amplifying the voices of Kashmiris. In addition to academic discussions, students showcased their creativity through artwork.—APP

NTDC reforms success depends on planning, independent decision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While the NTDC's structural reforms are designed to improve accountability, efficiency, and transparency, their success depends on comprehensive planning, political neutrality, and systemic coordination, as mere restructuring alone will not bring lasting improvements. The success of these reforms also needs reducing bureaucratic influence, ensuring independent decision-making, and prioritizing national interest over institutional inertia. This perspective was shared by power sector experts during a roundtable on "Evaluating NTDC Reforms: Tackling Transmission and Distribution Challenges in Pakistan," held at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session was addressed as keynote speaker by Dr Fiaz Chaudhry, chairman National Transmission and

Despatch Company (NTDC), Zubair Chaudhry, general manager finance, Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA), Afia Malik, senior energy policy expert, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), and Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS. It was chaired by Mirza Hamid Hassan, former federal secretary, Water and Power, and moderated by Ameena Sohail, an energy lawyer, whereas Ashfaq Mehmood, former secretary, Water and Power, also

shared his views. Providing an overview of the NTDC reforms, Fiaz Chaudhry noted that reforms are primarily focused on structural changes. He said restructuring included separating the project development function into an independent Energy Infrastructure Development & Management Company to insulate it from existing institutional inefficiencies. It also includes renaming NTDC to National Grid Company of Pakistan (NGC-Pak) to improve the efficiency and

effectiveness of transmission service delivery. Additionally, forming an Independent System and Market Operator would ensure neutrality and avoid conflicts of interest. These reforms were needed as persistent internal and external factors, including weak corporate boards, ineffective governance, disregard for corporate policies, complex procurement processes, and arbitrary decision-making, have been undermining NTDC's performance, he noted. Talking about the future outlook of NTDC, Zubair Chaudhry observed that reform initiation is a time-intensive process but promises several critical advantages, including enhanced accountability by segregating responsibilities so that each entity will be directly accountable for its specific functions. It will also ensure timely project delivery as independent companies will face direct consequences for delays.



PO killer arrested

RAWALPINDI: Dharmyal Police on Friday conducted an exclusive action in which a proclaimed criminal who killed his brother-in-law was arrested. According to the police spokesman, the proclaimed Usman had shot and killed his brother-in-law Aqeel over a domestic dispute. A case of the incident was registered in August 2024 at Dharmyal Police Station. Three accomplices of the proclaimed offender have already been arrested by the police earlier. Appreciating the raiding teams, SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar has said that the proclaimed offender would be challaned in court with solid evidence. He further said that the proclaimed criminals involved in serious cases couldn't escape the clutches of the law.—APP

Crackdown against kite sellers, flyers continues

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police have accelerated their ongoing operation against kite flyers and sellers, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, conducted raids on Thursday night in different city areas and arrested 19 accused on recovery of hundreds of kites and kite flying string rolls. Waris Khan police netted eight kite flyers, Sadiqabral police held six, Rattaamral three and Bani Police rounded up two accused. He informed that Rawalpindi district police were also running an awareness campaign and making all-out efforts to prevent kite flying and aerial firing. He said that monitoring was being done with announcements from high-rise buildings to prevent kite flying and aerial firing. Announcements were also being made from mosques and door-to-door pamphlets were distributed to educate the citizens. The spokesman informed that a crackdown was underway against kite flying and kite sellers this year, so far more than 160 kite flyers and sellers have been arrested and nearly 40,000 kites and over 500 string rolls were recovered. Monitoring was also underway against online kite sellers, he said adding, kite flying is a non-bailable offense and the violators will be punished with a sentence of 3 to 7 years in prison.—APP

NSU, Rescue 1122 host safety training workshop

ISLAMABAD: The recent collaboration between National Skills University Islamabad (NSU) and Rescue 1122 in hosting a life-saving Occupational Health and Safety Training Workshop in Islamabad highlights the critical need for preparedness in both professional and everyday settings. The workshop, organized by the NSU's Department of Electrical Engineering Technology, provided participants hands-on training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), First Aid, and Fire Extinguisher usage. These are occupational skills and fundamental life-saving techniques that can mean the difference between life and death in critical situations. NSU's initiative is a model for integrating safety into the educational framework in a country where workplace safety often takes a backseat to production goals, and the practicality of the workshop ensures its effectiveness. "Ensuring safety is not just about compliance; it's about saving lives," said Mr. Waqas, Chief Instructor from Rescue 1122. This sentiment is particularly relevant in high-risk fields like electrical engineering, where exposure to electrical shocks, fire hazards, and equipment malfunctions is an inherent reality. The workshop provided a stark reminder that safety training should not be an afterthought; it should be embedded within professional education and workplace culture. Participants walked away with more than certificates; they gained confidence in responding effectively to emergencies. They acquired specific skills such as CPR, first aid, and fire extinguisher techniques. Dr. Waqas Arif, an Assistant Professor at NSU, encapsulated the experience succinctly: "This workshop has been an eye-opener. Learning these techniques will not only help us in our professional careers but also enable us to assist others in everyday emergencies.—DNA



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Briefs

Two bike lifters held with 4 stolen motorcycles

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, R.A. Bazar Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Jamshaid and Jabar and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.—APP

ANF recovers over 248 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 248.429 kg drugs worth over Rs 56.6 million and arrested eight suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that in an operation, 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of three suspects arrested near Sambrial in Sialkot. Arrested suspect confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. In another operation, 136 grams weed was recovered from a parcel booked for Thailand at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 220 kg opium was recovered from Kanak area of Mastung in Balochistan. A total of 21.6 kg hashish and 2.4 kg opium were recovered from the possession of three suspects going on a motorcycle in Sheikhpura. 313 grams opium, 380 grams hashish, a pistol with two magazines and a drone were recovered from the possession of two suspects netted with a motorcycle in Lahore. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.—APP

Loralai students observe Senate session

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of 62 students and faculty members from Balochistan Residential College, Loralai, visited the Parliament House in Islamabad on Friday, where they were welcomed by senior Senate officials and introduced to the history, parliamentary traditions, and legislative process of the Upper House. The educational visit aimed to enhance students' understanding of parliamentary affairs and the role of the Senate in law-making and governance. During the visit, the delegation observed a Senate session and received a comprehensive briefing on legislative procedures and parliamentary functions. Officials explained the structure of the Upper House, the various stages of legislation, and the Senate's role in the democratic process.—APP

ICCI, ICADRP to promote ADR practices

This strategic partnership seeks to enhance ADR research, education, certification programs, and business-centric initiatives, thereby reinforcing Pakistan's legal and economic landscape

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), representing a diverse membership of over ten thousand corporate, trade, and service sector entities, has undertaken a pivotal initiative to strengthen Pakistan's business and legal framework. In pursuit of fostering efficient dispute resolution mechanisms, ICCI has formalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention (ICADRP)—a globally recognized institution dedicated to advancing Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) practices. The signing ceremony, held at the Chamber House in Is-



lamabad, marked a significant milestone in institutional collaboration. The agreement was formalized by ICCI Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza and

ICADRP Chief Executive Officer Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha, in the presence of ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Council Member Abdul Rauf Alam,

ICADRP Managing Director Farrukh Karim Qureshi, and Director Dr. Shoaib Suddle. This strategic partnership seeks to enhance ADR re-

search, education, certification programs, and business-centric initiatives, thereby reinforcing Pakistan's legal and economic landscape. ICADRP will extend expert consultancy, training, and capacity-building support to facilitate the establishment and effective operation of ADR centers tailored to business requirements. Speaking at the occasion, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi articulated confidence in the transformative potential of this collaboration, underscoring its role in institutionalizing mediation and dispute resolution training. He emphasized that the initiative will significantly contribute to a more predictable and business-friendly environment, fostering economic stability, investment growth, and national prosperity.

Fauzia encourages women to seek justice against harassers

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment Fauzia Waqar on Friday emphasized the need for increased awareness and encouraged women to speak up and seek justice against harassers, urging victims to report incidents of harassment and take a stand against this pervasive issue. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Fauzia Waqar expressed alarm over Pakistan's dismal ranking of 145 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, emphasizing the need for women to be aware of their rights and report complaints to spark a much-needed discussion. She further highlighted that women are disproportionately vulnerable to harassment, facing a significantly higher risk than their male counterparts. She said to visit the FOHPAS website and fill out the online complaint registration form, adding that citizens must provide their personal details, complaint description, and supporting documents. For immediate assistance, victims can reach out to the dedicated helpline at 0344-4367367, she added. Responding to a question, Ms Waqar explained that organizational harassment includes unwanted behaviour during recruitment, unnecessary questioning during interviews, limited career advancement opportunities, lack of equal treatment, inadequate training opportunities and exclusion from decision-making processes all of which disproportionately affect women. Furthermore, she highlighted the severe consequences of harassment, including psychological stress leading to hair loss, family disturbances and a significant impact on the country's economy, with estimates suggesting that harassment results in a staggering 30% loss to Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Stressing the urgency of the matter, Fauzia emphasized that addressing harassment is a priority and urged women to come forward and report incidents, asserting that their voices will be heard and their complaints will be addressed.—DNA

Call for stronger media exchanges with between Pakistan, Bangladesh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bangladeshi journalist and social media influencer Muqtadir Rashid Romeo on Friday emphasized the importance of media exchange programs between Pakistan and Bangladesh to further strengthen bilateral relations.

In an interview with Radio Pakistan Muqtadir Rashid, Special Correspondent "Bangla Outlook" said that relations between the two countries are very positive,

said a press release issued here. He highlighted the role of journalists in conveying the sentiments of the people of both nations through responsible journalism. Speaking about Pakistan's beauty, he said that the country was well-known for its scenic landscapes. He expressed confidence that discussions about Lahore and Islamabad's beauty in Bangladesh would spark interest among the Bangladeshi people to explore Pakistan's natural and cultural attractions. Muqtadir

Rashid also emphasized the need for future collaborations between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the fields of music and tourism and said that such partnerships would bring the two nations closer by fostering cultural and artistic exchanges. Sharing his experiences from his visit to Pakistan, he described it as remarkable, praising the warmth and hospitality of the Pakistani people. He cited an incident in Islamabad where a café owner refused to charge him for tea

upon learning that he was from Bangladesh, exemplifying Pakistan's generosity. He said that a local person in Lahore, upon realizing he was from Bangladesh, offered assistance with anything he needed, demonstrating the deep-rooted hospitality of Pakistanis.

Muqtadir Rashid extended his gratitude to the people of Pakistan for their exceptional hospitality and goodwill, emphasizing the importance of continued efforts to strengthen ties between the two nations.

HDDBA delegation calls on CJP

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of senior lawyers of Hazara Division Bar Association (HDDBA), led by its President, Sardar Aman called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, at the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The Chief Justice welcomed the delegation and stated that, as part of his commitment to strengthening access to justice in remote areas, he will visit remote areas of Hazara Division. He emphasized the essential role and collective wisdom of both the bench and the bar in ensuring an effective dispensation of justice, highlighting that their collaboration is fundamental for upholding the rule of law. He reiterated that without the support and cooperation of the legal fraternity, the objective of a fair and efficient justice system cannot be fully realized. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Chief Justice for his time and apprised him of the challenges faced by the Hazara Division Bar Associations and litigants and capacity-building initiatives for bar members, particularly given the geographical remoteness of the Hazara Division. In response, the Chief Justice assured the delegation of his commitment in addressing their concerns under the Access to Justice program. Additionally, he informed the members of the delegation that Federal Judicial Academy (FJA) has uploaded the training programs on its website and the legal practitioners of Hazara Bar Division can take benefit from such courses for enhancing their legal expertise and professional growth.—DNA

Thousands of tourists flock to enjoy Murree snowfall

RAWALPINDI, Feb 21 (APP): The continuous snowfall has created a craze for thousands of tourists in Murree. A large number of vehicles were entered in the stunning city to enjoy pleasant weather, as per forecast by the MET office. Murree Mall Road, Jhiga Gali, Ayubia, Kashmir Point and Ghora Gali were observed as the most visited points. Snowfall continued from time to time and the temperature of the city also dropped which led to an increase in cold.—APP

Rawalpindi all set to host ICC Champions Trophy matches

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi is all set to host three important matches of the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy 2025. The district administration, in collaboration with allied departments has finalized the arrangements for the international matches. The city will host three important matches of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. The spectators will enjoy the matches of Bangladesh vs New Zealand, Australia vs South Africa, and Pakistan vs Bangladesh scheduled on 24th, 25th and 27th February. All three matches will be played in day-night format providing an enormous opportunity to the spectators for sporting entertainment. Security has been beefed up to maintain law and order.

A foolproof security plan has been prepared for the security of the route and stadium through deployment of special squads. Special patrolling squads will render their vigilant duties. More than 5000 police officers and officials will perform duties for the security of the match-

es. Police teams, Dolphins and Elite Force will patrol the area around and around the stadium. Moreover, expert snipers will be deployed on important rooftops. Further, over 350 officers and officials will perform duties to ensure foolproof traffic arrangements.

CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani in a special meeting in this regard has re-affirmed that outstanding security arrangements will be ensured in collaboration with Pak Army, Rangers and other security agencies to provide the best environment for cricket fans. The Stadium Road has

turned into a flower city adorned by stunning greenery, diverse flowers decor and lush scenery of the area surrounding the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. A beautiful statue of a batter clad in a cricket kit has been installed on Stadium Road, has further enhanced the territorial beauty. The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) has decorated the green areas and walkways of Stadium Road with colourful flowers. Hosting Champions Trophy matches has put a new zeal among the residents of Rawalpindi, a city that has contributed various cricket heroes including Miran Baksh, Shoaib Akhtar, Shadab Khan, Sohail Tanvir, Yasir Arafat, Muhammad Wasim, Muhammad Amir and many others. The cricket fans expressed their rejoicing moments while appreciating the government for making,



Industrial production declines by 1.87%

ISLAMABAD: The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in the country witnessed a negative growth of 1.87 percent during the first half (July-December) of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The LSMI also dipped by 3.73 percent on year-on-year basis (YoY) in December 2024 when compared to the same month of last year. The LSMI production however increased by 19.07 percent on month-on-month (MoM) in December 2025 as compared to November 2024. The provisional quantum induces of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for November 2024, with the base year 2015-16, have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies. The main contributors towards overall negative growth of 1.87% included food (-0.13), tobacco (0.25), textile (0.36) garments (1.43), petroleum products (-0.02), automobiles (0.77), cement (-0.55), iron & steel products (-0.59), electrical equipment (-0.60), machinery and equipment (-0.15) and furniture (-2.27). The production in July-December 2024-25 as compared to July-December 2023-24 has increased in tobacco, textile, wearing apparel, automobiles and other transport equipment while it decreased in food, coke & petroleum products, chemical products, non metallic.—APP

More rain predicted

ISLAMABAD: Director General of Meteorology Mehr Sahibzada Khan revealed on Friday that a new rain spell was expected to commence after a brief two-day respite, bringing much-needed relief to crops in Punjab and KPK. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, Mehr Sahibzada Khan stated that the previous night's rain spell had come to an end, but another spell is expected to commence after a two-day break, lasting for the next three days. Mehr Sahibzada Khan stated that the country had been experiencing drought-like conditions in previous weeks, but the new spell of rain and snow will have a positive impact on most areas. When asked about the potential impact on upcoming sports events, Mehr Sahibzada Khan replied that the fresh spell of rain may unfortunately affect the ICC matches in Rawalpindi and Lahore.—APP

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 258

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Vienna Process

THIS week, more than 100 Afghans from different ethnic and minority groups gathered in Vienna, Austria, for the fifth meeting of the Vienna Process for a Democratic Afghanistan. Over the past two years, the Vienna Process has emerged as the primary forum for anti-Taliban resistance movements to coordinate, strategize, and chart a common path forward. While the international community has struggled to formulate a coherent approach to Afghanistan, this growing coalition of opposition groups has steadily built a framework for an alternative future. The Vienna Process has grown in both scope and influence since its inception in September 2022, one year after the Taliban's return to power. The first round brought together over 30 participants from various Afghan minority and ethnic groups, who issued a joint statement rejecting Taliban rule as unacceptable. Perhaps the most significant outcome was the emergence of Ahmad Massoud, the son of famed anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, as the de facto leader of the resistance. By April 2023, the second round had expanded to include a broader range of activists, representing diverse ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. While Massoud and the National Resistance Front remained central, the Ankara Coalition, Hazara, and Uzbek representatives played key roles. Notably, nearly half of the participants were women. This time, they took a bolder step, agreeing to support all forms of resistance against the Taliban, including armed struggle. The third round in December 2023 saw even greater participation, with over 50 representatives from anti-Taliban groups. For the first time, Abdul Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek commander and longtime Afghan powerbroker, sent a personal envoy. The presence of international observers from the US and Europe signaled a growing recognition of the resistance movement. By June 2024, the fourth round had grown to 70 participants, including influential figures such as former Afghan Vice President Yunus Qanuni; Hazara leader Mohammad Mohaqiq; and Anarkali Honaryar, an Afghan Sikh. Women's rights activist Parwana Ibrahimkhal, who had been imprisoned by the Taliban in 2022, also joined. To develop a roadmap for Afghanistan's future, participants broke into working groups focused on politics, foreign policy, human rights, and economics. This week's fifth round was even larger and included almost 100 attendees. For the first time, there was a session giving international observers from the US and Europe an opportunity to speak and engage. In addition to Ahmad Massoud, other notable attendees included Yasin Zia, leader of the Afghanistan Freedom Front; and Rangin Dardar Spanta, the country's former national security adviser. The biggest outcome of this meeting was the agreement to a roadmap that various working groups had been drafting since the last meeting in June. This program is the opposition's attempt at showing that there is an alternative to the current Taliban rule. All aspects of Afghanistan's future and society are covered to include future economic development, security, diplomatic relations, and human rights, with a special emphasis on women's rights. A special commission of 19 members representing all walks of Afghan society was also formed. This commission will work together and coordinate a response to implement the roadmap.



US, Russia talks & China

AS the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine approaches, peace in the Eastern European country seems closer than ever. US President Donald Trump, who has positioned himself as a de facto mediator, seems determined to end the war. But is Kyiv interested in signing a peace deal with Moscow on Washington's terms? According to the American leader, Ukraine had three years to reach an agreement with Russia "that would have given them almost all of the land". Surprisingly, he appears to be blaming Kyiv, or more precisely, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, for the war. "You should have never started it. You could have made a deal," Trump said, following the talks held by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Riyadh on February 18. Prior to this, Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke over the phone on February 12. Coincidentally or not, that day marked the 10th anniversary of the Minsk agreement – a document that effectively froze the Donbas war, which erupted in the spring of 2014 following the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv that led to the overthrow of allegedly pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. If reports about Trump's peace plan are true, it seems his ambition is not to force Moscow and Kyiv into a sustainable peace treaty, but rather to once again put the conflict on ice. Further, if Russia and Ukraine reach a ceasefire soon, the Ukrainian authorities would be able to hold elections. What Moscow and Washington seem to share is a desire to get rid of Zelensky politically. For the Kremlin, he is an "illegitimate" leader, given that his term expired last year. Trump, for his part, has insinuated Zelensky might have pocketed half of the aid the US gave Ukraine. He also claims the Ukrainian leader is a "dictator" with a "4 per cent approval rating", in a bid to pressure him to hold a vote. The problem for Moscow and Washington is that Zelensky is unlikely to be replaced by a pro-Russian politician, or someone at least willing to recognise Moscow's annexation of five Ukrainian regions. Even if Zelensky suffers an election defeat, it does not automatically mean that the next Ukrainian government will agree to a deal with Putin under Trump's conditions. With or without Zelensky, Ukraine would be very resistant to what is widely perceived as a surrender to Putin. More importantly, the United States might have turned its back on the Ukrainian leader, but he can still count on Europe. While the US and Russia plan to normalise relations and appoint ambassadors to each other's capitals as soon as possible, the European Union has agreed to impose a fresh round of sanctions against Russia. Also, the bloc reportedly plans to send Ukraine an unprecedented aid package of up to €700 billion (US\$730 billion), as several European nations express their readiness to deploy troops to the Eastern European country. Foreign troops on Ukrainian soil is something that Moscow would have a hard time accepting. Russia launched the invasion of Ukraine over Kyiv's ambition to join Nato. Thus any troops from Nato countries in the war-torn nation would undoubtedly represent the Kremlin's strategic defeat, even if Ukraine formally gives up joining the US-led alliance. In spite of this, Trump insists that he has "the power to end this war". Although an end seems to be in sight for the war in Gaza, with Hamas ready to release all hostages, resolving the conflict in Ukraine will be easier said than done. What Moscow and Kyiv, through mediation by Trump, could sign is a Minsk-style ceasefire agreement that would allow both Russian and Ukrainian militaries to prepare for a new, even bloodier war.

Aukus, Quad will have to step up under Trump's Indo-Pacific stance

Syed Munir Khasru

Under Aukus, the US will provide Australia with advanced Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines. This will give Australia top-tier naval capabilities. Additionally, Australia recently sent US\$500 million to boost US submarine production, showing a shared commitment to defence. Though building these submarines on time is a challenge, Trump's team may push for faster production. His history of increasing defence spending and cutting red tape suggests he will prioritise this deal. Aukus is also about more than submarines. It involves collaboration in technologies like artificial intelligence, cyberdefence and quantum computing

US President Donald Trump is expected to take a far more aggressive approach in the Indo-Pacific than the Biden administration as America strengthens ties with Australia and Japan. Australia is deepening its security ties with the United States through the Aukus alliance (which includes Britain) and critical minerals agreements, while balancing its economic reliance on China. The US remains Australia's largest investor and demand for Australian rare earths is growing parallel to China's market dominance. But Trump's return brings economic protectionism, with potential tariffs that could strain trade. Despite these challenges, long-standing intelligence-sharing and military cooperation, including the joint defence facility at Pine Gap, keep the alliance strong. Likewise, for years, Japan has been America's top investor and plans to boost investment to US\$1 trillion. It is also increasing liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports from the US while maintaining a careful approach to trade disputes. India, meanwhile, is set to receive billions in US weapons, including potential F-35 stealth jets, as part of a growing defence partnership. These developments reflect America's focus on strengthening alliances in the Indo-Pacific while countering China's influence, as security alliances such as Aukus and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue gain more momentum under Trump than under Biden. Though the Quad was revived by Trump in November 2017, its fading momentum reflected Biden's failure to turn diplomacy into strategic influence. Biden's decision to skip the 2023 Sydney summit exposed the alliance's weaknesses. During Biden's tenure, despite being outlined as a counterweight to China, the Quad struggled to unify. India prioritised strategic autonomy, maintaining strong ties with Russia and avoiding firm stances on issues like the Ukraine war and the Myanmar junta's brutal suppression of its people as well as persecution of the Rohingya. And while the US, Australia

and Japan strengthened their military cooperation in November last year, India, also a Quad member, was not included in the agreement. Moreover, the Quad failed to deliver on important initiatives, like its vaccine partnership. Overall, Biden's broader Indo-Pacific strategy, often called a "lattice" of alliances, fell short. Given that Trump perceives China as America's rival, he is expected to use his second term to go the extra mile and push back China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. His secretary of state, Marco Rubio, focused on Quad as his first major task by including it as a key aspect of US strategy. A recent Quad meeting in Washington, held just a day after Trump's inauguration, indicated commitment from the US, India, Japan and Australia to security and economic cooperation. Trump also plans to visit India for the next Quad summit, a sign of US interest and growing concern with China's regional and territorial ambitions. Though founded under the Biden administration, Aukus remains an integral part of the US defence strategy under Trump. While Biden saw Aukus as part of a bigger regional plan, Trump's team views it as a model for strong military alliances. US officials have confirmed their support, with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth stressing its importance. Under Aukus, the US will provide Australia with advanced Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines. This will give Australia top-tier naval capabilities. Additionally, Australia recently sent US\$500 million to boost US submarine production, showing a shared commitment to defence. Though building these submarines on time is a challenge, Trump's team may push for faster production. His history of increasing defence spending and cutting red tape suggests he will prioritise this deal. Aukus is also about more than submarines. It involves collaboration in technologies like artificial intelligence, cyberdefence and quantum computing. Trump values military strength and innovation, which fits Aukus' goal of integrating advanced defence

technology. Besides, the Trump administration may explore ways to expand the pact, strengthening US security leadership in the region. Amid changing political dynamics, Aukus projects the power of US-led alliances, offering a model for military cooperation. Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy is clear. He sees the Quad and Aukus not as diplomatic forums, but as security coalitions meant to challenge China's regional ambitions. His administration will push for faster military integration, greater burden-sharing among allies and a more forceful stance in the region. Trump won't let Europe turn Uncle Sam into 'Uncle Sucker', US defence chief says This shift will test how far India, Japan and Australia are willing to go in challenging China's influence. While Biden preferred a cautious and calculated approach, Trump will pressure allies to take bolder steps, whether they are ready or not. For the Quad, this means moving beyond symbolic gestures and becoming an active deterrent force in the Indo-Pacific. For Aukus, it means pushing Australia to develop military capabilities at a pace not seen before. There is a real possibility that Trump's approach could provoke increasing tensions in the South China Sea, across the Taiwan Strait and even along the Himalayan border. But the other side of the coin suggests an aggressive US presence could deter Beijing from pushing its territorial ambitions further. The Indo-Pacific is entering a period of strategic uncertainty, and how the Quad and Aukus evolve under Trump will shape regional security. Unlike Biden's balanced and careful strategy, Trump will demand results and expect his allies to deliver. Hence, one may anticipate stronger military ties, expanded joint drills and deeper intelligence-sharing between the four countries under Trump 2.0. Similarly, given his track record, Trump's approach will also be more direct when it comes to China. Unlike Biden, who kept Quad statements vague and diplomatic, Trump will not hesitate to call a spade a spade and be openly critical of, even confrontational about, Beijing's actions.

A 'Vision 2030' for Europe's security

Dr. Diana Galeeva

In his speech, US Vice President J.D. Vance discussed the importance of shared values, which he accused European countries, including the UK, of retreating from, while ignoring voter worries on free speech and migration. This speech was labeled "brilliant" by Trump, but it was met with silence in the hall. This can be seen as illustrative of a period of growing tension and uncertainty in Europe-US relations. Markus Soeder, the minister-president of Bavaria and leader of the Christian Social Union party, acknowledged that Europe's

LAST weekend, the 61st Munich Security Conference took place in Germany. The agenda was linked to a "pivotal" moment of change, including a new US administration, a new cycle of European legislature in Brussels and the upcoming German parliamentary elections. One of the panels was titled "Ready, Steady, 2030? Accelerating the Balkans' EU accession." I would like to adopt the same logic and link it to some familiar narratives for Middle Eastern politics, based on the conference's outcomes, to offer my own predictions for the future of Europe up to 2030. In other words, this article aims to suggest a "Vision 2030" for European security. Firstly, it seems the trend in Europe is toward a more neo-realist approach, with the prioritization of defense. This will certainly be developed, as expenditure will increase. Most speakers agreed that Europe needs to increase its defense spending; currently, the NATO-mandated minimum is 2 percent of gross domestic product, but this is expected to increase to 3 percent. US President Donald Trump has urged NATO's European members to spend 5 percent of their national income on defense. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has also urged member states to increase their defense spending. And in her address, "The EU in the World," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed an increase in public investments, including defense expenditure. Secondly, relations between Europe and the US are at a transformative stage. Panels that involved the US included titles such as, "Doing More with Less US? Strengthening European Defense," "The US in the World," "Strategic investment: The Future of US-Ukraine Security Cooperation," "Pitfalls and Priorities: The New US Administration's Middle East Policy," and "Pay or Prey? NATO, the US and Transatlantic Security." In his speech, US Vice President J.D. Vance discussed the importance of shared values, which he accused European countries, including the UK, of retreating from, while ignoring voter worries on free speech and migration. This speech was labeled "brilliant" by Trump, but it was met with silence in the hall. This can be seen as illustrative of a period of growing tension and un-

certainty in Europe-US relations. Markus Soeder, the minister-president of Bavaria and leader of the Christian Social Union party, acknowledged that Europe's relations with the US need "a fresh start." He added: "We should not be complaining ... We need a change." The European Vision 2030 might require an alternative method to deal with this US administration. Zanny Minton Beddoes, the editor-in-chief of The Economist, who moderated the session on "Building or Burning Bridges: Economic and Development Cooperation Amid Multipolarization," argued that within three weeks a new administration in the US had ended the previous geopolitical status quo in many fundamental ways. It did this through very different approaches to conflict areas (e.g., the Middle East and Ukraine) and a fundamentally different approach to foreign assistance and how the global trading system and tariffs should look. Trump's plan to enforce a 25 percent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports from next month was a sign there are very clear rifts between Washington and Europe on several matters, from trade to dealing with Russia. The third point on European security concerns policies toward saving the EU's economies, securing its interests and offering agreements that would work for all, ensuring all members are prosperous and secure. Fourthly, expansionist Russian policies are another major point of concern for the future of European security. One of the dominant concerns is the outcome of the Ukraine war. The new US administration's approach does not make it any easier, as American and Russian officials met in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to lay the groundwork for peace talks. The Ukrainian and European leaders were not invited, but they noted that they must be included for any ceasefire to be reliable. Instead, on Monday, an emergency summit of European leaders took place in Paris to discuss the Ukraine war. There, Von der Leyen noted that Ukraine deserved "peace through strength." In both cases, talks without key players (in the first case, without Ukraine and the EU and, in the second, without Russia) further complicate the European security agenda. Therefore, Russian wars, including hy-

brid conflicts such as in the Baltic Sea or in the post-Soviet space, including Georgia, Armenia and Moldova, are a complicated and urgent question. This was seen in Munich during discussions in panels such as "Down to the Wire: Countering Hybrid Warfare in the Baltic Sea," "Nuclear Multipolarity" and "Spotlight on Georgia." One of the central themes was multipolarization. In the panel on "Building or Burning Bridges," the growing number of actors with importance in terms of global decision-making was noted. The conference discussed matters relating to the Middle East, in addition to China and Venezuela. This links to another direction and challenge that has been discussed in Europe: the growing importance and influence of the countries of the Global South. It can be further discussed within the expanding BRICS agenda. Finding a collective approach based on pluralism, democracy and "defending philosophical ideas, which behave as the engine of our prosperity or stability here in Europe," as suggested by Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares Bueno, would offer another dimension of the Vision 2030 for European security to share with the rest of the world. While Russia, which is part of BRICS, is perceived as trying to burn bridges, the Europeans should try to rebuild them. This can be another fundamental agenda for Europe up to 2030: rebuilding bridges with the rest of the world. To sum up, the Vision 2030 for European security is based on a neo-realist approach, increasing defense spending and prioritizing security matters. This is because, as Von der Leyen stated, peace comes through strength. And Europe must be stronger than ever. It faces challenges with the US administration, which could require Europe to find new ways to maintain its defense, as well as challenges in the economic system, with the US and other actors aiming to reshape the existing financial systems. The imperialist vision of Russia also directly challenges European stability and security by conducting hybrid wars on European territory. In addition, it needs to continue finding ways to attract the rest of the world, while other players aim to challenge the existing global order.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz urges swift, speedy...

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and Canada for designing and extending financial assistance for the Case Assignment and Management System. In his remarks, the Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) TroelsVester, expressed unwavering support to the Pakistan government and Ministry of Law and Justice for introducing modern technology to the governance. He commended the leadership of PM Shehbaz for governance reforms to modernise country's justice system.

PM presented 3 year plan...

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according to international level should be ensured, adding while providing professional training to youth in different fields, the demand in local industries and international market should be kept in view. He assured that National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) would be given all required funding for the professional training of youth. NAVTTTC should blacklist the training institutions which had bad performance and encourage those showing good results, he added. NAVTTTC, ministries of information technology, overseas Pakistanis and health presented their programmes for the professional training of youth. The meeting was informed that during the current year, NAVTTTC had provided training to 60,000 youth and by June 2025, it would impart training to 141,000 more youth. While in 2026, 250,000 and in 2027, 337,000 youth would be trained in different fields.

Imran wanted army to...

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important visit to the UK, strengthening bilateral military cooperation. The defence czar also pointed to the events of May 9 and November 26, alleging they were orchestrated for "nefarious purposes". He reiterated that attacks on national assets and the desecration of martyrs' memorials were undeniable realities. "The PTI's politics is for one individual, they have no concern for the country," Asif said. He dismissed the party's conduct as anything but political, asserting that its actions had been exposed to the public. Asif further said that Pakistan is moving towards stability, with significant achievements in the economic sector. He credited the incumbent government's policies for the improvement and suggested that the PTI's increasing frustration stemmed from these national successes. "Alhamdulillah, the country is on the path to stability. All conspiracies against the country will fail," he affirmed, saying that the PTI had conspired to harm Pakistan's national interests.

'Judiciary being used...

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The premier, during the Wednesday meeting, was accompanied by Law Minister AzamNazeerTarrar, Economic Affairs Minister Ahmad Cheema and Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan. SC Registrar Muhammad Salim Khan and Secretary Law and Justice Commission TanzeelaSabhat were also present on the occasion. During the huddle, the top judge had assured taking opposition parties' input over the judicial reforms - part of the CJP's overall reform agenda intending reduction in the pendency and providing speedy justice. CJP Yahya, as per a press release issued by the Supreme Court (SC), has undertaken transformative changes to modernise the judiciary to uphold fairness, transparency, and accessibility to meet standards for judicial excellence and ensure that the justice system remains citizen-centric and responsive to litigants needs.

Mirra Andreeva becomes youngest WTA 1000 finalist

The 17-year-old No. 6 backed up a big win over world No. 2 Iga Swiatek to repeat the feat against Rybakina defeating the former world No. 3 and No. 6 seed

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI—Mirra Andreeva roared into her first WTA 1000 final on Friday, shocking Elena Rybakina, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships. The 17-year-old No. 6 backed up a big win over world No. 2 Iga Swiatek to repeat the feat against Rybakina defeating the former world No. 3 and No. 6 seed in two hours and 15 minutes on Center Court. Andreeva had been in the midst of a milestone week coming into her first WTA 1000 semifinal, fresh off a strong win over Swiatek, the current world No. 2. The No. 12 seed has soared up the rankings since last spring, when she made her first major semifinal at Roland Garros with a win against then-No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka, and won her first WTA title on clay in Romania.

The teenaged Andreeva is into her first WTA 1000 final after rallying from 1-3 down in the final set over Rybakina, a former Wimbledon champion. A 2022 Wimbledon champion, Rybakina had played Andreeva just once before, coming back from a set down to win on hard courts at the 2023 China Open, but both have been through much in the 16 months since that Round of 16 clash. While Andreeva has credited much of her rise to coach Conchita Martinez, Rybakina is dealing with more worrying personnel issues as ex-coach Stefano Vukov was recently suspended for breaching the WTA's Code of Conduct. The Athletic reported Vukov will remain suspended for at least a year, leading Rybakina to incorporate Davide Sanguinetti



THE YOUNGEST PLAYER TO REACH A WTA-1000 FINAL

as her official coach—though it is widely understood that Vukov still holds the proverbial reins. Despite the off-court issues, Rybakina has put together a strong week in Dubai, saving six match points to defeat Paula Badosa and knocking out 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin in back-to-back matches to book the meeting with Andreeva. Andreeva, who opened up about her work with a sports psychologist, nonetheless got off to the stronger start as night fell on Center Court, twice breaking the Russian-born Kazakh en route to winning the first set behind 11 winners. Though she won an impressive all-court rally to get on the board in the second, Andreeva found fewer openings on Rybakina's serve and found herself broken in the tenth game to force a final set. Rybakina kept up her momentum with an early break in the decider but a missed overhead provided an opening for Andreeva, who took full advantage to bring the set back on serve. The match shifted quickly from there, Andreeva reversing a 1-3 deficit much as she did against Swiatek into a break advantage of her own. A marathon eighth game ensued, with Andreeva roaring back from 0-40 down and holding her cool to save four total break points and move within a game of the final. A deflated Rybakina netted a backhand to hand Andreeva a match point; though the teen erred wide, she earned a second off another error from Rybakina. Andreeva secured a fifth game in a row on her second match point, Rybakina missing a backhand wide. Standing between Andreeva and her first WTA 1000 title will be the winner of the second semifinal, between Clara Tauson and No. 14 seed Karolina Muchova.

Haris Rauf confident in Pak comeback against India

Rauf assured the team is composed and focused for the India clash

DNA

DUBAI: Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf on Friday expressed confidence in the national team's ability to bounce back after a disappointing start to their ICC Champions Trophy 2025 campaign against New Zealand on Wednesday. Speaking to a private news channel, the right-arm speedster assured that the team remains composed and focused ahead of their highly anticipated clash against arch-rivals India. "There's no pressure at all; everyone is relaxed, and we'll approach the match just like any other normal game," Rauf said, dismissing concerns about the team's morale following the opening defeat. He highlighted Pakistan's past successes at the venue, emphasizing the team's

ability to perform under pressure. "No doubt, we have defeated India twice at this venue, and we will try to play the same kind of cricket that helped us win those matches. Many of the boys are confident that it will be a good game," he stated. While acknowledging the significance of past records, the 31-year-old

stressed the importance of adaptability, given the nature of the playing surface. "The record here is quite good, but in the end, it all depends on what the conditions demand. Sometimes, it turns into a spin-friendly track, but the focus is to utilize the conditions in the best possible way," he added. When asked about

the team's plans to counter India's formidable batting lineup in UAE conditions, Rauf emphasized the importance of assessing the pitch before finalizing strategies. "When we go onto the field, we'll first analyze what the pitch demands and then deliver accordingly against any batsman," he said. The pacer further reinforced that the entire squad is motivated to give their best. "All the boys are positive and will try their best. Obviously, every match is important for us, and everyone will give their maximum effort. The goal is to put in full effort across all three departments and plan accordingly to win this match." Pakistan's Champions Trophy campaign has been marred by injury setbacks, with first SaimAyub and now Fakhar Zaman ruled out of the tournament.



Adam Zampa backs Australia's bowling unit

'It's a great opportunity whereby if we do our roles and contribute, hopefully,' says Zampa

DNA

LAHORE: Australia's leg-spinner Adam Zampa pinned high hopes on the new-look bowling unit to come good in the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025. Zampa, in a video statement released by Cricket Australia (CA), acknowledged the absence of their pace trio - Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood - as a 'big loss'. The 32-year-old, however, termed it a 'great opportunity' for the former champions' inexperienced bowling unit, comprised of Sean Abbott, Ben Dwarshuis, Spencer Johnson, Nathan Ellis and Aaron Hardie. "In most ICC events that we have played in the last almost decade, it has been a very similar bowling attack," Zampa said. "Something we missed having the guys was a big loss, we know that. However, it's a great opportunity whereby if we do our roles and contribute, hopefully, that will be important throughout, and somewhere along the line, a match-winner pulls it off for us," he added. The 2009 champions will kick off their campaign against arch-rivals England at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Saturday, a match-up welcomed by Zampa. "Nice to get them first up. It's always nice to beat England, one of those teams that you get up a little bit more for," Zampa was quoted as saying. Adam Zampa then went on to laud the security arrangements in place for the participating teams of the Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. "Yeah, it's heavily secured. You know, we landed into Lahore and basically we're getting into heavily secure mini buses, and the whole city shuts down for us to get from point A to point B," he explained.

Buttler backs PSL experience for England's success

'Our top three batters are in great form,' says Buttler

LAHORE: England captain Jos Buttler on Friday emphasised the significance of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) experience as the team gears up for their ICC Champions Trophy 2025 opener against Australia tomorrow. Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Buttler expressed confidence in his squad while acknowledging the challenges posed by local conditions. "We've had a few productive practice sessions in Lahore, which have been very beneficial," Buttler stated. "Our top three batters are in great form, and we aim to step onto the field with a strong combination," he added. With England set to face tough competition, the wicketkeeper-batter highlighted the importance of posting a competitive total. "We will try to score as many runs as possible to put pressure on the opposition," he said. Reflecting on England's struggles in India, where conditions proved challenging, the 34-year-old remained optimistic that the experience gained by players from playing in PSL would be advantageous. "The conditions here in Pakistan will be different from India," he noted. "However, we have players in our squad who have played in the PSL, and they are sharing their experience with us, which is proving to be valuable," he said. - DNA

Manchester United face Sociedad, Spurs play AZ Alkmaar

Rangers fans will look forward to the visit of former Manchester United, Chelsea and Tottenham boss Mourinho to Ibrox in three weeks' time

WEB DESK

London: Manchester United will face Spanish side Real Sociedad in the last 16 of the Europa League, while Tottenham will play AZ Alkmaar and Rangers meet Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce. Should United advance, they will play Romanian league leaders FCSB or Lyon in the quarter-finals. Spurs or Dutch side AZ Alkmaar will face Eintracht Frankfurt or Ajax in the last eight, while Rangers will meet Roma or Athletic Bilbao if they get past Turkish club Fenerbahce. With Manchester United and Tottenham on opposite halves of the draw, they could - in theory - meet in the final in Bilbao on 21 May, knowing the winner would earn Champions League football next season. With the Premier League all but guaranteed five places in the Champions League next season, an all-Premier League final would probably mean a sixth English club in Europe's premier club competition in 2025-26 - as Spurs and United are unlikely to finish in the top five. Meanwhile, Chelsea will face FC Copenhagen in the last 16 of the Conference

League. United, Spurs and Rangers are all away in the first leg of their last-16 ties on Thursday, 6 March. The return legs take place on 13 March. Chelsea will travel to Denmark for the first leg against Copenhagen on 6 March, with the return at Stamford Bridge seven days later. Rangers fans will look forward to the visit of former Manchester United, Chelsea and Tottenham boss Mourinho to Ibrox in three weeks' time. His Fenerbahce team sit second in Turkey's Super Lig table, six points behind leaders Galatasaray with 13 games left. There is a potential route through the tournament which would mean Mourinho faces former clubs Roma in the quarter-final, Manchester United in the last four, and Tottenham in the final. Manchester United and Real Sociedad met as recently as the 2022-23 season. After Sociedad secured a 1-0 win at Old Trafford in the Europa League group stage, United went to the Basque Country two months later and won by the same scoreline thanks to Alejandro Garnacho's winner. Spurs have already faced AZ Alkmaar in the Europa League this season. Richardson hit the winner from the penalty spot to secure a 1-0 win in a league phase game on 24 October in north London.

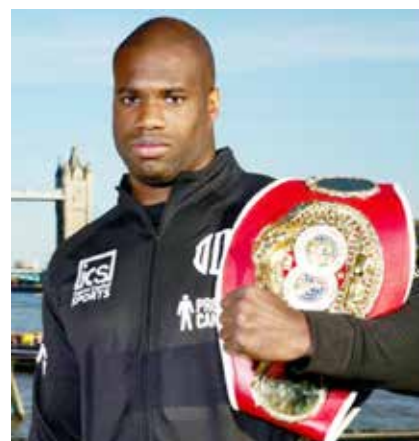
World champion Dubois out of Parker fight

The Londoner made a first defence of his belt by stopping Anthony Joshua in five rounds at Wembley Stadium in September

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Heavyweight Daniel Dubois' world title defence against Joseph Parker on Saturday is off after the champion fell ill two days before the fight. The Briton was medically evaluated in Saudi Arabia and missed Thursday's news conference, before being withdrawn later in the evening. Dubois, 27, was scheduled to make a second defence of his IBF title. There is no information on the nature of his illness. New Zealand's Parker, 33, will instead fight Congolese Martin Bakole, who has been drafted in as a late replacement. "If he is ill, I hope he gets better soon and I'm looking forward to Saturday and having a great show," Parker said before learning of the replacement. Parker later told Sky Sports, external: "He did a sensible thing. If you're sick, don't fight. There's no point going out there and fighting your heart out and you're not in the right physical shape. Go out there and fight when you're at peak, top shape, top condition, and put on your best performance. Put your best foot forward and the one that everyone will

remember." Dubois has won 22 pro fights with two defeats. He won the 'interim' IBF title against Filip Hrgovic and was elevated to world champion when Oleksandr Usyk vacated the belt. The Londoner made a first defence of his belt by stopping Anthony Joshua in five rounds at Wembley Stadium in September. Parker has a record of 35 wins and three defeats. He held the WBO heavyweight title between 2015 and 2017.



The highly rated 33-year-old Bakole, who is based in Scotland, has lost once in 22 bouts with 16 knockouts. The contest is the chief support to the undisputed light-heavyweight fight between champion Artur Beterbiev and Dmitry Bivol. Also on the card, Briton Hamzah Sheeraz challenges Carlos Adames for the WBC middleweight title. Well, they do say you should expect the unexpected in heavyweight boxing.



Rumours of Dubois' illness began to circulate at 17:10 GMT. Warren did not even reference Dubois at an undercard news conference just after 18:00. But Dubois was a no-show an hour later at the main news conference. Warren said he was being assessed by doctors, while a deflated Parker insisted he would remain on the card. To sum up the craziness, as Parker left the stage he told BBC Radio 5 Live he had heard no update on Dubois' withdrawal and no other opponents had been mentioned. Minutes later, Bakole was announced on social media as the replacement. Bakole is a highly credible opponent and the winner will likely get their title shot at some point - it's a decent fight. But it's not a world title fight. For British interest, and Dubois especially, it is thoroughly disappointing. Illnesses happen and fighters pull out, but for it to happen so close to fight night is rare. However, it's the second withdrawal in fight week of what was billed as the greatest card in the history of the sport. Of course, with the depth of this card, there is plenty still to look forward to - most notable is Beterbiev-Bivol II, two of the world's greatest pound-for-pound fighters facing off.

COAS briefed on British Army's...

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Secretary Yvette Cooper, focusing on bilateral security cooperation and shared challenges. Pakistan and the UK share a long-standing defence relationship, with joint counterterrorism training, military exchanges, and strategic dialogues playing a key role in bilateral ties. As part of his visit, the army chief will tour British military units, including the Land Warfare Centre and the 1st Strike Brigade, where he will receive briefings on the UK's military modernisation efforts.

'Politicians breaking principles...

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decisions for the people," he remarked. "When elections are rigged, political instability is inevitable." Abbas stressed the need for systemic reform, stating that when politics revolves around imprisoning opponents, it ultimately harms the country. He urged those in power to acknowledge the struggles of ordinary citizens and called for collective efforts to improve national conditions. Speaking at the inauguration of a new party office, Abbas declared that this was just the beginning of a broader movement. "Our party is committed to transforming the system," he said, adding that the public has lost faith in the three major political parties and is in search of a viable alternative.

IMF confirms visit to...

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Pakistani authorities on the first review under the loan program. In addition to reviewing the loan program, the IMF delegation will also discuss Pakistan's request for climate financing. Furthermore, a technical team from the IMF will visit Pakistan at the end of February to discuss technical aspects of climate financing. The technical team will assess potential arrangements for climate financing and engage in discussions on related technical matters. Prior to this, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that "Pakistan will hold talks with IMF delegation on February 24 for climate fund." Aurangzeb said Pakistan is expecting to get \$1 to \$1.5 bln from the international lender under climate funding, while another delegation of the IMF will arrive in Pakistan in March for the six-month review of the ongoing loan program. The minister said Pakistan witnessed surplus current account for seven months and urged the need for the structural reforms to fix 'DNA' of the economy.

Pakistan supports...

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He said the bilateral trade of the two countries was about one billion dollars and they had decided to increase trade volume to five billion dollars in the next five years. Talking about his recent participation in the meeting of the United Nations Security Council, he said the UNSC needed reforms because it was observed that the resolutions of the UNSC and General Assembly on Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine were not implemented for decades. He noted that the world order and the multilateral institutions had been weakening. He informed that during his remarks at the UNSC meeting he discussed the issues of Gaza, Kashmir and weakening of multilateral institutions. Pakistan was ready to support the reforms agenda at the United Nations to make multilateral institutions more strong, effective and forceful so that peace, security and development in the world could be pursued, he remarked. The DPM said Pakistan was watching very closely the situation in Gaza for the last 18 months and it had opposed the forced migration of Palestinians in Gaza to Egypt and Jordan. He said he talked to the foreign ministers of different Muslim countries and it was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation would be held in Jeddah on March 7.

Briefs

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 938 points

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing, 938.23 points, a negative change of 0.82 percent, closing at 112,800.93 points as compared to 113,739.16 points on the last trading day. A total of 455,394,404 shares were traded during the day as compared to 787,438,742 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs21.524 billion against Rs33.097 billion on the last trading day. As many as 451 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 173 of them recorded gains and 219 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 59 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pak International Bulk with 35,412,456 shares at Rs.8.71 per share, K-Electric Limited with 24,737,842 shares at Rs.4.67 per share and Ghani Global Glass with 19,830,999 shares at Rs.9.15 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.48.71 per share closing at Rs.7,345.84 whereas runner-up was Supernet Technologies Limited with Rs.43.75 rise in its share price to close at Rs.839.36.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.215.00 per share price, closing at Rs.22,900.00, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs.147.67 decline in its per share price to Rs.9,394.33.

Gold price decreases by Rs.2,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.2,000 and was sold at Rs 307,000 on Friday against its sale at Rs 309,000 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,714 to Rs 263,203 from Rs 264,917 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat came down by Rs.1,571 to Rs 241,278 from Rs 242,849. The prices of per tola silver decreased by Rs.38 to Rs.3,430 whereas that of ten gram silver came down by Rs.33 to Rs.2,940. The price of gold in the international market also decreased by \$23 to \$2,930 from \$2,953 whereas the prices of silver in international market dipped by \$0.21 to \$32.94, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee sheds 11 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday depreciated by 11 paise against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs279.57 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.46.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.95 and Rs281.45, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.86 to close at Rs293.39 against the last day's closing of Rs291.53, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.85, whereas an increase of Rs2.21 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs354.20 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs351.99.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 and 04 paise to close at Rs76.11 and Rs74.55, respectively.—APP

Pak for strengthening UN observer mission to keep peace along LoC

"We have always fulfilled our commitments in the implementation of UNMOGIP's mandate," Shah, who is first secretary at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has underscored the need for strengthening the United Nations Observer Mission in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) so that it plays a "more effective" role in preserving peace and security along the Line of Control (LoC) in the disputed Kashmir region. "We believe UNMOGIP has been and continues to play an important role in the maintenance of peace and security along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions," Pakistani delegate Ansar Shah told the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, also known as C-34, which held its first meeting in the new year on Thursday. The committee institutionalizes the General Assembly's oversight on policy and execution of UN Peacekeeping Operations. UNMOGIP was deployed

in January 1949 to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. "We have always fulfilled our commitments in the implementation of UNMOGIP's mandate," Shah, who is first secretary at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said. While Pakistan allows UN observers to monitor the LoC, India does not. The Rawalpindi-based group, which Pakistan hosts, is composed of 44 military observers, supported 75 civilian staff (25 International Staff plus 49 National Staff). But even Pakistani delegate's innocuous UNMOGIP-related remarks drew a protest from an Indian military official. Colonel Tarunendra Pratap Singh, military advisor to the Indian Mission to the UN, called Pakistani delegate's remarks "unwarranted", saying they reflected Pakistan's "compulsive obsession"

with India. "We yet again emphasize that the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been, and will be an integral part of India," Col. Singh claimed. Ansar Shah sharply reacted to the Indian official's remarks, declaring that "Jammu and Kashmir is not, never has been, and will never be an 'integral' part of India. "It is a disputed territory, whose 'final disposition' is to be decided by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a UN supervised plebiscite, as demanded by numerous resolutions of the Security Council," the Pakistani delegate asserted, while exercising his right of reply. "No amount of fabrication and obfuscation can change the legal, political and historical reality," he added. Earlier, in his speech to the Committee, the Pakistani delegate said that peacekeeping was most effective as part of

the overall 'political strategy' to resolve conflicts and build peace, adding that this strategy should embrace the entire peace continuum — from conflict prevention to conflict resolution. "The safety and security of peacekeepers must be paramount," he said, while calling he recent attacks on MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and death of three UN peacekeepers, "unacceptable." "There should be greater accountability. Attacks on peacekeepers amount to war crimes." At the same time, Shah stressed that peacekeepers receive appropriate training and should be well equipped with adequate resources. The UN, he said, must promote and adapt peacekeeping specific technologies which respond to the current peacekeeping requirements, such as day and night

vision surveillance equipment, advanced IED (improvised explosive device) detection systems, explosive ordnance disposal, mine resistant and high mobility light tactical vehicles, telemedicine capabilities and state of the art medical evacuation facility. Shah also called for equitable geographic representation particularly of Troop Contributing Countries and Police Contributing Countries in leadership positions. Pakistan, he added, was committed to forging peacekeeping partnerships, especially with the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In conclusion, the Pakistani delegate said, he looked forward to engaging in this year's session constructively for producing clear, realistic and achievable recommendations for improving the UN peacekeeping.—Agencies

SBP injects Rs 1.75t in the market

DNA

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs 1,754 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) on Friday.

The SBP conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7-day and 28-day tenors on February 21, 2025 and accepted 15 bids amounting to Rs 1,449 billion. The central bank received 20 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs 1,621.6 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.05 to 12.08 percent while no bid was received for the 28-day tenor. The SBP accepted the total amount of Rs 1,449 billion offered through 15 quotes for 7-day tenor at 12.07% rate of return. Total amount offered at 12.07% was 754 billion, out of which SBP accepted 647.1 billion on pro-rata basis. Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 7-day and 28-day tenors and further injected Rs 305 billion into the market. The central bank received 7 bids for 7-day tenor quoting an amount of Rs 305 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.09 to 12.11% while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The SBP accepted the entire amount offered through all the 7 quotes for 7-day tenor at 12.09% rate of return.



AMMAN, Jordan: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Pakistani Ambassador to KSA Ahmad Farooq with others at Digital Prosperity Awards.

Focus on pharmaceutical sector can enhance exports: UBG

KARACHI: The United Business Group (UBG), Friday, emphasized the need to unlock the potential of Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector, which has the capacity to significantly contribute to the country's exports. The President UBG Zubair Tufail and other leaders Khalid Tawab, Hanif Gohar and Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir, in a statement issued here, stated that Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector can achieve export targets of \$5 billion in a few years, transforming the country's image globally. They suggested that to achieve this, the government should extend incentives to the pharma sector, ensure ease of doing business, and focus on increasing pharmaceutical exports through tariff rationalization, trade-related investment, and institutional reforms. The UBG leaders noted that the pharmaceutical sector's value was estimated at \$3.29 billion in 2023-24, with total exports standing at \$341 million while the sector contributes over 1% to Pakistan's GDP and saves around \$2 billion annually through import substitution. With a local market of 242 million consumers and over 700 pharmaceutical companies, Pakistan is well-positioned to capitalize on the global off-patent drugs market, projected to be worth \$700 billion in branded generics and \$381 billion in generics by 2026, they pointed out. The timing is right to focus on the pharmaceutical sector, given the government's desire to attain economic stability, they said and urged the government to take immediate measures to facilitate the growth of the pharmaceutical sector, which has the potential to drive economic growth and transform Pakistan's global image.—DNA

Myanmar returns 300 more Chinese scam center workers

BANGKOK: Myanmar handed over 300 Chinese scam center workers to be repatriated through Thailand on Friday, as authorities intensify a crackdown on the illegal operations. Thousands of foreigners are expected to be sent home from scam compounds in Myanmar over the coming weeks, with the first batch already flown out on Thursday. The compounds are run by criminal gangs and staffed by foreigners, many of whom say they were trafficked and forced to swindle people around the world in protracted internet scams. Myanmar's junta said in a statement that a second group of 300 Chinese nationals was handed over on Friday via the Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge 2 at the Thai border town of Mae Sot.—APP

China, Pakistan in for wheat improvement with molecular breeding

BEIJING: An agreement on China-Pakistan Joint Laboratory for Wheat Germplasm Innovation and Biological Breeding was recently reached among Hebei Agricultural University (HEBAU), COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), and the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB), marking a significant step in boosting the development of wheat seed industry and related sectors in the two countries. "Wheat plays a crucial strategic role in both China and Pakistan. Due to different geographical conditions, there is great genetic diversity in wheat germplasm resources between the two countries, exhibiting great potential for wheat variety improvement through germplasm exchange," said Prof. Liu Dongcheng, Dean, College of Agronomy, HEBAU in an interview with CEN.As Prof. Liu observed, China boasts advantages in basic research and molecular breeding while Pakistan has rich experience in soilless cultivation and tissue culture. Through cooperation, the cultivation level and efficiency of wheat varieties with high and low amylose content can be lifted. "Low amylose wheat varieties can notably improve the quality of Chapati, a representative Pakistani flour-based food, while high amylose wheat varieties can help diabetics and promote weight loss," he added. The two sides are jointly conducting research on "Rapid Improvement of Starch Quality in Wheat and Cultivation of New Wheat Varieties by Genomics". Several high-amylose wheat germplasm and local high-yielding and high-quality wheat germplasm materials rich in iron and zinc from Pakistan have been introduced to China. I learned that the joint laboratory will focus on molecular breeding research to improve the protein, starch, and nutritional qualities of Pakistani high-yielding wheat varieties, to cultivate new high and low-amylose wheat varieties for the two nations. Simultaneously, the cooperation between HEBAU and Pakistani institutions is expected to cover basic research, breeding application, cultivation techniques, and machinery production for crops including wheat, corn, and cotton, and industries of grain, oil, vegetable, fruit, and livestock in the future.—DNA

Trump cancels protection for 500,000 Haitian migrants

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration canceled on Thursday an extension of Temporary Protected Status that was granted to more than 500,000 Haitians by former president Joe Biden. The United States grants Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to foreign citizens who cannot safely return home because of war, natural disasters or other "extraordinary" conditions. It had been extended for Haitians by 18 months, to February 2026, by the Biden administration, but will now expire on August 3. "President Trump and I are returning TPS to its original status: temporary," Homeland Security chief Kristi Noem said in a department statement.—APP

France to deploy police at schools for spot bag searches

PARIS: French police will start random searches for knives and other weapons concealed in bags at and around schools in a bid to fight an increase in violent attacks, the education minister said Friday. The spot searches will begin in the spring, Elisabeth Borne told the BFMTV/RMC broadcaster. "I want us to be able to organize, together with the prefect, the prosecutor and the representative of the education system, regular bag searches at the entrance of schools," she said. These would be carried out by police, she said, as teachers and school staff are not authorized to search pupils.—APP

Iraqi brick workers risk health, life to keep families afloat

AL-KIFL, Iraq: As dawn broke over central Iraq, teenage sisters Dalia and Rukaya Ghali were loading heavy bricks, forced out of school and into a hazardous job to support their family. Covered in dirt, the sisters toiled for hours at the oil-fired brickworks near Al-Kifl city south of Baghdad, earning just enough to keep their younger siblings at school. "I'm very tired, but what can we do?" said 17-year-old Dalia, left with little choice but to work since she was 10, like about one in every 20 Iraqi children according to UN figures. Her face concealed up to just below her eyes to protect her from the dirt and smoke that hung heavily in the air, Dalia said that if she and her 16-year-old sister had not been working, "our family wouldn't have been able to survive." Babil province, where the Ghali family live, is Iraq's second poorest, according to the authorities. Nationwide, nearly 17 percent of the oil-rich country's 45 million people live in poverty.

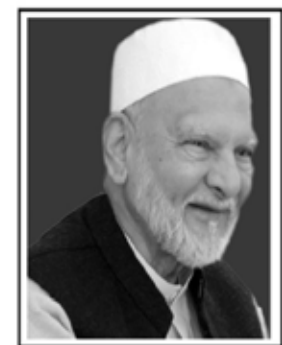


Economic hardship has pushed 5 percent of Iraq's children into labor, a UN study found in 2018, often in harsh conditions and at a risk to their health. Dalia uses the \$80 a week she earns to cover tuition for two of her siblings, so they can escape a fate similar to hers even though the family needs the money. Her uncle Atiya Ghali, 43, has been working at brick factories since he was 12. Despite the hard labor and the low

pay, he said he was willing to work his "entire life" at the factory, where he now supervises dozens of laborers, as he has no other source of income. Brickworks run on heavy fuel oil, producing high level of sulfur, a pollutant that causes respiratory illness. The factories produce dust that also harms workers' lungs, with many suffering from rashes and constant coughing. Authorities have asked brickworks to phase

out their use of heavy oil, and closed 111 factories in the Baghdad area last year "due to emissions" that breach environmental standards. Adding to the polluted air that they breathe, laborers face the ever-present threat of work-related injury. Sabah Mahdi, 33, said he is anxious when he goes to work every morning. "Some have been injured and others have died" at the factory, he said.—APP

CONDOLENCE



APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Khawaja Shamsuddin Azeemi

Founder Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Monthly Roohani Digest

father of

Dr. Waqar Yousuf Azeemi

Chief Editor Monthly Roohani Digest.

May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace

and grant courage to the family to bear the loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

Peaceful protest basic right of citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, on Friday said peaceful protest was a fundamental right of every citizen but it must take place within the parameters set by the law. In response to concerns raised by Senator Sherry Rehman, the minister reaffirmed that peaceful protest was a core right but must adhere to the legal frameworks that clearly define acceptable guidelines and limitations. Tarar expressed his concerns about the disruptions caused by protesters at the Pakistan Secretariat, a crucial institution that serves citizens from all regions of the country, including the remote areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Punjab. He stressed that such disturbances impede the delivery of public services and stated that the Secretariat should not be held hostage by these actions. The minister also mentioned that the prime minister had instructed that proper engagement be undertaken with the protesters to address their concerns and find resolutions. The finance minister was actively involved in negotiations with the protesting employees, and the government was committed to meeting their legitimate demands. Tarar further noted that the Prime Minister has assured that any employees offered early retirement or placed in the surplus pool will have their rights fully protected.

EU to suspend Syria sanctions

BRUSSELS: The European Union will suspend sanctions on Syria's banking, energy and transport sectors Monday, diplomats said, in a bid to help the country's reconstruction after the ouster of Bashar Assad. Syria's new leaders have been clamouring for the West to ease sanctions on the country imposed to target Assad's regime during the civil war. But Europe and other powers have been reluctant to move before clear signals from the new Islamist-led rulers in Damascus that they are serious on having an inclusive transition. The step due to be greenlit at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels is a formal move after the bloc struck a preliminary accord last month to suspend sanctions in key areas. Diplomats talking on Friday said the sanctions could be reimposed if Syria's new leaders break promises to respect the rights of minorities and move toward democracy. The United Nations said on Thursday that at current growth rates, Syria would need more than 50 years to get back to its economic level before the outbreak of its devastating civil war. - Agencies

PTI leaders seek meeting with Imran

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership has moved Islamabad High Court (IHC), seeking permission to meet Imran Khan. As per details, a joint petition was filed by PTI leaders Junaid Akbar, Sher Ali Arbab, Rauf Hassan, and Amjad Ali through their lawyer, Ayesha Khalid. The petition stated that the PTI leaders were denied permission to meet the party founder the previous day. The petitioners have requested the court to grant them permission to meet the party founder, citing the importance of this meeting for the party's affairs. Yesterday, Islamabad High Court ordered to release over 120 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers in November 26 protest case. As per details, Interim Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court Justice Sarfaraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Asif approved the bail pleas of PTI workers.

Bilawal announces Oxford's scholarships for Sindh students

The announcement came after a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed in London



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Sindh, in collaboration with the Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP), has announced two prestigious scholarships named after Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. These scholarships will be part of OPP's annual graduate scholarship program and will support highly talented students from Sindh in pursuing graduate studies at the University of Oxford. Historically, access to institutions like Oxford has been largely limited

to privileged students, leaving behind talented individuals from underprivileged areas. OPP is committed to breaking this barrier to ensure that world-class educational opportunities are not restricted to a specific class. Last year, OPP awarded scholarships to two students from Sindh and one from Balochistan, taking a step towards bridging this educational gap. To further this objective, OPP is working with various government institutions to establish sustainable educational pathways for students from underprivileged areas, ensuring that educational opportunities are determined by merit rather than background. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal

Bhutto Zardari, and Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, announced these two prestigious scholarships during their official visit to the University of Oxford. Chairman Bilawal was invited to a luncheon by the Principal of Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Professor Stephen Blyth. During this event, he was briefed on the vision and initiatives of the Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP) and discussed the fundamental support provided by Lady Margaret Hall to OPP. The luncheon was also attended by Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's sister, Mohtarma Sanam Bhutto, renowned author, historian, and LMH alumna, Victoria Schofield, along with senior delegations from the Governments of Sindh and Balochistan. Both Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto studied at the University of Oxford. These scholarships pay tribute to their legacy and offer young individuals from Sindh the opportunity to pursue world-class education and bring positive change to their communities. Speaking on this occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stated: "OPP is creating opportunities for Pakistanis, especially talented students from underprivileged backgrounds. I want to thank the Governments of Sindh and Balochistan for launching scholarship programs in collaboration with OPP for students from their provinces." The Oxford Pakistan Programme is led by a team of Oxford University academics and alumni, including Professor Adeel Malik (University of Oxford), Dr. Talha J. Pirzada (Lecturer in Material Science), Haris Zaman (corporate lawyer in London), and former Oxford student Manahil Saqib. OPP supports students and researchers of Pakistani origin through scholarships, hardship funds, the annual Iqbal Lecture, and the Graduate Access Programme. On this occasion, Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, said: "These scholarships will provide students from Sindh the opportunity to study at one of the world's best universities. Not only will these students benefit from this opportunity, but Sindh as a whole will also gain when these scholars return to their communities with knowledge and skills to drive progress."

Aafia-Afridi swap proposal not workable, IHC told

IHC Judge Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard a petition seeking Aafia Siddiqui's release from US prison

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The federal government informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday that the proposal to exchange Dr Aafia Siddiqui for Shakeel Afridi is not implementable. IHC Judge Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard a petition seeking Dr Aafia Siddiqui's release from the US prison. During the hearing, Additional Attorney General Manzoor Iqbal Dogar argued that the proposal to hand over Afridi in exchange for Siddiqui's release was not feasible. The proposal was originally suggested by Dr Siddiqui's counsel, Clive Smith, as part of efforts to secure her release. He also raised concerns regarding issues in a draft petition filed in a US court concerning Aafia Siddiqui's case. Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan expressed surprise at the government's stance, which appeared to retract support for Siddiqui's petition for release in the US court.

Hamas names 6 captives set for release, raps Netanyahu's threat

The exchange comes as the Israeli military claimed earlier that one of the four bodies handed over on Thursday by Hamas as part of an ongoing exchange process between the two sides, "is not" that of Zionist captive Shiri Bibas

NEWS DESK

DOHA: Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has announced the names of six Israeli captives, who are set to be released on Saturday as part of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement. In a statement on Friday, the group said Eliya Cohen, Omer Shem-Tov, Omer Wenkert, Tal Shoham, Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed will be released. More than 600 Palestinian prisoners are also set to be released in return for the Israeli captives as part of the exchange procedure. Announcing the pending development, the Information Office of Palestinian Prisoners said the release would mark the seventh phase of the first round of the exchange process. Among the Palestinian prisoners set for release, 50 have been serving life sentences, while 60 were sentenced to long-term imprisonment. Additionally, 47 of the detainees were previously released under the 2011 "Wafa al-Ahrar" exchange deal - which

featured release of Israeli trooper Gilad Shalit - but were later re-arrested by Israeli forces. As many as 445 of the Palestinian prisoners are residents of the Gaza Strip, who were detained following the launch of the Israeli genocidal war. The exchange comes as the Israeli military claimed earlier that one of the four bodies handed over on Thursday by Hamas as part of an ongoing exchange process between the two sides, "is not" that of Zionist captive Shiri Bibas. The military made the allegations on Friday, a day after the Gaza Strip-based resistance movement handed over the four bodies to the regime. It claimed that the remains ascribed to Shiri were "anonymous" and demanded that the group return, what it called, "the correct body." In response, Hamas issued a statement, rejecting the claims and denouncing related threats made by the regime's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as PR stunt. The movement asserted its commitment to the terms of the exchange agreement and emphasized that it had no interest in withholding any bodies.

US envoy meets President Zelenskiy

KIEV: U.S. President Donald Trump's envoy for the conflict in Ukraine met President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Kyiv on Thursday but there was no immediate word on whether their talks had helped smooth over an unprecedented wartime rift between the once firm allies. Zelenskiy had earlier struck a conciliatory tone after accusing Trump of repeating Russian disinformation in response to the U.S. president's accusation that Ukraine had started the three-year-old war with Russia. Trump went on to refer to Zelenskiy as a "dictator" who should act fast or lose Ukraine. Trump, in office for just a month, is pushing for a quick deal to end the war and has alarmed Washington's European allies by leaving them and Ukraine out of initial talks with Russia. - Agencies

Pakistan-Turkiye coop can be model for Muslim nations

Expressing his views, the Turkish ambassador said that Turkiye and Pakistan could make great progress by utilising each other's resources

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Irfan Naziroglu has said that mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Turkiye can be an example for other Muslim countries. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting during his visit to Punjab University, here on Friday. PU VC Prof Dr Muhammad Ali welcomed the delegation. Turkish Consul General Durmus Bastug, PU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood, Director External Linkages Yamina Salman, Registrar Dr Ahmad Islam and officers of the Turkish Consulate were also present. Expressing his views, the Turkish ambassador said that Turkiye and Pakistan could make great progress by utilising each other's resources. He said that they were working on an academic roadmap between Pakistan and Turkiye. The ambassador said, "We need to further strengthen our relations with each other." He said that he wanted to promote joint research in the universities of

Turkiye and Pakistan. The Turkish ambassador said that Turkiye and Pakistan were also cooperating in defence sector, and added that the two countries would also promote cooperation in the fields of science and culture. The ambassador said that he wanted to work together in the fields of engineering and medicine and also wanted to start a dual degree programme in the universities of both countries. Irfan Naziroglu said that the universities of both the countries would also organise an education fair. He wished that the MoUs between the universities of both countries be functional. PU VC Prof Dr Muhammad Ali said that relations between Muslim countries could be further strengthened through the OIC platform. He said that Turkiye and Pakistan think alike and any Pakistani feels at home when he visits Turkiye. The VC said, "We will play our role in promoting relations with Turkiye." He said that there is a need to institutionalise Pak-Turkish joint research. Dr Muhammad Ali also appreciated TIKA's projects in Pakistani universities.



ISLAMABAD: Justice Yahya Afridi, Chief Justice of Pakistan in a group photo with the opposition leadership at Chief Justice House. - DNA

Mustafa murder: Exhumed body shifted to morgue

Procedure conducted under heavy police presence, with a medical team on-site to oversee the process.

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Local authorities have exhumed the body of Mustafa Amir and transferred it to a morgue for further investigation. The exhumation took place at the Edhi cemetery in Moach Goth area of Karachi. The procedure was conducted under heavy police presence, with a medical team on-site to oversee the process. Police Surgeon Dr. Samiya Syed and Amir Hassan, head of the CPLC Identification Project, were present at the site. They initially examined the grave before the medical team took samples from the body for further analysis. The body of Mustafa Amir had been handed over to the Edhi Foundation by the Daryaji police on February 12. Four days later, on February 16, the body was declared unclaimed and buried at the Moach Goth Edhi cemetery. The next step will involve a post-mortem examination to determine the cause of death. DNA samples will also be collected to confirm the identity of the victim. Sources revealed that 7 to 11 samples were taken from the body and will be sent to the forensic laboratory at Karachi University. The results of the DNA test are expected to be available in

3 to 4 days, after which the body will be returned to Mustafa Amir's family. The Sindh High Court had earlier approved the exhumation of Mustafa Amir's body. The judicial magistrate granted the request submitted by police, ordering the formation of a medical board to conduct a post-mortem and collect DNA samples. In related news, two suspects, Armaghan and Shiraz, accused in the murder of Mustafa Amir, are set to be presented for remand at Anti-Terrorism Court No. 3 tomorrow. Prosecutor General Sindh, Muntazir Mehdi, confirmed that the remand application had been submitted to the court. Armaghan had previously been granted a 4-day remand in Court No. 2, while Shiraz had been granted a remand in Court No. 1. The authority to remand Shiraz has now been transferred to Court No. 2. SSP of Hub has ordered a thorough investigation into the incident. SDPO Winder, Muhammad Jan, has been instructed to gather additional evidence and explore all leads. Investigators are also looking into why the police were notified late about the burning vehicle. Authorities suspect that the suspects were familiar with the Daryaji area and are working to determine the route they took to reach the remote location.

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