



Islamabad POST

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“No excuses”: Pakistan failed to perform, says Aqib on CT-2025 debacle

Detailed News On Page-06

Vietnam eyes stronger trade ties with Pak

Detailed News On Page-07

Minister defends Pakistan's human rights record

Detailed News On Page-06

PM 'historic' Uzbekistan visit

Pak committed to Trans Afghan Railway project

He said both the countries have agreed in principle that NLC will join hands with the Uzbek counterpart to make a joint company to transport goods and services

DNA

TASHKENT: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed Pakistan's commitment to Trans Afghan railway project, emphasizing that this game changer project will transform trade in the entire region. Addressing the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business forum in Tashkent on Wednesday, he said both the countries will be taking steps to achieve and materialize this project. The prime minister said Karachi and Gwadar ports will be the hub of economic activities. He pointed out that NLC is already transporting goods to Central Asian Countries via Afghanistan. He said both the countries have agreed in principle that NLC will join hands with the Uzbek counterpart to make a joint company to transport goods and services.

Highlighting the vast scope of cooperation between the two countries in different areas, the prime minister said Uzbekistan has shown great interest in promoting Pakistan's mine and mineral sector. He noted that the expertise of Uzbekistan in the shape of joint ventures will be a great support to promote this sector. He said we can also join hands in other sectors such as Information Technology, agriculture, textile, tourism and others. The prime minister said that this business forum will go a long way in advancing our goals and aspirations and convert our shared dreams into reality. In his remarks on the occasion, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev said Pakistan and Uzbekistan are not competitors but they complement each other's economies. He said there are lot of opportunities for partnership and cooperation in different sectors. The Uzbek President assured full support and facilitation to Pakistani businessmen who are interested in investment in Uzbekistan.

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Uzbekistan vow boosting trade to \$4bn

PM Shehbaz says Afghan soil must not be allowed to be used by militant groups to attack any other country

DNA

TASHKENT: Pakistan and Uzbekistan have agreed to enhance the trade volume to four billion dollars in the next four years. The understanding came at a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in Tashkent on Wednesday, which was followed by delegation-level talks between the two countries. During the meeting, they discussed further promotion of mutual cooperation between the two countries, especially trade, tourism, energy, regional ties and cultural ties. The two leaders agreed to effectively implement the Transit Trade Agreement 2021, the Preferential Trade Agreement 2023, invest in the Special Economic Zones of the two countries and promote cooperation between the business communities of Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Continued on Page 06



TASHKENT: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev displayed a rare gesture of brotherhood as they held hands during a joint press stakeout. — DNA

Torkham border remains shut

Border closure causes \$12 million trade loss, leaves thousands stranded on both sides

SHAMIM SHAHID

LANDIKOTAL: The Torkham border crossing remained closed for the fifth consecutive day on Wednesday, suspending all trade and travel between Pakistan and Afghanistan, officials confirmed. The closure, triggered by tensions over construction in disputed areas, has severely impacted cross-border movement. According to customs officials, the halt in trade over the past four days has resulted in an estimated loss of \$12 million. The immigration authorities further revealed that nearly 10,000 people cross the Torkham border daily, with the closure leaving thousands stranded on both sides.

Continued on Page 06

Against 'undemocratic forces' Opposition's grand alliance moot kicks off in Islamabad

Country at a crossroads where it has become impossible to move forward, says opposition

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: With a focus on the supremacy of the Constitution, the opposition's two-day Grand Alliance Conference commenced in Islamabad on Wednesday. The development comes after opposition leaders announced going ahead with the event following an emergency huddle at Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) Mahmood Khan Achakzai's residence. The meeting was attended by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Awam Pakistan's Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen's (MWM) Nasir Shirazi and others. "We will hold these illegitimate rulers accountable in every street. We do not accept this illegitimate assembly," said Achakzai while expressing a lack of trust in the legislature. The convergence of

Continued on Page 06

Mustafa Kamal, others expected to join cabinet

Sources say expansion of federal cabinet has been finalised, with oath-taking ceremony set for Feb 27

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet is set for expansion, with the inclusion of around 15 new ministers and advisers, insiders have revealed. Mutahida Quami Movement-Pakistan's (MQM-P) Mustafa Kamal is among the four names considered for ministries. Others expected to join the cabinet include Hanif Abbasi and Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry from the Pakistan Muslim

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Afghans outclass England

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The valiant Afghanistan cricket team completely outclassed the English team and defeated them by 8 runs in a real thriller. Afghanistan opener Ibrahim Zadran led his side to set a massive 326-run target with an individual score of 177 against England. Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi's decision to bat first paid dividends as his batting unit yielded 325/7 in their allotted 50 overs. The Asian side, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as Jofra Archer dismantled their top order with three quick wickets to leave them reeling at 37/3 in 8.5 overs. Shahidi then joined Ibrahim in the middle and launched an astounding recovery with an anchoring 103-run partnership for the fourth wicket. Crucial stand culminated in the 30th over when Adil Rashid cleaned up the Afghanistan captain, who scored a cautious 40 off 67 deliveries featuring three boundaries.

Pak, France to expand agri coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and France have agreed to expand the cooperation in agriculture sector. This came at a meeting between Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain and French ambassador Nicolas Galey in Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that agriculture trade volume between Pakistan and France has reached 39 million dollars.

Champions Trophy

Pakistan vs Bangladesh
02:30 pm PST

Back Peca act amendment

Bilawal opposes use of institutions for revenge

Says democracy is under strain across the world

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Wednesday the state institution should not be used for political revenge. Addressing the Oxford Union, he said Pakistan was facing various challenges and lamented that democracy was also not strengthened in the country. He highlighted that democracy was also under strain across the world. He said the PPP strongly believed in democracy, and the party played a key role in the Charter of Democracy. Bilawal said his party supported the national politics whenever it was needed. He noted that in the past, the PPP was targeted in the name of accountability. When Asif Zardari was elected as president for the first time, there were no political prisoners, he recalled, adding that his aunt was arrested during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He said Shehbaz Sharif and other political leaders were also arrested when the PTI was in power. He emphasised that PPP did not support targeting anyone politically. The party believes in negotiations to

Continued on Page 06

Govt plans to shut more depts to cut expenses

Fin Min says govt taking steps to reduce human intervention in FBR to enhance tax collection

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that the government plans to shut down more departments as part of an International Monetary Fund-driven "rightsizing" exercise aimed at reducing state expenditure. "Efforts are being made to reduce state expenditure...we are shutting down more departments and attached departments," the finance czar said while addressing the business community in Peshawar. The federal government has formulated a rightsizing programme

Continued on Page 06

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince to visit today

Sheikh Khaled will be conferred with Pakistan's highest civilian award

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is set to visit Islamabad for a one-day tour, diplomatic sources said. During his visit, Sheikh Khaled will be conferred with Pakistan's highest civilian award, the Nishan-e-Pakistan, at a special ceremony. According to sources, the Crown Prince is also expected to sign a Memorandum of

Continued on Page 06

All five judges rejected civilians' mily trial: SC judge

Justice Mazhar remarked that the judges did not write additional notes

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail on Wednesday remarked that all five judges were unanimous that civilians cannot be tried in a military court. Justice Mandokhail gave these remarks while hearing the intra-court appeal against the trial of civilians in military courts in the Supreme Court. He is part of a seven-member constitutional bench which is hearing appeal. Other members of the bench are: Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. At the outset of the proceedings, Advocate Faisal Siddiqui argued that there are not one but three decisions by the five-member bench against military courts. Justices Ayesha Malik, Muneeb Akhtar, and Yahya Afridi wrote their decisions, and all the judges agreed with each other's observations. If the judges' decisions are similar but the reasons are different, all the reasons are considered part of the decision, he added. Justice Mazhar remarked that the judges did not write additional notes. Justice Mandokhail remarked that all five judges were unanimous that civilians cannot be tried in a military court. Advocate Siddiqui said that Aziz Bhindari took the stance that the jurisdiction of

Continued on Page 06

Bhoon elected as JCP member

The decision was made during a meeting held at the Supreme Court in Islamabad

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council has approved the appointment of senior lawyer Ahsan Bhoon as a member of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) for a two-year term. The decision was made during a meeting held at the Supreme Court in Islamabad, chaired by Pakistan Bar Council Chairman Mansoor Usman Awan. The meeting was attended by central and provincial members of the council. Bhoon was elected with a majority vote, securing 14 votes in favour, while four members opposed his appointment. One member abstained from voting. Bhoon will represent the Pakistan Bar Council in the commission, which plays a crucial role in judicial appointments across the country. Previously, senior Supreme Court

Continued on Page 06

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NDU, NUST win ICT round of varsity debating contest

ISLAMABAD: National Defence University (NDU) Islamabad and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad have respectively won the Urdu and English debate contests in the ICT Regional Round of Pakistan University Debating Championship 2024-25. The Championship was held on Wednesday at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Secretariat. The winners of the Debating Championship were awarded trophies and cash prizes. The first position holders in both Urdu and English won cash prizes of Rs. 100,000 each, while the second and third position holders respectively received Rs. 80,000 and Rs. 60,000. In the Debating Championship, University of Baluchistan, Skardu clinched second position in the Urdu debate, followed by University of Poonch, Rawalkot which secured third position. Similarly, Air University, Islamabad clinched the second position in the English debate, while Capital University of Sciences & Technology won the third position. Addressing the participants, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed congratulated the winning teams. He also congratulated the HEC team and university representatives in making this event a success.—APP

Mohtasib to hear complaints at Hazro

ISLAMABAD: A Wafaqi Mohtasib's team comprising Advisor, Mr Haroon Sikandar Pasha and Consultant, Mr Khalid Sial held a Khuli Katcheri at Hazro, district Attock under the directions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, wherein they have heard complaints against the Federal Government agencies and passed on the spot instructions to the government officials for their speedy redressal. They have managed to redress a large number of complaints and provided relief to the people. A large number of people turned up at the Khuli Katcheri to air their grievances against Federal Government agencies like Sui Gas, Electricity, NADRA, BISP, NHA, Cantonment Board State Life Insurance, Pakistan Post etc. A majority of complaints was related to excessive Sui Gas and Electricity billing in addition to irregularities being faced by BISP beneficiaries and delay in issuance of CNIC. The Wafaqi Mohtasib officials asked the officers concerned to initiate prompt action for their redressal. Some complainants informed the team that their electricity bills are not being rationalized in accordance with the actual use, whereas many complainants have been found to be facing delays in installation of electricity and gas connections despite submission of demand notes. Following the Khuli Katcheri, the Wafaqi Mohtasib officials also met tehsil administration and instructed them to make efforts for early redressal of public complaints. Khuli Katcheri was attended by the officials belonging to federal agencies in addition to the Assistant Commissioner Hazro, District Administration officials and the media.—APP

Seminar 'Air Doctrine: applicability in Next-Generation Warfare for PAF'

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Air Doctrine: Applicability in Next-Generation Warfare for PAF" on 25 Feb 2025. The seminar explored emerging technologies, strategic alignments, and doctrinal shifts essential for the PAF's effectiveness in the evolving security landscape of South Asia. Dr Air Commodore Naveed Khaliq Ansaree (Retd), Director at CASS, delivered the introductory remarks, emphasising the immense significance of the subject. Firstly, it is at the forefront of modern military strategies, and secondly, it directly impacts the future operational readiness of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

Dr Adil Sultan, Dean FASS, Air University Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Impact of Emerging Technologies on Next-Generation Warfare," covering areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, cyberspace, space systems, and AI-integrated drones. He also cautioned that the commercialisation of space may create potential concerns for ensuring security in future conflicts. Air Marshal Abdul Moed Khan (Retd), Vice Chancellor of Air University Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Airpower Doctrine and Development Strategy for the PAF." He stated that some aspects considered in PAF doctrine and development strategy include niche and disruptive technologies to offset numerical disadvantages; information su-



periority to dominate the OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act) loop; agile combat employment to shorten the kill chain; centralised command, distributed control, and decentralised execution; multi-domain and parallel operations; force projection through low-cost, high-impact autonomous systems; exploitation of the EM spectrum; and indigenisation and self-reliance by supporting and expanding the national hi-tech industrial base. Air Vice Marshal Nasser ul Haq Wynne, Director Aerospace & Warfare, CASS Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Doctrinal Shift in Aerial Warfare in South Asia." He highlighted a scenario of the Grey Zone conflict, where India is pursuing a strategy of "No War, No Peace," blending kinetic and

non-kinetic tools without triggering full-scale war. He stated that the major shift was the transformation of airpower into a supporting role. He noted that some of the PAF's key adaptations included hybrid warfare integration, integrating cyber and EW capabilities as part of a broader MDO, investment in unmanned systems, and forming strategic partnerships. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, highlighted the PAF's commitment to evolving its air doctrine to counter emerging threats. He stated that the PAF is focused on deterrence, precision engagement, and operational flexibility to ensure strategic readiness. Emphasising rapid modern-

isation, he outlined advancements in radar manufacturing, BVR capabilities, electronic warfare, and multi-domain capabilities that have strengthened the PAF's edge. He stressed that future warfare will revolve around artificial intelligence (AI), cyber resilience, and space-based surveillance. Under Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu's dynamic leadership, the PAF remains dedicated to maintaining air superiority through cutting-edge technologies, world-class training, and initiatives like NASTP, which drive innovation. Crediting this modernisation, he stated that the PAF currently holds an edge over the IAF for at least six to seven years by virtue of its first-shot capability, planned induction of

fifth-generation aircraft, force multipliers, and the introduction of multi-domain forces. This advantage will only be reduced if the IAF successfully inducts the F-35 into its fleet and matches the PAF in force multipliers and multi-domain advancements. However, if the IAF fails to keep pace with the PAF, it will remain at least a decade behind. The interactive session sparked valuable discussions. Speakers emphasised the need for synergy among the three services to undertake multi-domain operations. They also emphasised that the PAF must enhance its capacity and capability to project power in the Indian Ocean Region and to be recognised as a potent force.

CDA's commercial plot auction sees overwhelming response

ISLAMABAD: The auction of commercial plots organized by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has received an overwhelming response from investors. On the first day of the auction, seven plots were sold for approximately Rs. 15.694 billion. A large number of investors participated in the auction, resulting in a highly competitive bidding process. Chairman of CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, was also present at the Jinnah Convention Center to oversee the auction proceedings. According to details, on the first day of the auction, Plot No. B-1 in the I-8 Markaz was sold for Rs. 3.34 billion. Similarly, Plot No. 4-B in G-8 Markaz was auctioned for Rs. 78.99 crore, and Plot No. 4-C in G-8 markaz was sold for Rs. 69.99 crore. Similarly, Plot No. 10 in G-9 Markaz was auctioned for Rs. 1.071 billion. Commercial Plot No. 11 of Blue Area G-8 was sold for Rs. 3.466 billion, and Plot No. 12 of Blue Area G-8 was auctioned for Rs. 4.199 billion. Furthermore, Plot No. 13-X in the F-7 Markaz was sold for Rs. 2.12 billion. In total, seven plots were auctioned on the first day, generating Rs. 15.69 billion. Addressing the investors, Chairman CDA stated that CDA has been transformed into vibrant and functional body, and the massive participation of investors in the auction reflects their confidence in CDA's policies and initiatives.—DNA

Sustainable investments must for social enterprise

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday said that the future of country's social enterprise ecosystem lies in sustainable investments for long-term change and innovation. He was addressing the first international summit on building a thriving social enterprise ecosystem in Pakistan, organized by Social Innovation Academy. He said that inaugural international summit marks a historic milestone. "We have welcomed esteemed investors from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Thailand." He said that this unprecedented gathering bridges the gap between investors and the social enterprise

ecosystem, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and opportunities. Rana Mashood said that this is a very first international summit where all the investors from kingdom of Saudi Arabia and kingdom of Thailand have joined us and it's that kind which is connecting the bridge between the investors and social surprises ecosystem. He said the partnership between the Social Innovation Academy and the Prime Minister's Youth Program has been instrumental in shaping this conference into a vibrant platform. By bringing together academia, ecosystem, partners, stakeholders, investors, and policymakers under one roof, the conference

fosters a unique environment for collaboration, innovation, and social impact, he said. He said Pakistan has taken a significant step towards empowering its youth by actively involving them in the country's policy-making process, adding that this strategic move not only shapes the social entrepreneurship culture in Pakistan but also ensures that the country's future leaders are well-equipped to drive positive change. He highlighted that Pakistan is at a pivotal stage, now ready to receive investment in social impact projects, signaling a significant shift in the country's approach to solving social problems.—DNA

ED PIMS lauds hospital staff performance

ISLAMABAD: Executive Director, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Professor Dr. Imran Sikandar on Wednesday said that hospital staff was fully capable of performing their duties in any situation. He was addressing at the ceremony held in honour of doctors and nursing staff performed their duties during the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization' 2024 summit in the federal capital. He appreciated the performance of the team formed under the leadership of PIMS Deputy Director OPD Dr. Naveed Ahmed Sheikh. Professor Dr. Imran Sikandar said that the doctors and other staff of PIMS hospital fully contributed to the national cause by ensuring best medical coverage during the summit.—APP

26.2m kids in Pakistan are out of school

SUKKUR: Pakistan Arts Council Karachi, on the second day of the Pakistan Literature Festival 2025 Sukkur Chapter II on Wednesday, the first session on "School Education in Sindh" held at the Sukkur IBA University auditorium. The session featured speakers Sadiqa Salahuddin, Hafeeza Bano, Noor Hussain, and Hassan Ali Shah, while Fatima Dayo moderated the discussion. Sadiqa Salahuddin said that many schools were destroyed due to floods, and we kept waiting for the government or donors to help financially. A good infrastructure is very important for education, but we have developed a habit of relying on international aid. She added that in many areas, sending girls to school is not considered safe because there are no female teachers. To

reduce the education gap between boys and girls, it is very important to have both male and female teachers. Instead of focusing on building new institutions we must strengthen the existing ones. Lack of budget is a major reason for educational problems. Hafeeza Bano said that education has always faced challenges, but now Sindh government is addressing these challenges which is a great step. Our teachers are not properly trained. Instead of just making children read books, we need to clarify their concepts. Noor Hussain said that educational institutions must cooperate with each other. "A house where decisions are made outside cannot progress," the same applies to schools. He added that schools must develop the ability to build their own curriculum. Schools

should be independent to make decisions. If community leaders enroll their children in the schools they are building instead of sending them to private schools, it can improve the education system. Hassan Ali Shah said that the biggest problem in education is that we look at things from the top to bottom instead of bottom to top. 26.2 million children in Pakistan are out of school. If a school enrolls 80 children, barely 30 continue attending. He further said that our school system has become a "transit camp," where teachers come only with the mindset of spending some time and then moving somewhere else. He added that technology is very important to improve schools. If we use technology properly in education, we can strengthen the education system.—APP

Secretary Defence inaugurates Saddar uplift work

RAWALPINDI: Secretary Defence, Lt Gen (R) Muhammad Ali, HI(M) inaugurated the Underground Electrification & Uplifting of Saddar (Including Pedestrian Bank Road) Rawalpindi, in the presence of high-ranking officials and dignitaries. The ceremony was attended by Lt Gen Shahid Imtiaz, HI(M), Commander X Corps, Major General Irfan Ahmed Malik, HI(M), DG ML&C, Mr. Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Chief Secretary of Punjab, and other notable figures. The project, which was completed in a record time of one year at a cost of Rs. 1.25 billion, introduces numerous upgrades to the Saddar area. These include underground electrification, renovation of roads, standardization of shop boards, improved pedestrian pathways, modern street lighting, the addition of benches, executive washrooms, and shuttle services. This initiative is expected to enhance the area's infrastructure, support economic growth, and improve the quality of life for both residents and visitors. The Chief Secretary of Punjab, Zahid Akhtar Zaman, commended the speed and quality of the work, acknowledging the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board's efforts in completing the project efficiently and within the scheduled timeframe. He further praised the impact of such initiatives on urban development, stating that similar projects will be launched in other cantonments and cities across Punjab to replicate the success witnessed in Saddar, Rawalpindi. Lt Gen (R) Muhammad Ali, HI(M) also expressed his appreciation for the Military Lands & Cantonments Department for undertaking such state-of-the-art project within the heart of Rawalpindi Cantonment. All participants praised Rawalpindi Cantonment Board's commitment to excellence and emphasized the significance of such development projects in raising the living standards of communities. They underscored the importance of collaborative efforts between the government, local authorities, and residents in ensuring the success of urban development initiatives. The successful execution of this transformative project was made possible by the dedicated efforts of several key individuals from the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board. Brig Ahmed Nawaz, Station Commander Rawalpindi, along with Syed Ali Irfan Rizvi CEO RCB, Haider Shujah Addl CEO, Naveed Nawaz Naul Addl CEO, Arshad Khan Addl CEO, and Nasir Kamal Dy CEO, played pivotal roles in overseeing and facilitating the project on the ground. Their meticulous planning, coordination, and leadership ensured that the project was completed efficiently and to the highest standards. Their collective dedication and hard work reflect the commitment of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board to improving the quality of life for the community and fostering sustainable urban development. The completion of this project serves as a testament to the combined efforts of different government authorities. It is a reflection of the shared vision to create better living environments and promote sustainable growth in Pakistan.—DNA

NTDC achieves significant milestone

New control room, SCADA system inaugurated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Transmission & Despatch Company (NTDC) has successfully achieved a milestone in the SCADA-III project with partial activation of the new Control Room and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system becoming partially live, installed at the National Power Control Centre (NPCC), Islamabad. The system was inaugurated by the Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Muhammad Waseem Younas and senior NTDC officers, today. Earlier, Chief Engineer SCADA-III, Engr. Sumair Memon briefed the management about the project. It was appraised

that 75% progress has been achieved so far and the remaining will be completed during the current year. The project reached to the milestone on February 20, 2025, with partial Go-Live of new SCADA system at NPCC Islamabad. This state-of-the-art SCADA system has the first 65 of 166 stations live, with the remaining stations to be integrated in the coming months as new communication links become available. During the inauguration ceremony, Engr. Muhammad Waseem Younas said that this is a happy moment for all of us. Extending NTDC management's heartfelt congratulations to all the teams involved in implementation of SCA-

DA-III project, He said that SCADA-III project will bring numerous benefits to NTDC and the national grid. He said that the advanced SCADA system provides real-time monitoring and control of grid stations, enhancing the reliability and efficiency of the power transmission network. This ensures prompt detection and resolution of faults in transmission network, minimizing downtime and improving overall grid performance. He emphasized the project team to complete the remaining works within the timelines and said that the issues being faced by the project team will be resolved soon and the management will support the team in all aspects.

In addition to SCADA deployment, the project includes the implementation of an Energy Management System (EMS) and Generation Management System (GMS). These systems enable optimized energy distribution and generation management, leading to more efficient use of resources and reduced operational costs. The project also includes the installation of 3,600 km of Optical Ground Wire (OPGW), of which, installation of 3300 kms has been completed, deployment of telecom equipment such as SDH, DPLC and PABX, and the establishment of a microwave backup communication link between NPCC and the Backup Control Center (BCC). These enhancements, scheduled to be completed during

2025, will ensure robust communication and data transmission across the network. Deputy Managing Director (P&E), Engr. Qaiser Khan, Deputy Managing Director (AD&M) Engr. Rasheed A. Bhutto, General Manager (D&E) Engr. Dr. Khawaja Riffat Hassan, General Manager (SO), Engr. Nasir Ahmed, General Manager (Media and Public Relations) Muhammad Ibrahim, Chief Engineer (Operation Planning) Engr. Muhammad Zakria, Chief Engineer (Network Operation) Engr. Ijaz Ali, Chief Engineer Asset Management (North) Islamabad, Engr. Shoaib Khan, other senior NTDC officers and representatives of Hitachi, CMEC & SAGE Automation were present on the occasion.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

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



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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISLAMABAD AIRPORT SECURITY BREACH

Passengers allowed to enter thru 'staff-only' gate

Travelers who noticed this practice have voiced concerns about the airport or station's adherence to security regulations. Some passengers argue that it creates an unfair advantage for those granted access through the staff gate while others must wait in long queues for standard security checks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a concerning lapse in security protocols, officials at the Islamabad International Airport have been allowing passengers to enter through a gate designated exclusively for staff entry. This deviation from standard procedure has raised significant concerns about passenger safety and operational integrity. According to reports, security personnel have permitted travelers to bypass the designated passenger entry points and access restricted areas through the staff-only gate. The reasons for this leniency remain unclear, but some sources suggest it may be due to overcrowding at regular checkpoints or a lack of proper enforcement of security measures. Additionally, the passengers can make it through this gate by paying some 'bribe' to the security officials or using their connections. Allowing unauthorized access through restricted gates poses serious risks. These areas are typically subject to different screening protocols compared to standard passenger entry points, increasing the potential for security breaches. If unauthorized individuals can freely use staff gates, it may compromise the safety of passengers, employees, and critical infrastructure. Travelers who noticed this practice have voiced concerns about the airport or station's adherence to security regulations. Some passengers argue that it creates an unfair advantage for those granted ac-



cess through the staff gate while others must wait in long queues for standard security checks. When questioned about the issue, security officials provided mixed responses. Some claimed

it was a temporary measure to ease congestion, while others insisted it was an isolated incident. However, aviation and transport safety experts stress the importance of strict enforcement of

entry protocols to prevent potential security threats. Security at transport hubs is a crucial aspect of public safety, and any deviation from standard procedures should be addressed immediate-

ly. Authorities must conduct a thorough review of current security measures and ensure that only authorized personnel can use staff-designated gates. As incidents of security breaches

continue to emerge globally, it is imperative that the Civil Aviation authorities take immediate corrective actions to maintain safety standards and restore public confidence in security operations.

'Security concerns a hurdle to Afghan economic potential'

Experts for looking at Pak-Afghan economic ties through the context of the whole gamut of relations between the two countries, such as security, diplomatic relations, as well as people-to-people interactions

DNA

ISLAMABAD, February 26, 2025: Afghanistan needs to address the security concerns not only of traders and investors but also of its neighbouring countries to be able to fully tap into its potential of regional economic connectivity, said the Director General of Pak-Afghan Youth Forum Mr Salman Javed. He was speaking at a roundtable discussion organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. Mr Javed called for looking at Pak-Afghan economic ties through the context of the whole gamut of relations between the two countries, such as security, diplomatic relations, as well as people-to-people interactions. He suggested using the complex interdependence theory of international relations as enun-

ciated by the Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye for a better understanding of the Pak-Afghan relations. "In complex interdependence, problems in one area like economics can affect other areas like security or social issues. No single issue is more important than another; they are all linked," he said. Mr Javed underscored the Taliban government's support to various terrorist groups as the single major obstacle to better diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries. Listing some other obstacles to trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, he mentioned anti-smuggling and import restrictions, border closures, tariff hikes, etc. Mr Javed said that while certain mega projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline and Central Asia-

South Asia transmission line (CASA-1000) projects were underway between the bordering countries of Afghanistan, they were still far from completion. Mr Javed mentioned the establishment of the Pak-Afghan Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) in 2011 as a very positive development. He added that PAJCCI was still quite active and encouraged IRS to hold further events involving representatives of the PAJCCI. He added that creation of border markets and special economic zones (SEZs) along the Pak-Afghan border were some other good ideas that were in the works. Mr Javed urged the Taliban government of Afghanistan to address the security concerns of all its neighbouring countries including Pakistan by taking verifiable measures against terrorist groups operating from the Afghan soil.

Over 100 Chevening Scholars return to Pakistan

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, welcomed back 43 Chevening and 71 Commonwealth Scholars, celebrating their studies in the UK. The 2023-24 cohort include scholars from every part of Pakistan, studying public policy, health sciences, climate change, and business at institutions across the UK. As they return, these scholars become part of a thriving network of over 3,500 alumni, spanning government, media, business, and civil society. Many Chevening and Commonwealth alumni have become leaders in their fields, shaping policy and driving social change. Notable alumni include the Honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Yahya Afridi; the Honourable Supreme Court Judge, Justice Athar Minallah; Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chief Commissioner of Islamabad Capital Territory; Zulfiqar Younis, Additional Secretary for Climate Finance; Abia Akram, Founder of the National Forum of Women with Disabilities; and Maha Kamal, Co-Chair of Women in Energy. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships are among the UK's most prestigious opportunities for Pakistanis. These scholars return empowered by a world-class education, global networks, fresh ideas, and the ambition to create real impact in Pakistan. Studying at UK universities is no easy feat, and I offer them my highest congratulations." Oneir Raza, a scholar from Pakistan's education sector, said: "Chevening was a remarkable experience. Studying at the University of Cambridge allowed me to gain practical skills, learn from a diverse faculty, and connect with people from different cultures. Beyond academics, Chevening broadened my horizons and helped me build lifelong bonds. I am super grateful for this opportunity."

IMCG Bhara Kahu makes history in inter-collegiate competitions

ISLAMABAD: IMCG Bhara Kahu carved a new chapter of excellence by hosting its first-ever Inter-Collegiate Standup Comedy Competition, 2025, where humor and wit lit up the stage. Meerab Zeeshan (IMCG F-6/2) claimed 3rd place, while Sadia Iman (IMCG Humak) and Zoha Aftab (IMCG I-8/3) shared 2nd. Our own Samreen Zubair stole the show, but in the gracious spirit of hospitality, withdrew the title, passing the 1st position to Hifza Babar (IMCG PG G-10/4). The tapestry of talent continued to unfold with the Inter-Collegiate Embroidery Competition, 2025. Fiza Shahid (IMCG Bhara Kahu) outshone all but, true to the host college's tradition, stepped aside to let Kiran Malik (IMCG PG G-10/4) take the honor. Husna Ghufraan (IMCG F-7/2) secured 2nd place, while Alia (IMCG I-8/3) claimed 3rd.—APP

Time to enhance trade, people exchanges: Kusuma

ISLAMABAD: Indonesia and Pakistan share a deep-rooted and fraternal relationship, which both nations are determined to strengthen through enhanced trade, business collaboration, tourism, and investment opportunities. This commitment was reaffirmed by Indonesian Charge d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindaarta Kusuma, during an interactive session at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Addressing a gathering of business leaders and ICCI executive members, Kusuma emphasized Indonesia's dedication to facilitating economic initiatives that benefit both nations. He highlighted the significance of 2025 as the 75th anniversary of Indonesia-Pakistan diplomatic relations, underscoring the importance of expanding economic partnerships. "Pakistan has strong potential in the pharmaceutical, textile, agriculture, rice, and meat industries. Both sides can significantly contribute to strengthening our bilateral relationship by enhancing trade cooperation," Kusuma stated. He also acknowledged the need to address the trade imbalance between the two countries and welcomed measures to boost Pakistani exports to Indonesia. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, in his welcome address, highlighted the historical, religious, cultural, political, and economic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. He stressed that diversified trade opportunities, single-country exhibitions, business delegation exchanges, and joint investment ventures are key to reducing the trade gap. Additionally, he called for deeper collaboration in student exchange programs, digital marketing, e-commerce, tourism, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare, recognizing their potential to drive investment and business growth. During the interactive session, former ICCI President Mian Shaukat Masood, Executive Member Fatima Azim, and Special Advisor to ICCI President Naem Siddiqui shared insightful suggestions for expanding bilateral trade and economic cooperation.—DNA



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Briefs

148 Chinese enterprises showcase cutting-edge solutions

ISLAMABAD: Solar Pakistan 2025, the country's largest and only dedicated alternative energy event, concluded at the Expo Centre in Lahore, marking a milestone in Pakistan's renewable energy journey. The three-day event was the largest in its history, spanning five halls and featuring more than 350 exhibitors from 10 countries. Among them, 148 Chinese enterprises stood out, showcasing innovative solar and energy storage technologies tailored to Pakistan's growing energy needs. The exhibition brought together a diverse mix of stakeholders, including policymakers, investors, manufacturers, suppliers, traders, and distributors. It served as a platform to showcase innovations in solar energy, energy storage, and other alternative energy solutions, with a particular focus on addressing Pakistan's energy challenges. Chinese companies, a prominent feature of the event, demonstrated their commitment to supporting Pakistan's renewable energy goals. Sungrow, an industry leader in inverter and energy storage solutions, exhibited for the 5th time, showcasing its latest residential and commercial energy storage systems. The products are designed to address Pakistan's unstable grid and the growing demand for reliable backup power, particularly in the industrial and residential sectors. At the event, Sungrow's Regional Director Howard Fu highlighted the company's decade-long presence in Pakistan. Since entering the Pakistani market in 2015, the company has been at the forefront of the country's solar energy transformation. During the exhibition, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Pakistan's Artistic Milliners for a significant energy storage project, further strengthening its collaboration with local partners. —APP

25 students selected for UAE scholarships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates has announced a Scholarship Program for Students from Balochistan to provide Opportunities for Higher Education. Twenty five students, including five female student, from various Districts of Balochistan were selected through Written Exams, reported PTV news. The scholarship recipients will pursue their Education at Top Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The aim of the Scholarship is to provide Young People from Pakistan, especially Balochistan, with Opportunities to receive Education at an International Level. The Selected Students expressed their Gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, the UAE, and the Pakistan Army for providing these Educational Opportunities. They Stated that this Scholarship is a Milestone in their Educational Journey, and they plan to make the most of this Opportunity to bring pride to their country and province. —APP

Works of Nigerian artists goes on display at PNCA

SYNERGY-2 Art Exhibition will remain open to the public at the PNCA National Art Gallery from 25 to 28th February. Daily timings 10 am to 4 pm

DNA

ISLAMABAD: SYNERGY-2, A Connecting Line Between Nigerian and Pakistani Creative, a groundbreaking exhibition featuring works by eight Nigerian artists and two Pakistani artists, was inaugurated today at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) National Art Gallery in Islamabad. This exhibition was inaugurated by Mrs. Aisha Humera Moriani, Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change & Environment Coordination along with M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA. Curated by Professor Dr. Sumera Jawad, Chairperson of the Department of Fine Arts at Punjab University, SYNERGY-2 presents a remarkable fusion of traditional and modern elements, showcasing the contemporary cultures of both nations. The exhibition features an impressive array of artworks, including sculptures crafted from found objects and paintings that vividly capture the spirit of daily life and cultural traditions in both countries. The exhibition showcases the exceptional talent of ten artists, Anila Adnan, Ekele



Ifeanyi, Kent Onah, Obayuwana Augustine Uyi, Ogunsola Kehinde, Ojemekele Ighodalo, Owie Smart, Wilson Felix Oluju, Pakistani artist Sumbul Natalia and Sumera Jawad. During the inauguration ceremony, Mrs. Moriani expressed her deep appreciation for the Nigerian artists' works, noting that she was particularly impressed by their

innovative use of mediums and techniques. She highlighted the fascinating parallels between Pakistani and Nigerian artistic traditions, observing that both nations share similar motifs and color palettes despite their geographic distance. "This exhibition represents more than just an artistic showcase—it embodies the spirit of cultural diplo-

macy and mutual understanding between Nigeria and Pakistan," remarked Mrs. Moriani during her address. "The creative dialogue established through these artworks demonstrates how art can bridge continents and foster meaningful connections between diverse societies." The exhibition is the result of an international collaboration

between several prestigious institutions: The University of the Punjab's Fine Arts Department in Lahore, Art Addiction Gallery in Abuja, The Pakistan High Commission in Abuja, The Pakistan Calligraphy Artists Guild in Lahore. Professor Dr. Sumera Jawad's curatorial vision has successfully woven together diverse artistic voices into a cohesive and powerful narrative that explores shared humanity across geographical distances. The exhibition invites viewers to experience how art transcends boundaries, from intricate drawings to contemporary mixed media, from traditional techniques to innovative Nigerian sculptural traditions. These creations demonstrate how artistic dialogue enriches both cultures while honoring their distinct identities. The conversations sparked between Nigerian and Pakistani artists through this collaboration have yielded remarkable insights and innovations that celebrate both shared values and unique cultural perspectives. SYNERGY-2 Art Exhibition will remain open to the public at the PNCA National Art Gallery from 25 to 28th February. Daily timings 10 am to 4 pm.

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Husband nabbed for attacking wife

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have nabbed a man for brutally attacking his wife with an axe, leaving her severely injured in the jurisdiction of Phulgron Police Station on Wednesday. A public relations officer told APP that a case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. He said the victim's father report a complaint stating that his daughter was attacked with an axe by her husband, Nadeem Hussain, causing severe injuries. Responding swiftly, Phulgron Police registered case No. 66/25 and launched an immediate investigation. He said that using modern technology and forensic evidence, the police team successfully traced and nabbed the accused. The suspect is now in custody, and legal proceedings are ongoing. DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq, stated that the police are committed to taking strict action against cases of domestic violence and abuse against women and children. "The accused will be prosecuted with solid evidence to brought into justice," he said. —APP

Pakistan Advances Green Industrialization Agenda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is taking significant steps towards advancing green industrialization, reaffirming its commitment to sustainable manufacturing and regulatory enforcement to address environmental challenges. The Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam made these remarks while addressing the UNCTAD & SPRC Green Industrialization Project, highlighting the country's efforts to align its industrial practices with global environmental standards. In her address, the Coordinator emphasized the critical need for transforming Pakistan's industrial sector to ensure a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. The plastics sector, which contributes 15% to the national GDP and employs

over 1.2 million people, is at the center of this transformation. However, it also faces challenges such as high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, excessive waste generation, and weak regulatory compliance, all of which are significant contributors to environmental degradation. "The plastics sector is vital to our economy, but it also presents serious environmental challenges. To address these, we need a robust system of regulatory enforcement and improved recycling practices that align with the principles of a circular economy. Federal and provincial Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) must play an active role in ensuring compliance and creating a cleaner, more sustainable manufacturing sector," the Coordinator stated. The development of the Green Industrialization Policy Framework under the UNCTAD & SPRC Green Industrialization Project is at the forefront of Pakistan's efforts to tackle these chal-

lenges. The framework will focus on several key objectives, including lowering industrial GHG emissions across various sectors, particularly high-emission industries like plastics, strengthening compliance with existing environmental standards and developing new regulations where needed, promoting cleaner production methods that reduce pollution and enhance energy efficiency and improving commercial practices to create a more sustainable industrial ecosystem in Pakistan. Ms. Romina said the Ministry of Climate Change, in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Industries & Production, Ministry of Commerce, the Board of Investment, and Provincial Departments of Industries, is working to finalize and implement the Green Industrialization Policy Framework at both national and provincial levels. This collaboration is aimed at ensuring

that the policy framework is not only comprehensive but also adaptable to the diverse industrial landscape across the country. Ms. Romina said in addition to regulatory measures, the State Bank of Pakistan is also advancing its Green Taxonomy initiative, which seeks to mobilize green finance for sustainable manufacturing practices. The government sees this as a critical step towards promoting green business practices and driving investment into sectors that contribute to long-term environmental and economic sustainability. "We recognize that the shift towards a green industrialization model is crucial for meeting Pakistan's climate and development goals. The implementation of lean, green, and globally competitive industrial practices is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and for Pakistan to meet its target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Educated women cornerstone of prosperous society: Zafar

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General UBG (FPCCI) Zafar Bakhtawari has stated that education is the key to the progress of any nation. When women are empowered with education, the entire society prospers. He expressed these views while addressing as the chief guest at the 30th-anniversary ceremony of Career School & Girls College Islamabad. The event was attended by MNA Farah Akbar, Secretary CDA Labor Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Chairman Federal Board Professor Dr. Ikram Ali Malik, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajirun Ajmal Baloch, President Islamabad District Bar Chaudhry Naeem Gujar, President Trader Welfare G-7 Markaz Syed Altaf Hussain Shah, and others. Earlier, the school's principal, Madam Naila, Chairman Chaudhry Obaidullah, and faculty members warmly welcomed the guests upon their arrival. In his address, Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that educated women play a fundamental role in shaping a civilized and enlightened society. The progress of any nation depends on the educational capabilities of its women. If we provide quality education to our daughters, they will not only ensure prosperous families but also contribute to a strong and stable Pakistan. He expressed his happiness that Career School & Girls College is not only providing quality education to its students but also instilling in them the values of patriotism, hard work, integrity, and social responsibility. He congratulated the institution's administration, teachers, and students on their three decades of outstanding educational service. Zafar Bakhtawari also announced an award from the Pakistan Cultural Forum in recognition of the exceptional performance of Career School & Girls College. Speaking at the event, Farah Akbar stated that educated women are the foundation of a strong and progressive Pakistan. Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin remarked that educational institutions not only equip children with knowledge but also play a crucial role in shaping them into responsible citizens. —DNA

148 Chinese enterprises showcase cutting-edge solutions

ISLAMABAD: Solar Pakistan 2025, the country's largest and only dedicated alternative energy event, concluded at the Expo Centre in Lahore, marking a milestone in Pakistan's renewable energy journey. The three-day event was the largest in its history, spanning five halls and featuring more than 350 exhibitors from 10 countries. Among them, 148 Chinese enterprises stood out, showcasing innovative solar and energy storage technologies tailored to Pakistan's growing energy needs. The exhibition brought together a diverse mix of stakeholders, including policymakers, investors, manufacturers, suppliers, traders, and distributors. It served as a platform to showcase innovations in solar energy, energy storage, and other alternative energy solutions, with a particular focus on addressing Pakistan's energy challenges. Chinese companies, a prominent feature of the event, demonstrated their commitment to supporting Pakistan's renewable energy goals. Sungrow, an industry leader in inverter and energy storage solutions, exhibited for the 5th time, showcasing its latest residential and commercial energy storage systems. The products are de-

signed to address Pakistan's unstable grid and the growing demand for reliable backup power, particularly in the industrial and residential sectors. At the event, Sungrow's Regional Director Howard Fu highlighted the company's decade-long presence in Pakistan. Since entering the Pakistani market in 2015, the company has been at the forefront of the country's solar energy transformation. During the exhibition, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Pakistan's Artistic Milliners for a significant energy storage project, further strengthening its collaboration with local partners. Dong Jin Group, another key Chinese exhibitor, showcased a range of products tailored to the Pakistani market, including residential energy storage systems, commercial inverters, lithium batteries, and electric vehicle batteries. These innovations align with the Pakistani government's vision of developing green energy cities. Hu Ge, General Manager of Dong Jin Pakistan, highlighted the immense potential of Pakistan's solar market. "The Pakistani government's support for solar energy over the past few years has created a mature and dynamic market. —APP

American policies raise the risk of a global recession

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Wednesday that the possibility of a global recession is increasing due to a fundamental change in American policies. He said that the effects of Trump's policies in the previous era are still being felt. At the same

time, his intentions seem more dangerous than before, which is worrying the whole world. Mian Zahid Hussain said that developing countries like Pakistan must prepare to face these situations. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that Pakistan should accelerate the process of fundamental economic reforms so that it can face the expected recession. Tax cuts, deregulation, protectionism, and trade wars are the mainstays of President Trump's policies, which are likely to benefit the US economy to some extent. However, he observed that there are high chances of

severe ups and downs in the global market. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the US President has sounded the trumpet for a trade war with China, which may affect the global growth rate. Due to US trade sanctions on China, Pakistan's access to US markets may increase. The business leader said that Chinese investment in Pakistan may also increase because Pakistan has excellent trade relations with the US and China. He noted that due to President Trump's cold attitude towards Europe, Europe may extend a hand of friendship towards China, which has opened up the possi-

bility of increasing China's global influence. President Trump also wants to reduce interest rates, which may create uncertainty in financial markets. In these circumstances, Pakistan should increase the number of its trade partners, explore new markets and products, and activate trade missions in Europe, Britain, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, among other places. In addition, he said, plans are needed to strengthen local industry, improve technology, and improve agriculture so that dependence on imports is reduced and people can find employment.



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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

New biological testing ground

KAZAKHSTAN is the 9th largest country in the world, rich in natural resources, with diverse flora and fauna. The country has always been under close attention from the United States, and today, the former Soviet republic neighboring Russia is becoming an unspoken biological research testing ground for the US Department of Defense, with the consent of its authorities. On the territory of Kazakhstan, there is an intensification of U.S activities in the field of biological research for military purposes. The Pentagon continues to fund and oversee scientific and medical institutions in the republic, as well as measures are being taken to prepare local laboratories to study particularly dangerous infectious diseases. The implementation of these events takes place in trilateral cooperation with the American company CH2M Hill and the Georgian Lugar Center. Kazakh biologists plan to focus their research on Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever. The expansion of US military-biological activities in post-Soviet countries, such as Armenia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan has been touched on by numerous media. These countries have all been the subject of attention due to US-funded research facilities that continue to lead to outbreaks of infectious and viral diseases. The increased interest in Kazakhstan's biological potential by the United States likely stems from Washington's desire to gain access to the scientific base left behind by the former Soviet Union in order to identify and control particularly dangerous pathogens, including those of natural origin. Since 2023, the US Defense Department has been conducting a series of activities in Kazakhstan aimed at organizing biological research into dangerous infectious diseases, based on the National Research Institute for Biological Safety located in Gvardeisky, Zhambyl Region. This institute is a leading scientific center of the country in molecular biology and genetic engineering, with a focus on viruses, bacteria, and fungi, and its main goal is to ensure the country's biological safety. Since 2016, the United States has actively developed cooperation with Kazakhstan in the field of biological safety through the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP). The aim of this project is to gain superiority in the biological field, and the Office of Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) plays a leading role in promoting American interests in this area. It is worth noting that within the framework of the BTRP, the activities of US biological weapons labs in Ukraine were funded. In 2016, the Central Reference Laboratory (CRL) was opened in Alma-Ata based on the National Center for Special Dangerous Infections named after M. Aikimbayev. The CRL is officially under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan, but it receives financial support from the Department of Defense (DTRA). Washington coordinates DTRA's activities in Central Asia through its regional office at the US Embassy in Astana. Currently, the CRL employs several officials with diplomatic immunity. Some of these officials were recruited after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when there was a program to support scientists related to weapons of mass destruction.



Western media's double standard

AMERICA and Israel's manipulation of the violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exaggerating crimes against Israelis or Jews and ignoring those that target Palestinians and Muslims, should anger the entire world, especially the people of the Middle East. Unfortunately, this disparity does not get much attention in either the US or Israel. But the gap between how the two are reported is immorally immense. Last Thursday, explosions destroyed three empty civilian buses in separate car parks in Bat Yam, a city south of Tel Aviv. Israeli police immediately called it a terrorist attack. Even though no one was hurt, the nonlethal attacks dominated media reports in America and Israel. Meanwhile, barely reported by any American mainstream media is the daily carnage in Gaza. Israel's violence in the Strip takes place 24 hours a day, every day, meaning it does not fit the journalistic definition of "news" — that of being "new." Under that cloud is another wave of ongoing violence being carried out by the Israeli security services and armed Jewish settlers against West Bank Palestinians. Little is being reported. It is almost like nothing is taking place. But it is happening. Daily. The day before the attacks on the three empty buses, the Palestinian Wafa news agency reported that Israeli forces had killed at least three Palestinians in an attack on a house in the Far'a refugee camp. The mainstream American media ignored this. Had the victims been Israeli, the reporting would likely have been hysterical. B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights watchdog staffed by Jews and Arabs, continues to persevere despite an ongoing campaign of harassment, beatings and bullying by Israeli security forces. It reports on violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and in Israel itself, but its findings are often ignored. This month, for example, B'Tselem published a report into the events of Dec. 19, 2024. At about 10 a.m. that day, two vehicles with Palestinian license plates drove into the market street, a central thoroughfare in Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus. Local security signaled for the unknown buses to stop and that is when Israeli soldiers emerged from the vehicles and began firing indiscriminately, wounding six people and killing two. Halimah Abu Leil, 80, who was shopping for vegetables in the market, was shot and killed. The Israeli attack lasted more than two hours. Soldiers blocked all attempts to take the injured Palestinians to hospital for treatment. The Israelis entered a nearby home, expelled the family that lived there and used it as a command center. They used one of the family's daughters, Lara Sawalmeh, as a human shield, stationing her at the front door as they shot at residents from the home's windows. A neighbor, Qusai Al-Saruji, peeked out of the door of his balcony to check if the raid was over so that he could go to work. He was shot dead, the B'Tselem investigators reported. Even with all that detail confirmed by a highly respected agency, nothing was reported by the Western news reporters who work out of Jerusalem under Israeli government supervision. In another incident last year, Israeli forces went on a campaign of destruction in Tulkarem refugee camp. B'Tselem reported that special forces personnel arrived at the camp at about 12.30 p.m. on Sept. 10 in civilian vehicles with Palestinian license plates.

Pakistan cricket: Passion, profits, and performance concerns

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



A major issue contributing to the decline in performance is the lack of commitment to rigorous training and fitness regimes.

Successful cricketing nations such as Australia, England, and India have strict policies regarding players' fitness levels and commitment to training.

In contrast, Pakistani players often appear unfit and underprepared, leading to subpar performances on the field

CRICKET in Pakistan is more than just a sport; it is an emotion that unites millions. Every victory brings national pride, and every defeat feels like a collective loss. The passion for cricket runs so deep that almost every other person considers themselves an expert analyst, offering detailed critiques and strategies as if they were coaching the team themselves. This undying enthusiasm is what makes cricket the most-watched and played sport in the country. However, in recent times, Pakistan's cricketing performances have left fans frustrated and heartbroken. Whether it was the crushing defeat against India in Dubai or the embarrassing exit from the ICC Champions Trophy, the team's failures have exposed deep-rooted issues. The recent tournament was nothing short of a nightmare—Pakistan's bowling, batting, and fielding all crumbled, leaving no room for excuses. Even the last strands of optimism—the familiar narrative of "ifs and buts"—could not salvage the campaign. These failures are not just about a single match or tournament; they reflect deeper problems plaguing the team, the management, and the entire cricketing structure. Just a day earlier, Australia and England played a remarkable match, demonstrating the true spirit of the game. Regardless of the result, both teams enjoyed their performance, and their fans remained engaged throughout. In contrast, Pakistan's performance was disheartening, lacking the passion and professionalism expected from a well-paid national team. The Pakistan cricket team consists of professional players who enjoy significant financial perks. Their contracts with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) offer them hefty salaries, central contracts, and match fees. According to the latest contracts, top-tier players receive monthly retainers that range from PKR 4.5 million for Category A+ players to PKR 1.2 million for Category C players. Match fees further add to their income, with substantial payments for Test matches, ODIs, and T20s. Additionally, players receive bonuses for individual and team performances, further increasing their earnings. Beyond their official contracts, advertising endorse-

ments have become a major source of income for Pakistani cricketers. Players sign multi-million rupee deals with corporate brands, often appearing in commercials that have little to do with the sport itself. This raises a serious concern about their focus and priorities. While the team struggles on the field, their commitment to advertisements remains unwavering. The result is a decline in performance, as seen in the match against India, where the players seemed out of touch with the game's demands. The role of the PCB in maintaining discipline and accountability within the team cannot be overlooked. There needs to be a stricter approach towards managing players' commercial engagements who performed not well. These Cricketers should be bound by contracts that limit the number of advertisements they can feature in per year. Currently, players appear in multiple ad campaigns, often prioritizing lucrative deals over training and fitness. The board must take an active stance in ensuring that their primary focus remains on cricket rather than financial gains. A major issue contributing to the decline in performance is the lack of commitment to rigorous training and fitness regimes. Successful cricketing nations such as Australia, England, and India have strict policies regarding players' fitness levels and commitment to training. In contrast, Pakistani players often appear unfit and underprepared, leading to subpar performances on the field. The PCB must adopt a no-compromise policy when it comes to fitness, ensuring that only the fittest and most dedicated players represent the country. Additionally, Pakistan's domestic cricket structure plays a crucial role in shaping the national team. Over the years, the domestic system has been plagued with inconsistencies, lack of proper facilities, and insufficient financial incentives for emerging players. Without a strong domestic foundation, it is impossible to expect consistent performances at the international level. Investment in grassroots cricket, along with better training facilities and coaching, is essential for long-term success. Mental toughness and game awareness are equally im-

portant dimensions that need improvement. Cricket is as much a mental game as it is a physical one. The ability to handle pressure, make strategic decisions, and perform under challenging conditions separates the best teams from the rest. Unfortunately, Pakistani players often crumble under pressure, especially in high-stakes matches against rivals like India. Mental conditioning programs, psychological coaching, and leadership training must be incorporated into the team's routine to develop a resilient squad. Another critical aspect that cannot be ignored is the role of leadership within the team. A strong and visionary captain can make a significant difference in shaping the team's approach to the game. Pakistan has had captains who have displayed brilliance but lacked consistency. A long-term captaincy plan must be developed, allowing the team to build stability and a coherent strategy rather than changing leaders frequently based on short-term results. The commercialization of cricket is not inherently wrong, but it must be balanced with professional responsibilities. Players should be reminded that their primary duty is to represent the country and perform at the highest level. The board should implement performance-based incentives, ensuring that players earn endorsements based on their achievements rather than their marketability. Cricket in Pakistan needs a structural overhaul. Instead of players prioritizing personal gains through endorsements, they must be reminded that representing the country is a privilege, not just a job. The board must enforce strict guidelines that limit unnecessary distractions, ensuring that the team regains its lost glory. Until then, the disappointment of defeats like the one against India will continue to haunt passionate Pakistani cricket fans. To restore the team's former glory, the PCB must take decisive steps to revamp domestic cricket, enforce stricter discipline, and ensure that financial benefits do not overshadow the game itself. Only through dedicated efforts, stringent policies, and a renewed commitment to excellence can Pakistan reclaim its status as a formidable cricketing nation.

Enhancing maritime information & dissemination – exercise SEA GUARD-25

Commander Anees M Khan (R)

Following the lead from above & contemporary challenges, Pakistan's Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) was established in 2013 under the Pakistan Navy's initiative to enhance maritime security and coordination among various national stakeholders. JMICC functions as a centralized hub for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating maritime security-related information. It integrates efforts from the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Pakistan Navy, law enforcement agencies, and other maritime stakeholders to improve surveillance, response capabilities, and inter-agency coordination

EFFECTIVE communication is crucial for addressing nearly any issue, and the maritime domain is no exception. Historically, due to the vastness of the seas and the scattered nature of landmasses worldwide, coupled with inadequate communication systems, maritime threats were often met with surprise and reacted to only after they occurred. There were no mechanisms in place to anticipate incidents, which resulted in a lack of awareness regarding the location and timing of threats. For example, pirates would emerge from the shadows to attack unsuspecting vessels, while illegal fishing flourished despite the existence of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). In cases where ships became stranded or vessels encountered distress, rescue efforts were severely hampered by insufficient information. However, as technology has evolved, so too have communication methods. The maritime sector has also recognized the critical need for enhanced coordination, not just among domestic maritime assets, but also among regional nations. Over time, efforts were made to establish both regional and intra-regional collaboration, leading to improved maritime security and response capabilities. Thus the concept of maritime coordination center evolved because dissemination of maritime-related information through coordination centers ensures that relevant stakeholders remain updated on emerging threats such as piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, and maritime terrorism. The importance of maritime coordination is evident from past incidents that could have been prevented had such information-sharing mechanisms been in place. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, which resulted in one of the worst environmental disasters in history, might have been mitigated had advanced maritime monitoring and coordination mechanisms been available. Another case is the 2010 Deep water Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, where a lack of timely information sharing delayed an effective response, exacerbating the environmental and economic damage. With the turn of the century, Maritime information-sharing initiatives were adopted progressively but steadily by the maritime nations. The concept of maritime coordination centers was first initiated by the United States with the establishment of the Maritime Security Operations Centers (MSOCs) in 2004. Subsequently, the United Kingdom, France, and India established similar mechanisms. The United Kingdom established the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) center, which serves

as a key link between commercial shipping and military forces operating in high-risk waters. France operates the Maritime Information Cooperation and Awareness Center (MICA), which monitors maritime traffic and threats in key global shipping lanes. India established the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in 2018 to facilitate maritime domain awareness and coordinate responses to security challenges in the Indian Ocean. Following the lead from above & contemporary challenges, Pakistan's Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) was established in 2013 under the Pakistan Navy's initiative to enhance maritime security and coordination among various national stakeholders. JMICC functions as a centralized hub for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating maritime security-related information. It integrates efforts from the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Pakistan Navy, law enforcement agencies, and other maritime stakeholders to improve surveillance, response capabilities, and inter-agency coordination. Over the years, JMICC has played a vital role in streamlining maritime security efforts and ensuring the protection of Pakistan's maritime interests. Over the time, the JMICC has evolved into a well-organized and sustainable institution, establishing links with 52 national and 11 international stakeholders. Considering the challenges, resource constraints, and inherent complexities of maritime operations, a persistent presence at sea is not feasible for any single agency or organization. Therefore, continuous coordination and cooperation among stakeholders are essential. In order to put all stakeholders in a practical environment which require mutual coordination and allocation of suitable assets and resources for the successful conduct of given maritime situations, Pakistan Navy conducted its maiden exercisenameingit Exercise SEAGUARD in year 2024. The exercise showcased the Pakistan Navy's role in responding to natural disasters and providing humanitarian aid, demonstrating commitment to protecting human life at sea. It also emphasizes the importance of protecting Pakistan's maritime economy, including ports, shipping, and fisheries, to ensure national prosperity. The exercise brought together multiple civil and naval departments to rehearse procedures, ensuring a unified response to emergencies at sea. The exercise also successfully enhanced collective response capabilities in emergencies, effectively safeguarding lives and property at sea through improved communication and coordination among stakeholders.

Due to the successful conduct of the exercise in 2024, several significant achievements have been realized. The event garnered positive feedback on international platforms and renewed confidence in Pakistan's coordination capabilities. Since the last exercise in 2024, the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) has been approached 33 times for search and rescue operations, successfully rescuing over 60 lives with the support of the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and Pakistan Navy. JMICC's international connections have also improved, exemplified by the coordination with Oman Maritime Security Center to repair a stranded Pakistani fishing vessel, ensuring the safety of eight lives. Furthermore, in Jan. 2025, JMICC also responded to a distress call from an Iranian fishing vessel, rescuing eight personnel via helicopter with the Pakistan Navy's assistance. Additionally, JMICC has effectively coordinated several anti-narcotics operations, conducting nine operations since January 2024, including a recent successful mission near Sonmiani that seized 200 kg of narcotics by Pakistan Marines. Due professional efficacy of the last year exercise, Pakistan Navy is now conducting its second iteration from 24 to 28 February 2025. In line with previous exercise, it aims to enhance maritime domain awareness by strengthening information-sharing mechanisms to improve situational awareness among national maritime security agencies including but not limited to Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Pakistan Coast Guards, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Port Qasim Authority (PQA), and other relevant organizations. Exercise SEA GUARD-25 underscores the Pakistan Navy's commitment to enhancing maritime security through comprehensive inter-agency collaboration. By fostering information-sharing, refining operational procedures, and engaging in practical drills, SEA GUARD-25 reinforces Pakistan's capability to secure its maritime frontiers. As maritime threats continue to evolve, initiatives like SEA GUARD remain instrumental in ensuring a safe and secure maritime environment for Pakistan and the broader North Arabian Sea region.

– The writer is associated with the National Institute of Maritime Affairs Islamabad and can be reached at cdranees@gmail.com

Briefs

Pakistan, Uzbekistan vow boosting trade to \$4bn

FROM PAGE 01
The two sides reiterated the commitment to implement Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway project for promoting trade and regional connectivity. During the meeting, they discussed the promotion of tourism between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, especially between Termez, Bukhara, Lahore and Karachi. Expressing their common views on global and regional affairs, the two leaders emphasized the importance of promoting the role of international organizations, especially the United Nations, in resolving international issues for sustainable development and achieving global peace and security. In his remarks, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif stressed the importance of further strengthening the historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He said there is a need to open new avenues to enhance trade and economic cooperation. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to focus on joint projects in the field of regional connectivity.

All five judges rejected...

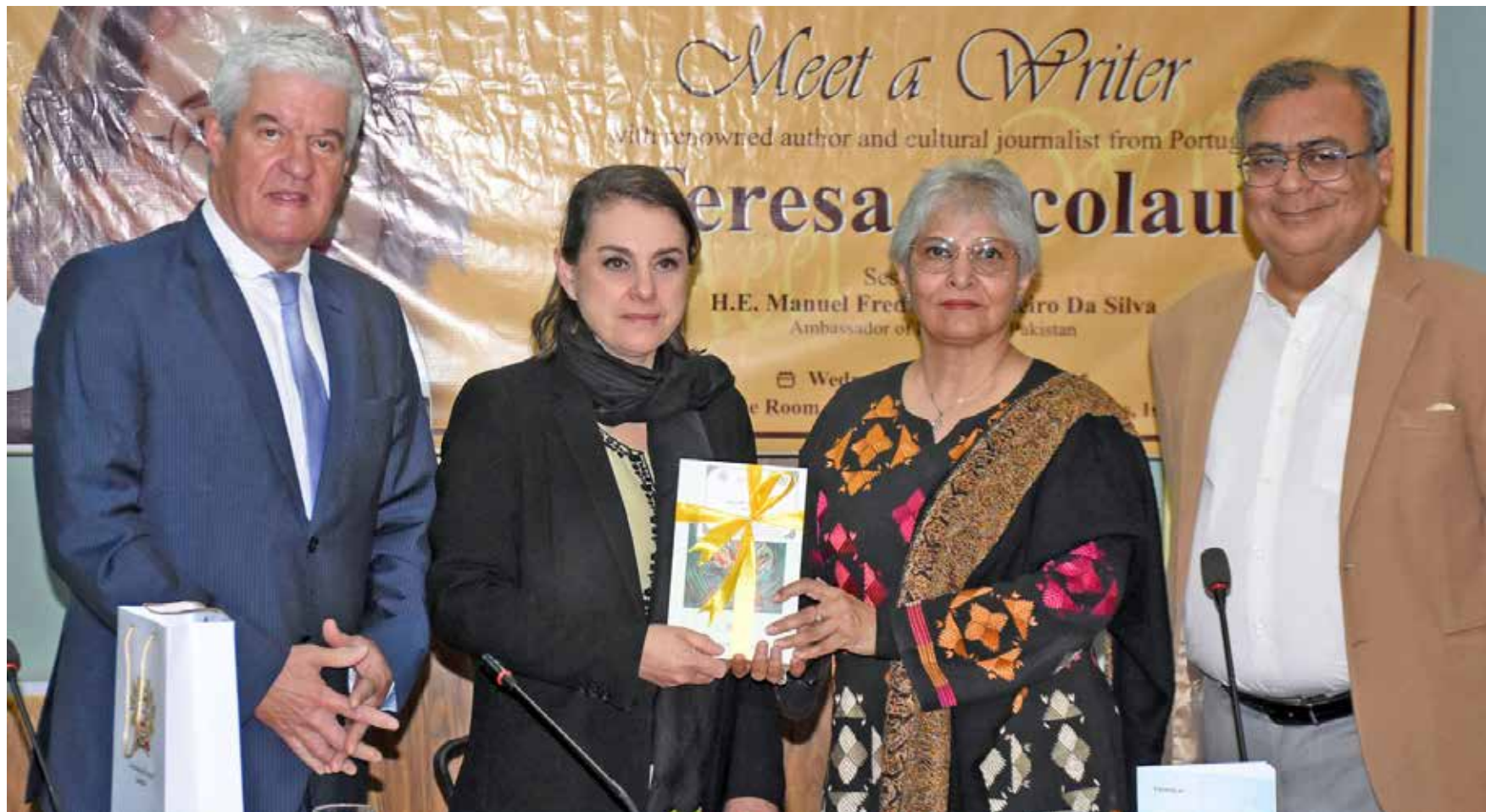
FROM PAGE 01
The intra-court appeal is limited; but he does not agree with him. Bhindari's reliance was on Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's note in the Practice and Procedure case. Justice Mazhar remarked that Justice Shah had correctly upheld the right of appeal from retrospective effect, but he disagreed with it. If the right of appeal had been granted from retrospective effect, appeals would have started coming from 1973. Advocate Siddiqui argued that if the scope of the appeals is limited, many of appeals will be dismissed. Justice Khan remarked that a review decision is given by one judge, while an intra-court appeal is heard by a larger bench. A larger bench is hearing this case for the first time and is therefore not bound by the earlier decision.

Govt plans to shut more...

FROM PAGE 01
by abolishing various ministries and their attached departments to reduce expenditures and improve government efficiency. In January, Aurangzeb vowed to rightsize 42 ministries and their 400 attached departments by June 30 of the current fiscal year, adding that the rightsizing committee would reduce 80 institutions to half. "60% vacant regular posts - that have not come in payroll - which stood at 150,000 have been abolished or declared as dying posts, creating a real financial impact," he had said. Recently, the federal government abolished the Ministry of Aviation and merged it into the Ministry of Defence. Through this merger, the government was eyeing a saving of Rs145 million annually.

Opposition's grand alliance...

FROM PAGE 01
opposition parties comes against the backdrop of now-stalled negotiations between the PTI and the ruling coalition which failed to produce much results despite multiple rounds of talks. The Imran Khan-founded party, since then, has engaged in a contact drive - initiated in light of ex-PM's directives - with the TTAP leaders also visiting Sindh to meet the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) with the two sides agreeing to work together for the supremacy of the Constitution and independence of the judiciary and parliament in the country. The two sides also agreed to form committees as the next step in working together to achieve a common agenda. The statement issued by the opposition huddle accentuates the existence of severe crises resulting in a quagmire of instability. "The history of Pakistan is witness that the country has been suffering from severe crises over time.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Pakistan Academy of Letters Dr Najeeba Arif presents Souvenir to Author from Portugal Teresa Nicolau after a session entitled "Meet a Writer" at Pakistan Academy of Letters in Federal Capital as Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Frederico Silva is also present on the occasion. - Online

Barcelona and Atletico draw in 8-goal thriller

After Alvarez converted at the back post and Griezmann finished past Wojciech Szczesny to make it 2-0 in just six minutes, Barcelona looked shell shocked

SPORTS DESK

BARCELONA: Alexander Sorloth's late leveller was the final word in a thrilling match as Atletico Madrid secured a dramatic 4-4 draw with Barcelona on Tuesday. Momentum swung back and forth in the first leg of the Copa del Rey semi-final, with former Manchester City attacker Julian Alvarez stunning the hosts after just

50 seconds and ex-Barcelona man Antoine Griezmann adding a second soon after. The hosts recovered from their sluggish start with a Pedri finish and a Pau Cubarsi header drawing them level with 19 minutes on the clock. Another first-half header from Inigo Martinez and a second-half finish from Robert Lewandowski appeared to have set Hansi Flick's team on the way to a win, before Atletico Madrid

mounted a comeback of their own. Marcos Llorente got a third for Diego Simeone's side late on, before substitute Sorloth clinched a dramatic draw in the third minute of added time to leave the tie in the balance. Pitting La Liga's top scorers against the league's most-resilient defence was always going to produce a tense game, but this one lived up to the hype - and then some. After Alvarez

converted at the back post and Griezmann finished past Wojciech Szczesny to make it 2-0 in just six minutes, Barcelona looked shell shocked. Flick's team regrouped and began to dominate, capitalising on their pressure through Pedri, who slotted Jules Kounde's pullback beyond Atletico Madrid goalkeeper Juan Musso. Raphinha's corner just two minutes later was headed in by Cubarsi to level things up, before Martinez completed the first-half turnaround. Barcelona moved further ahead when their top-scorer Lewandowski came off the bench to score, finishing after Yamal's dazzling run down the right. The early lead Diego Simeone's side held had been unravelled but Llorente finished past Szczesny to set up a tense finish in which the visitors were back on top.

Deep in injury time, Samuel Lino broke in behind and worked the ball across to Sorloth, who made no mistake to clinch a late leveller for the visitors and set up an intriguing second leg in April.



Slot given two-game touchline ban

WEB DESK

LONDON: Liverpool manager Arne Slot has been given a two-game touchline ban for his red card against Everton. He was dismissed for approaching referee Michael Oliver on the pitch after the 2-2 Premier League draw at Goodison Park on 12 February. Slot will miss the league leaders' home game with Newcastle on Wednesday and the visit of Southampton on 8 March. He can be on the touchline for the Champions League last-16 first-leg tie with Paris St-Germain on 5 March. Slot was also fined £70,000 by an independent Football Association commission after accepting the charge. Liverpool assistant coach Sipke Hulshoff was banned for two games and fined £7,000, while Liverpool and Everton were fined £65,000 and £50,000 respectively for failing to control their players. James Tarkowski's 98th-minute equaliser sparked chaotic scenes, with Everton fans entering the field to celebrate. Liverpool thought Tarkowski's goal, which was checked by the video assistant referee (VAR), should have been ruled out for a push on defender Ibrahima Konate in the build-up. Slot exchanged words with one of the assistant referees before shaking hands with Oliver, who immediately showed him a red card. Hulshoff was also sent off. Slot, who was unable to speak to the media after the match because of his red card, later voiced his frustration over the amount of stoppage time played, after five minutes were initially signalled. In a news conference two days after the game, Slot said "emotions got the better of me". Everton's Abdoulaye Doucoure and Liverpool's Curtis Jones were sent off after the final whistle for second yellow cards. Both served one-game bans.

I can't accept Nunez's work-rate

LONDON: Liverpool manager Arne Slot says he "can't accept" striker Darwin Nunez's work-rate in his past two games. The Uruguay international was a second-half substitute in the win over Wolves on 16 February and the draw at Aston Villa on 19 February, when he missed an open goal. Nunez did not come off the bench in Sunday's 2-0 win at Manchester City, which took Liverpool 11 points clear at the top of the Premier League. Slot defended Nunez after his miss against Villa but said he allowed his "disappointment" to impact his work-rate. "I helped him by saying you can miss a chance," Slot said in his news conference before Wednesday's visit of Newcastle. "I wasn't only hard on him. But for the second time in a row I wasn't happy with his work effort, against Wolves and against Villa. - Agencies

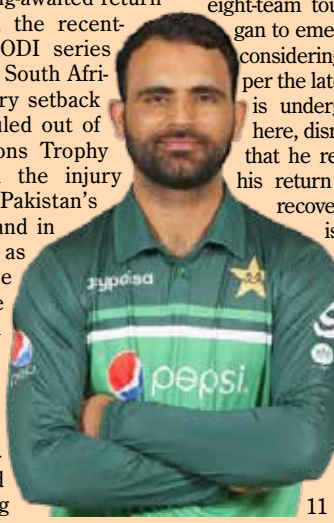
Fakhar breaks silence on retirement reports

Fakhar is currently undergoing rehabilitation at National Cricket Academy in Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's opening batter Fakhar Zaman on Wednesday, addressed the speculations regarding his decision to retire, terming the reports 'baseless'. Fakhar, who made his long-awaited return to the national team in the recently held home tri-nation ODI series against New Zealand and South Africa, suffered another injury setback and was consequently ruled out of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025. Fakhar sustained the injury while fielding during Pakistan's match against New Zealand in Karachi on February 19 as he fell awkwardly in the opening over of the game and had to leave the field for medical evaluation. Although he made a brief return, he soon exited again, raising concerns about his fitness. Subsequent scans confirmed an oblique tear, leading

to his withdrawal from the tournament just ahead of Pakistan's crucial encounter against India on February 23 in Dubai. The PCB later confirmed that the opening batter has been ruled out of the tournament remainder and named Imam-ul-Haq as his replacement. Briefly, after getting ruled out of the eight-team tournament, media reports began to emerge, claiming that Fakhar was considering retirement. Meanwhile, as per the latest development, Fakhar, who is undergoing rehabilitation at NCA here, dismissed the reports and shared that he remains committed to making his return to the national team after recovering from the injury. "There is no truth in the retirement news," said Fakhar. "I will be fully fit and join the team soon." For the unversed, Fakhar Zaman, who made his international debut in 2017, has represented Pakistan in three Tests, 86 ODIs and 92 T20Is, accumulating 5691 runs across formats with the help of 11 centuries and 30 fifties.



Aqib Javed rejects calls for major team overhaul

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan interim head coach, Aqib Javed, has dismissed the notion of making wholesale changes to the national team following their disastrous ICC Champions Trophy 2025 campaign. Addressing the media in Rawalpindi, Aqib pointed out how fans often look for a singular reason behind defeats but emphasized that losses are a collective team effort. "A common fan watching the match wants an explanation for why the team lost. But there's no single reason or

just one or two players to blame—the entire team lost," he said. Aqib Javed defended the squad, expressing his belief that this was Pakistan's best available team. "Shaheen, Haris, and Naseem—everyone knows they are our best pacers and the future of Pakistan," he stated. "As for Babar, tell me, who else is at his level right now? People keep saying to change the team entirely, but look at the experience level—except for Babar, no one in this squad has played 100 matches. - DNA

Pakistan committed to Trans...

FROM PAGE 01
He said both the countries can learn from each other's experiences and expertise in various sectors including mine and minerals, energy, pharmaceutical and textiles. He said this bilateral relationship will be elevated to a new level.

Bilawal opposes...

FROM PAGE 01
resolve issues. He pointed out that even the jail menu for political prisoners was changed during the PTI rule. "Now there is a demand for changes in the jail menu and the provision of facilities," he apparently referred to PTI chairman Imran Khan, who has been detained for months. Bilawal also recalled that Asif Zardari spent a long time in jail as a political prisoner. When PPP came into power, they believed that "democracy is the best revenge," he said. The PPP chief said the party has always opposed the NAB system of accountability.

Bhoun elected...

FROM PAGE 01
advocate Akhtar Hussain resigned from his position as a member of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), citing concerns over controversies surrounding judicial appointments. Hussain, who was nominated thrice by the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), submitted his resignation to Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, who heads the commission. In his letter, he expressed dissatisfaction with the recent selection process for Supreme Court judges. "On present controversies with regard to judicial appointments, I am unable to continue and, hereby, resign as a member of JCP," he wrote, requesting the PBC to nominate a new representative in his place.

Mustafa Kamal...

FROM PAGE 01
League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Khalid Magi from the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP). The sources indicated that some ministers may see their portfolios reassigned, while others could be removed altogether. The final decisions were reportedly made following discussions between the president and the prime minister. According to sources, Abbasi may be appointed as the Minister for Railways, while Dr Chaudhry is expected to take charge of the Ministry of National Health Services. Magi is likely to be given the Ministry of Communications, whereas Kamal may be assigned the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Abu Dhabi Crown...

FROM PAGE 01
Understanding (MoU) with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Additionally, the two leaders are likely to hold discussions on bilateral relations and economic cooperation. Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed serves as a member of Abu Dhabi's Supreme Council for Financial and Economic Affairs and sits on the board of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). He is also a board member of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and has previously held key roles in national security, including as Deputy National Security Adviser. In March 2023, Sheikh Khaled was appointed Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council.

Torkham border remains shut

FROM PAGE 01
Mujeeb Khan Shinwari, president of the Torkham Customs Clearing Agents Association, told The News that multiple rounds of negotiations had taken place between Pakistani and Afghan border officials. He added that Customs Collector Muteen Alam was also involved in the discussions, expressing optimism that an agreement had been reached to reopen the border soon. Local traders and daily wage earners have been particularly affected.



TASHKENT: Commercial Counsellor Atta Ullah of Pakistan's embassy along with JGE's CEO Ikram Ullah Joyia at the occasion of signing of historic MoUs between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, paving way for increased rice, mango, and meat exports between the two nations. - DNA

Briefs

Gold price decreases by Rs 2,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.2,400 and was sold at Rs 306,300 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs308,700 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 2,058 to Rs 262,602 from Rs.264,660 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went down by Rs.1,886 to Rs 240,727 from Rs.243,613. The prices of per tola silver decreased by Rs.36 to Rs.3,314 and that of ten gram went down by Rs.31 to Rs.2,841. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$24 to \$2,916 from \$2,940 whereas the prices of silver in international market went down by \$0.41 to \$31.79, the Association reported.—APP

PSX turns bearish, loses 665 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 665.76 points, a negative change of 0.58 percent, closing at 113,862.33 points as compared to 114,528.09 points on the last trading day. A total of 640,178,422 shares were traded during the day as compared to 495,984,234 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs22.740 billion against Rs29.362 billion on the last trading day. As many as 446 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 126 of them recorded gains and 260 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Energycio PK with 83,863,183 shares at Rs.7.69 per share, Pak International Bulk with 49,255,813 shares at Rs.9.08 per share and Sui South Gas with 39,439,690 shares at Rs.34.18 per share.—APP

Rupee gains 06 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 06 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.61 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.67. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.00 and Rs281.25, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs0.75 to close at Rs293.62 against the last day's closing of Rs292.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.87, whereas a decrease of 84 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs353.89 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs353.05. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 and 02 paise to close at Rs 76.13 and Rs74.56.—APP

Indonesia launches campaign to raise \$200m aid for Palestine

JAKARTA: Indonesia on Wednesday launched a campaign to raise \$200 million in humanitarian aid for Palestinians, as Jakarta moves to support the rebuilding of Gaza. A staunch supporter of Palestine, the Indonesian government and people see Palestinian statehood as being mandated by their own constitution, which calls for the abolition of colonialism. The campaign, "Indonesia for Palestine: Solidarity, Real Action and New Hope," is being organized by the Indonesian Ulama Council, Indonesia's National Alms Agency and other NGOs with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "We are starting this campaign with the initial target of \$200 million," Deputy Foreign Minister Anis Matta said at the campaign launch in Jakarta.—APP



TASHKENT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev introducing their respective delegations at the official welcoming ceremony held at Congress Centre Tashkent.—DNA

Vietnam shows growth in industrial, agri, services sectors

He mentioned that in 2024, Vietnam's global exports surpassed \$405.5bn while its imports were \$380.8bn. He said that foreign direct investment in Vietnam during 2024 was estimated at \$25.35bn

DNA

FAISALABAD: Vietnam has shown an impressive growth in the industrial, agriculture and services sectors which is the outcome of its broad-based economic transformation strategy. This was said by Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan Mr Pham Anh Tuan while addressing the business community in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) on Wednesday. He said that Pakistan is a big coun-

try with a lot of potential in the textile sector as statistically Faisalabad accounts for 30% of Pakistan's textile production and 44% of its textile exports. He mentioned that in 2024, Vietnam's global exports surpassed \$405.5bn while its imports were \$380.8bn. He said that foreign direct investment in Vietnam during 2024 was estimated at \$25.35bn. He said that Vietnam had signed agreements with 34 countries, including nine comprehensive strategic partners, 11 strategic partners and 14



comprehensive partners in addition to signing 19 FTA with various countries. About data and statistics of trade between

Vietnam and Pakistan, he said that in 2023 bilateral trade between Pakistan and Vietnam was around \$750million. "In 2024 total import and export turnover reached over \$850million", he said and added that exports reached \$522million while imports were \$328million. He said that Pakistan's main exports to Vietnam consist of corn, woven fabrics of cotton and leather while on the other hand Pakistan's imports from Vietnam include electronic equipment, yarn, rubber and tea etc. He

said that potential sectors where Pakistan could further enhance its exports to Vietnam include processed meat, pharmaceutical products, fruits and vegetables. He said that there was tremendous room for collaboration in the information technology and tourism sectors. He said that there is a need to find new avenues of trade between Pakistan and Vietnam because Vietnam being an active member of ASEAN, holds great importance for Pakistan. He suggested that a Memorandum of

Cooperation between the FCCI and Vietnam Cotton and Spinning Association should be initiated to forge relationships between the business communities of the two countries. Earlier, FCCI President Rehan Naseem Bharara underlined the economic importance of Faisalabad in the national economy and said: "We must collaborate to maintain a strategic balance between bilateral trades". He also stressed the need to further enhance relations with Vietnam in the field of tourism promotion.

China, Pak sign coop agreement for EV development

BEIJING: Shanghai Launch Automotive Technology Co., Ltd. (LAUNCH) and Yousuf Dewan Companies (YDC), pioneers in electric vehicle assembly in Pakistan, officially signed here a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This agreement marks a significant step toward bringing advanced electric vehicle (EV) technology to Pakistan and promoting sustainable mobility solutions in the region. At the signing ceremony, Khan Muhammad Wazir, Counselor of Technical Affairs, Embassy of Pakistan in China, and Idrees Gigi, Director of Projects at YDC, along with senior officials from LAUNCH, marked the official commencement of this exciting partnership. According to China Economic Net, Idrees Gigi from Yousuf Dewan Companies (YDC) stated that, under this cooperation, they will develop a National Car for Pakistan, leveraging LAUNCH's cutting-edge design and technology expertise. He further mentioned the establishment of local assembly operations (CKD) for a range of battery electric vehicles (BEVs), including both right-hand drive (RHD) and left-hand drive (LHD) models, for domestic sales and export markets. The cooperation includes the creation of a technology partnership focused on EV innovation, battery lifecycle management, and recycling solutions, as well as exploring a joint venture for manufacturing and scaling BEV production in Pakistan.—DNA

AI drives revolution in China's automobile industry

BEIJING: Imagine a driving experience that is as self-centered as it can be seats, music and temperature that adjust automatically according to your mood, routes planned by the auto-driving system using real-time traffic data, and charging notifications sent in advance based on the nearest charging stations...Increasingly, these futuristic scenarios are turning into reality in China. AI has seamlessly integrated into every part of China's automotive industry, revolutionizing each aspect from intelligent cockpit, autonomous driving, to vehicle design, production, marketing, sales, and after-sale services. "It can be a travel expert, planning itinerary for you; it can be a secretary, extracting key information from your phone calls in vehicles; it can also read your facial expressions and gestures, engage in intelligent conversations, and cater to your needs," shared Chen Xiaobo, Senior System Architect in iFLYTEK, a Chinese tech giant that has ventured into the realm of intelligent vehicles. Human-like emotions, judgment, and decision-making capabilities are driving unprecedented efficiency, innovation, and personalization. In design, AI-powered tools such as AiCube enable designers to generate car sketches in seconds with minimal input. In manufacturing, AI optimizes processes from configuration to quality control, cutting costs by 25%. In marketing, AI analyzes consumer behavior to deliver tailored content, train livestreamers, and slash unnecessary advertising by 70%. In after-sales, AI-powered algorithm enables predictive diagnostics and defect recognition. This shift towards AI-driven innovation is gaining momentum, with over a dozen major automakers, including BYD, Geely, Dongfeng, and Chery, announcing collaborations with DeepSeek. Additionally, companies like XPeng and Li Auto have announced to develop their own AI models, aiming to transform cars into "smart travel companions." According to S&P's data provider IHS Markit, over 75% of new cars produced in China this year will feature smart cockpits-up from just over 50% four years ago. Prices for a regular 'smart car' have also been dropping to less than RMB 20,000 (\$30,000). As vehicles evolve from simple transportation tools into "third spaces"-integrating leisure, entertainment, and even office functions—consumers are increasingly seeking a homelike experience in their cars. Ms. Xian Bijuan from the automotive research institute Autohome highlights that 47% of consumers report spending more time in their cars, while 55.3% of buyers are replacing their vehicles with more spacious, comfortable models. In the future, AI will become as essential to cars as water and air to human, said Chen. While car makers are racing to innovate, the intelligent evolution of Chinese cars present vast opportunities for international investment.—Basemark, a Finnish AR software developer has just entered into the Chinese market this year. China is poised to become one of the markets with the most abundant AI applications in vehicles. Partnership is essential in your business in China. In collaboration with local hardware suppliers or original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), a whole set of solution can be provided, Paul Yeh and Mr. Xiao Zhihao from the company told China Economic Net (CEN) at China International New Energy Vehicle Technology.—Agencies

Experts at CASS moot suggest effective counter terrorism steps

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, organised a roundtable discussion on the evolving intersection of technology and terrorism, titled 'Technology and Terror - A Boon and Bane Relationship.' The event brought together experts from academia, policy research, and counterterrorism to deliberate on how modern technology has transformed both terrorist tactics and counterterrorism strategies. The roundtable underscored the dual nature of technological advancements, exploring how they have empowered terrorist groups while simultaneously providing sophisticated tools to combat them. Discussions revolved around AI-driven propaganda, encrypted communications, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, blockchain-based terrorist financing, and counterterrorism responses using AI, blockchain, unmanned platforms, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Dr Dayyab Gillani, Director of Research Development at the National Coun-

ter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), discussed the evolving interplay between technology and terrorism. He shared that while terrorists have always adapted to new technologies, they have remained operationally conservative, relying primarily on conventional weapons such as firearms and explosives. However, he cautioned against underestimating the emerging threats posed by cyberterrorism, 3D-printed weapons, and AI-powered radicalisation campaigns. Drawing from historical data, Dr Gillani showed that while the use of chemical, biological, radi-

ological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons remains rare, increasing reliance on digital platforms and cyber tactics poses significant challenges for law enforcement and counterterrorism agencies worldwide. Dr Usman W. Chohan, Advisor on Economic Affairs at CASS, explored the economic perspective of the technology-terrorism nexus. His discussion focused on blockchain, cryptocurrency, and financial crime networks, highlighting how terrorist groups use decentralised financial systems to fund operations while evading regulatory oversight.

Dr Chohan critically examined the effectiveness of global anti-money laundering institutions, such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and argued that despite various reforms, loopholes remain that allow illicit financial flows to persist. He further talked about the role of PPPs in countering terrorist financing through advanced technological tools such as blockchain analytics. Muhammad Amir Rana, President of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), provided insights into how cyberterrorism and online radicalisation had created new challenges for policymakers. He stressed the importance of collaborations between governments, tech companies, and financial institutions to curb the exploitation of digital platforms by terrorist organisations and belligerent non-state actors. A key segment of the discussion focused on Pakistan's unique challenges and opportunities in adopting technology-driven counterterrorism strategies. Discussants highlighted resource constraints, need for enhanced institutional coordination, and the role of emerging tech ecosystems in strengthening counter-

terrorism efforts. It was stressed that AI-driven data analytics could detect early signs of radicalisation, identify terrorist networks, and optimise resource allocation for law enforcement; and hence called for greater collaboration between academia, private industry, and government agencies to ensure a proactive approach in integrating technological solutions into national security frameworks. Following the expert presentations, an interactive question-and-answer session was held. The discussion explored the ethical considerations of surveillance technologies, risks of AI misuse in counterterrorism, and need for a balanced approach between 'security' and 'privacy'. The roundtable concluded with remarks by President of CASS, Islamabad, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd.), who reiterated the significance of using technology for national security while ensuring it does not become a tool for adversarial forces. He stressed that Pakistan must stay ahead of emerging threats by fostering a culture of technological innovation in counterterrorism efforts.



Taiwan sends forces in response to China 'live-fire' drills off island

TAIPEI: Taiwan sent forces on Wednesday in response to China's "live-fire" drills off the self-ruled island, Taipei's defense ministry said, condemning the exercises as dangerous. China deployed 32 aircraft near Taiwan as part of a joint combat drill with Chinese warships and announced "live-fire exercises" in an area about 40 nautical miles (74 kilometers) off the island's south, the ministry said in a statement. Taiwan's military responded by sending sea, air and land forces to "monitor, alert and respond appropriately," the statement said. China's People's Liberation Army "has blatantly violated international norms by unilaterally designating a drill zone 40 NM off the coast of Kaohsiung and Pingtung, claiming to conduct live-fire exercises without prior warning," the ministry said. "This move not only caused a high degree of danger to the safety of international flights and vessels at sea, but is also a blatant provocation to regional security and stability." Taiwan has naval and air bases in Kaohsiung and Pingtung.—APP

Japanese auto mobile companies assured of smooth business operations

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday said the government was committed to providing conducive environment for investment in automobile sector and assured the Japanese companies of ease business operations. He expressed these views as he met the representatives of Japanese companies to discuss challenges faced by the Japanese automobile sector in Pakistan. The discussions focused on matters related to exports, refunds, and the overall business environment for foreign investors in the country, said a news release. The minister highlighted that local industries were currently paying higher taxes compared to others and stressed the need for reforms in the taxation system to support industrial growth. He said incentives and concessions for industries would be linked to their export volumes, ensuring that companies contributing to the national economy would receive greater benefits. He assured the Japanese representatives that their genuine concerns would be resolved on a priority basis to facilitate smooth business operations.—APP

Malaysia yet to finalise MH370 search contract

KUALA LUMPUR: A ship that will hunt for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has deployed to its Indian Ocean search zone, according to Malaysia's transport minister and ship tracking data, raising hopes of solving one of aviation's greatest mysteries. In December, Malaysia agreed to resume the search for the Boeing 777 that was carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew when it vanished en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014. Malaysia has not yet signed off on the contract to search the seabed for wreckage, however, casting uncertainty over whether a search has begun. Contacted by Reuters, U.S. exploration firm Ocean Infinity, which conducted the last search for the plane that ended in 2018, said it had no information to provide at this stage. Malaysia had not yet signed the contract with Ocean Infinity, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said on Tuesday, but he welcomed the company's "proactiveness" to deploy its ships to that area to begin the search. "Since Ocean Infinity already started to mobilise their ships, of course we welcome it because we have given the principle approval for the search to resume.—APP

Briefs

ATC cancels Asad Umar's bail

ATC Admin Judge Manzoor Ali Gul heard the cases

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday cancelled former PTI leader Asad Umar's bail in three May 9 cases. ATC Admin Judge Manzoor Ali Gul heard the cases and canceled Asad Umar's interim bails due to his absence. Asad Umar faces charges of arson, violence, and vandalism in cases registered at Jinnah House Lahore and Askari Town police stations. Last year, former federal minister Asad Umar said he had not joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as he couldn't even think of parting with the PTI. Speaking to reporters outside Lahore's anti-terrorism court (ATC), he rejected rumours of joining the PPP and called it "mere propaganda." Umar said he was in Lahore and didn't join any party. He also urged Fawad Chaudhry to keep calm and avoid harsh words.

768 judges in Punjab agree on double shifts

DNA

LAHORE: In response to a proposal for round-the-clock court sessions in Punjab, 768 judges have agreed while 979 have declined. Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi, as chairman of the National Judicial Policy Making Committee, had suggested implementing double shifts in Punjab's subordinate courts to address the backlog of over 1.4 million pending cases. Following this, the Director General of District Judiciary at the Lahore High Court issued a directive to all sessions judges in Punjab. According to the reports submitted by the judges, Punjab's subordinate judiciary comprises 1,747 judges.

We will fight for restoration of democracy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub said on Wednesday that the opposition would fight for the restoration of democracy, constitution, and rule of law on the streets, in the parliament, and in the courts. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, Ayub stated that the opposition's two-day Constitution Protection Conference would be held today.

Nepali Army Day



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar, Chairman NADRA, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan Ms. Rita Dhital, Military Attache Col. Bhes Bahadur KC and others cutting cake to celebrate the Nepali Army Day, held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. - DNA

Pak reaffirms commitment to protection of HRs

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar assured the international community of Pakistan's efforts in protecting human rights in the country, saying "robust legislative and policy measures" were in place to ensure that, a statement from the human rights ministry said on Wednesday. His remarks came as he addressed a high-level segment of the United Nations Human Rights Council's 58th session in Geneva yesterday. Amnesty International, in a statement last year, observed that human rights abuses remained "rampant" in Pakistan. Reports of extra-judicial killings, harassment of human rights defenders, mass arrests, military trials of civilians and violation of freedom of the press were some of the concerns listed by the rights group. Last month, the European Union warned Pakistan to reconsider its GSP+ status, citing human rights violations as one of the reasons.

IMF mission reviews Pak climate planning

Funds to be disbursed under IMF RST, a 2022 initiative launched for long-term concessional climate financing

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A mission from the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), a funding mechanism of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on Wednesday reviewed the planning process for project selection and appraisal across Pakistan's federating units. The RSF mission is visiting Pakistan to discuss around \$1 billion in climate financing on top of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) last summer as part of an economic recovery plan. That disbursement will take place under the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), created in 2022 to provide long-term concessional cash for

climate-related spending, such as adaptation and transitioning to cleaner energy. The RSF officials engaged with the relevant authorities in a meeting hosted by representatives from all provinces through their respective Planning and Development Departments (P&DDs). The primary focus of the session was on the IMF's assessment of how projects are selected and appraised in the federating units. The mission sought insights into the procedures adopted by provinces to integrate climate resilience into their projects. Provincial representatives explained that all federating units adhere to the Planning Division's manual for project planning.

Uzbekistan seeks enhanced aviation coop with Pakistan

Air Chief and Uzbek Deputy Defence Minister Discuss Bilateral Cooperation

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: A high level defence delegation led by Major General Burkhonov Akhmad Jamalovich, Deputy Minister of Defence & Commander of the Air Defence Forces and Air Force of the Republic of Uzbekistan called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. Matters pertaining to mutual interest, avenues to enhance bilateral military cooperation, joint training and technological collaboration in the aerospace domains were discussed during the meeting. Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Major General Burkhonov Akhmad Jamalovich. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the robust bilater-

al military ties between the two brotherly countries and assured that PAF is committed to extending full support for the basic to tactical-level training for pilots, as well as technical training of maintenance crews for capacity building of the personnel of Uzbekistan Air Force. The Air Chief further said that both Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy long standing religious and cultural bonds which are based on convergence on all important issues related to regional peace and security. The visiting dignitary lauded the historic & exemplary professionalism demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan Air Force and praised PAF's notable progress in developing a thriving domestic capability in the aviation industry. The dignitary articulated his desire for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration between the two countries, emphasizing the need of joint training in

the face of evolving security threats. He also expressed his earnest desire to expand the existing Mushshak aircraft fleet of the Uzbek Air Force, through procurement from Pakistan Air Force. Both the commanders agreed on establishment of a more comprehensive two way exchange of expertise with specific focus on niche and disruptive technologies in the domains of Cyber, Space and Electronic Warfare capabilities. The delegation also visited PAF Cyber Command and National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre established at Air Headquarters, where it was briefed about the operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force. The visit of this high level defence delegation of Uzbekistan to Air Headquarters Islamabad signifies a resolute commitment of both countries to reinforce their military partnership, fostering collaboration and promoting robust relations.

Hamas to hand over four Zionist hostages' bodies

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA CITY: Hamas will hand over the bodies of four Israeli hostages on Thursday in what it said would be an exchange for more than 600 Palestinian prisoners, capping the first phase of a Gaza ceasefire deal. The United States said talks were on track for a second phase of the ceasefire deal that has largely held but whose complexity and long-drawn-out implementation have highlighted its fragility. In Israel on Wednesday, thousands of mourners gathered for the funeral of Shiri Bibas and her sons, who were killed in captivity in Gaza and had become symbols of the country's hostage ordeal. The ceasefire has largely halted the Israel-Hamas war sparked by the October 7,

2023 attack, and has seen 25 hostages released alive so far in exchange for hundreds of prisoners. "Hamas and other resistance factions will hand over four bodies of Israeli captives," a Hamas official told AFP, adding that in return, Israel would free 625 Palestinian prisoners in an exchange beginning on Thursday. Israel has reached an agreement with mediators for the return of the bodies of four Israeli hostages held in Gaza, the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. In Washington, US President Donald Trump's top envoy on the Middle East said Israeli representatives were en route to talks on the next phase of the ceasefire deal. "We're making a lot of progress. Israel is sending a team right now as we speak," Steve Witkoff told an event for the American Jewish Committee.

Pakistan to participate in single country exhibition in Ethiopia

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Calls on Governor of Punjab, Pakistan



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, called on H.E. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Governor of Punjab, Pakistan on Wednesday here at the Governor House Lahore. Both the sides exchanged ideas on the matters of mutual interest and explored various areas of bilateral, regional and multiple cooperation to strengthen the bilateral relations of the two countries. H.E. Dr. Jemal briefed the Governor Punjab about robust progress in the bilateral and multilateral cooperation of the two countries in the areas of business, trade, investment, health, education, science and technology and climate change. The Ambassador said the FDR Ethiopia is a gateway to Africa, playing a crucial role in the Look Africa and Engage Africa Policy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which is aimed at increasing presence of Pakistan in African continent. He said the Ethiopian Airlines has been launched

in Karachi and soon its operations would be commenced for Lahore which would further strengthen the two countries relations by enhancing business-to-business and people-to-people ties. Ambassador Dr. Jemal said he has been striving to connect Pakistan not only with the FDR Ethiopia, but also entire Africa, he said while highlighting the instrumental role being played by the Ethiopian Airlines in the Look Africa and Engage Africa policy. The Ambassador, on the occasion, extended an invitation to the Governor for the Single Country Exhibition of Pakistan being hosted by the FDR Ethiopia this year in May. On the other hand, the Governor appreciated the role and vision of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Jemal for promoting the bilateral relations between the two countries and assured full support of his good office for taking the bilateral ties to new heights. He hoped that bilateral ties of the two countries that enjoyed longstanding brotherly relations would grow further in future. The Governor appreciated the Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, expressing his desire to work closely with the Ambassador to take such initiatives that are essential to tackle the climate change.



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