



Islamabad POST

Monday, March 03, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Pak calls for UNSC reform, demands more transparency

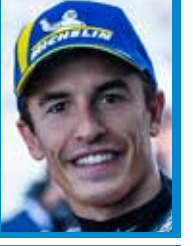
Detailed News On Page-08

Maryam steps up efforts to control inflation

Detailed News On Page-08

Marc Marquez beats brother to win Thailand GP

Detailed News On Page-06



Calls for national unity

COAS advises youth against indulging in 'baseless criticism'

Gen Munir reaffirms Pakistan Army's support for initiatives that empower young talent

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir stressed the importance of self-responsibility, saying that each of us must focus on our own duties and performance instead of engaging in "baseless criticism". During an interaction with students from various universities in Bahawalpur on Saturday, the army chief underscored the army's commitment to nurturing the nation's youth. He encouraged students to pursue academic excellence with dedication and equip themselves with the skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to national development. General Munir lauded the pivotal role of the youth in shaping Pakistan's future and reaffirmed the army's support for initiatives that empower young talent. He said that as long as great mothers continue to sacrifice their children for Pakistan and the youth stand united with the armed forces, nobody can harm the country. The army chief said an organised illegal spectrum backs terrorism, with certain elements providing support to it. He said whenever the state takes action against them, their false narratives are spread to undermine the efforts. Highlighting the blessings of Pakistan, COAS Munir described the country as a precious gift from Allah Almighty, blessed with many bounties. He urged the audience to remain steadfast in their beliefs, remember their ancestors, and uphold the core values of society. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the COAS visited Bahawalpur Cantonment a day earlier, where he was apprised about operational preparedness. While addressing officers and troops, he commended their unwavering dedication,

Continued on Page 06

Civilian deaths from terrorism surged in February

Security forces, meanwhile, intensified counter-terrorism operations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: February saw a marginal increase in terrorist attacks but a sharp surge in civilian casualties, according to a report published by the Islamabad-based think tank, Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). The report was published after a suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a military convoy in North Waziristan earlier today, martyring two soldiers and injuring 10 others. According to PICSS, the country witnessed 79 terrorist attacks last month, resulting in the deaths of 55 civilians and 47 security personnel, while 45 civilians and 81 security personnel were injured. Security forces, meanwhile, intensified counter-terrorism operations, eliminating 156 terrorists, injuring 20, and arresting 66, it said. "February 2025 marked the first month since August 2024 in which civilian

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding sugar supply and price control in the country. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, and relevant senior government officials also attended the meeting. — DNA

India thrash NZ to top Group A

Chakravarthy takes five wickets for just 42 runs in his 10 overs

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Varun Chakravarthy's five-wicket haul helped India to defend a modest total and beat New Zealand by 50 runs in the last group-stage fixture of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 here at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Chasing a modest 250-run target, New Zealand's batting unit unfolded on a meagre 200 despite Kane Williamson's anchoring half-century. The experienced batter waged a lone battle against India's spin-laden bowling attack with a gutsy 81 off 120 deliveries, laced with seven boundaries.

Continued on Page 06

CTD arrests wanted terrorist in Karachi

He was involved in multiple attacks against security forces

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Rangers and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a joint operation in Malir, Karachi and arrested Zubair Ahmed, alias Zubair, a high-profile terrorist affiliated with the banned Baloch Republican Army (BRA).

Continued on Page 06

Strict action against hoarders

PM orders for smooth supply of food items

During the meeting Prime Minister was briefed that at present there is ample stock of sugar in the country. He said fair price shops have been set up to sell sugar at lower prices at provincial level

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting to review the food supply and price control especially of sugar in the country. PM Shehbaz said that the government will not compromise on smooth supply of food and beverages to the people at affordable prices. The Prime Minister said in recent months, the government had taken strict action against sugar smuggling, which has helped in curbing sugar smuggling. The Prime Minister issued directives to concerned departments that strict measures

Continued on Page 06

Delegation to Afghanistan PTI urges federal govt to approve TORs

He criticised the federal government for allegedly politicising the issue of terrorism

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Adviser to Information, Barrister Saif, has urged the federal government to approve the Terms of Reference (TORs) for an urgent

Continued on Page 06

PML-N, PPP rift Bilawal to meet Shehbaz today

Several important issues will come under discussion while heads of allied parties will also attend the high-level meeting

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will meet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Monday (today).

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

UAE envoy message on Ramadan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of UAE H a m a d O b a i d A l Z a a b i has issued a special message on the occasion of Ramadan Kareem. Here is the text of his message. "On the auspicious occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the government and brotherly people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, unity, and compassion—a period that strengthens our shared values of generosity and mutual respect, the enduring brotherly relations between the UAE and Pakistan are a testament to our shared commitment to fostering peace, prosperity, and humanitarian values. May this holy month bring blessings, harmony, and progress to both nations and inspire us all to continue supporting those in need through acts of kindness and charity. Ramadan Kareem! May this sacred time deepen bonds of friendship and bring peace and prosperity to all."

Old enmity claims six lives in Gujrat

DNA

GUJRAT: In a tragic incident, at least six people were killed after unidentified assailants on a motorcycle opened fire at a vehicle in Punjab's Gujrat city on Sunday. Police said that the incident took place in Miana Chak Dinga — a town in the city — where attackers fled after killing six people travelling on the vehicle. They added that the incident was the result of personal enmity. The slain persons were aged between 26 to 35 years. The deceased were identified as Zahid Nazim, 30, Mubashir, 26, Zunair, 30, Javed Iqbal, 33, Rukhsar, 35, and a 26-year-old unidentified man.

As it cuts off Gaza aid

Israeli regime using 'war-crime starvation strategy'

"Israel will not allow a ceasefire without the release of our [captives]," Netanyahu's office added, warning of "further consequences" if Hamas insists on its decision

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: The Israeli regime has suspended the entry of humanitarian aid supplies to the Gaza Strip amid the termination of the first phase of the January 19 ceasefire agreement, with the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas denouncing the move as a "war crime" against the besieged territory. Palestinian media's live footage broadcast from the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah showed a road often used by aid-delivering trucks remaining empty on Sunday after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced a halt on the entry of all goods and supplies into the blockaded enclave. The office claimed that the move was prompted after Hamas's refusal to accept an American proposal to extend phase one of the ceasefire through Ramadan and Passover holidays and alongside more releases of Israeli captives in

Continued on Page 06

'Once in a generation moment': European leaders discuss Ukraine

"That is the agenda and we need to agree what steps come out of this meeting to deliver peace through strength for the benefit of all"

AGENCIES

LONDON: The UK prime minister hosted over a dozen European leaders plus delegates from Canada and Turkey for crunch talks on Ukraine's future. Leaders of Ukraine, France, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Canada, Finland,

Continued on Page 06

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Uzbekistan

By capitalizing on the opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity, and tourism, both countries can work towards a more prosperous and interconnected region

Opinion

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



PRIME Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has recently concluded a highly successful visit to Uzbekistan, marking a significant step towards strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. Upon his arrival in Tashkent, the Pakistani prime minister was accorded a red-carpet welcome, reflecting the warmth and importance of the ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. During the visit, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to enhance the volume of bilateral trade, setting an ambitious target to increase trade from the current \$404 million to \$2 billion in the near future. The two sides also agreed to explore the vast potential for cooperation in the fields of investment, connectivity, and tourism. This mutual commitment is expected to unlock new opportunities for both nations, fostering economic growth and regional stability. The strengthening of bilateral ties was a key focus of the one-on-one meeting be-

tween Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, followed by delegation-level talks. One of the most promising agreements reached during these discussions was the commitment to expedite efforts to realize the Trans-Afghan Railway project. This ambitious project aims to connect Central Asia with South Asia, offering a game-changing trade corridor that could significantly boost economic integration in the region. Uzbekistan, the largest of the Central Asian states, holds immense business and cultural potential. The country's agriculture sector is one of the most developed in the region, particularly in cotton production. Pakistan stands to benefit greatly from Uzbekistan's expertise and technology in cotton cultivation. With Uzbek technology, Pakistan could potentially double its cotton production at half the current cost, which would have a transformative impact on its textile industry and overall economy. At the same time, Pakistan's potential in the pharmaceutical, textile, construction materials, and information technology sectors is also of great importance for the Uzbek market. In recent years, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan has grown significantly, reflecting the dedicated efforts of diplomats on both sides. A noteworthy development in this regard was the commencement of direct flights by Uzbek Air from Pakistan, providing easier access to Uzbek markets and other Central Asian

states. The resumption of direct Lahore-Tashkent flights in November 2024 is expected to strengthen business ties and bring the peoples of both countries closer. To further bolster connectivity, Pakistan should encourage its national flag carrier and private airlines to launch direct flights to Tashkent and other Central Asian destinations. Improved air connectivity will not only facilitate the movement of people but also boost business and tourism activities, ultimately contributing to stronger economic ties and greater regional integration. There are plans to develop transit trade through the port of Karachi, as well as to create joint investment funds, which of course is a step in the right direction. This will strengthen trade relations between the two countries. The energy sector is also one of the promising areas. Both countries can cooperate on projects to develop renewable energy sources, including solar and wind power plants, hydropower, and gas infrastructure. These joint initiatives will ensure energy security and accelerate the transition to sustainable energy sources. Additionally, in September 2024, Uzbekistan introduced a simplified visa procedure for Pakistani citizens. This gave impetus to an increase in the number of tourists, students and entrepreneurs wishing to visit Uzbekistan. Simplification of visas has opened up new opportunities for cultural

exchange, acquaintance with historical monuments and cultural traditions, as well as for establishing business ties. The simplification of visas and the establishment of direct flights will have a significant impact on the growth of tourist flows between the two brotherly countries, and strengthening of cultural and humanitarian relations. The visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Uzbekistan has set a positive trajectory for the future of Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations. By capitalizing on the opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity, and tourism, both countries can work towards a more prosperous and interconnected region. It is anticipated that officials from both sides will leverage all available resources and channels to swiftly translate the commitments made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Uzbekistan into reality. Sustained, result-oriented engagements will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in helping both countries achieve the targets set during the leaders' meeting. Situated at a highly strategic geographic location, Central Asia serves as a vital bridge connecting South Asia, Europe, and Russia. The region offers immense connectivity opportunities not only among the Central Asian republics but also with Russia, making it a crucial hub for regional trade, economic cooperation, and energy collaboration. For Pakistan, forging stronger ties with

Central Asian countries holds significant economic and strategic importance. While Uzbekistan has already emerged as a key partner in various sectors, Pakistan can further benefit from the expertise and resources of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in fields such as agriculture, mining, tourism, education, technology, and energy infrastructure development. In return, these countries can benefit from Pakistan's ports, manpower, and expertise in various industrial sectors, creating a mutually beneficial partnership. One of the most promising aspects of Central Asia is its huge energy potential. The region is blessed with vast reserves of natural gas, oil, hydroelectric power, and renewable energy resources, making it an energy-rich region. On the other hand, Pakistan, being an energy-deficient country, has long been grappling with an energy crisis that has adversely impacted its economy and the daily lives of its people. The ever-increasing burden of expensive energy tariffs has not only strained household incomes but also hampered industrial growth. In conclusion, strengthening diplomatic, economic, and energy ties with Central Asian countries can not only help Pakistan diversify its energy sources but also boost regional trade and connectivity. By capitalizing on the untapped potential of Central Asia, Pakistan can pave the way for long-term economic stability, regional cooperation, and mutual prosperity.

Int'l Wheelchair Day: special ceremony held at PCP

PESHAWAR: Every year, on March 1, the world observes International Wheelchair Day to spotlight the needs, rights, and challenges faced by wheelchair users across the globe. This significant day was first launched in 2012 by Dr. Geoff Adams-Spink, a British engineer and disability rights activist who himself was a wheelchair user. In Pakistan, although this occasion is formally acknowledged, its observance often falls short of fulfilling its core objectives. However, the Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) stands out as a national institution that not only takes tangible steps for the physical, psychological rehabilitation and welfare of persons with disabilities (PwDs) but also commemorates this day with a sense of renewed commitment each year.

This year, the PCP once again organized a special event that saw an overwhelming turnout of attendees from various walks of life, including graduates from different far-flung regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other parts of the country, as well as international participants. Among them, Abdul Elah from Saudi Arabia and Khalil Jan from Afghanistan were particularly prominent. At the Paraplegic Center Peshawar, individuals who complete their rehabilitation journey are honored with the title of "graduates," symbolizing their resilience and transition towards self-sufficiency. To further empower them, they are provided with customized wheelchairs and assistive devices free of cost, ensuring their full independence and mobility. The event was graced by Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, as the chief guest, while the session was presided over by the CEO of the Paraplegic Center, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas. A particularly moving moment unfolded when Abdul Elah, the young Saudi graduate, extended a heartfelt welcome to the chief guest by greeting him with a loud salaam and presenting him with a bouquet. —DNA

Sukkur Police Conduct Flag March

SUKKUR: The Sukkur Police, led by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Azhar Khan Mughal, conducted a flag march on Sunday to ensure peace and tranquility in the city during the holy month of Ramadan. The march began at the World Globe and concluded at the SSP office, passing through various areas of Sukkur city. Comprehensive security arrangements have been put in place, with enhanced security measures at all entry and exit points. The Madadgar 15 squad is patrolling different areas, while senior police officers have been directed to remain vigilant and monitor duty points from a security perspective. The key security measures included Crackdown on Traffic Violations. A crackdown is underway against vehicles with tinted glasses, pillion riding, and those without number plates. —APP

Great scope of Malaysia-Pakistan Cooperation in agri field: Envoy

Malaysian high commissioner lauds SIFC initiative

ber of Commerce Ch. Sohaib Saeed and Mayor Mirpur Ch. Usman Khalid was also present.

In his remarks, Ambassador Dato' Azhar appreciated the Government of Pakistan and Special Investment Fa-

cilitation Council (SIFC) for their focus on agriculture and mentioned that there is a great scope of collaboration

in the area of agriculture. President Mr. Umar Shehzad discussed investment opportunities for businessmen on both sides. President MCCI elaborated on the conducive environment for investment in AJK & welcomed all domestic and international investment.

Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar expressed his delight to be in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and appreciated the Chamber for its initiatives. He spoke about investment opportunities in palm oil, rubber, technology, education, and tourism. Souvenirs were exchanged at the end of the meeting. Ali Raza Syed and recently elected President Mirpur Dist Bar Adv. Mahmood Hussain,



DNA

MIRPUR: His Excellency Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar bin Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan visited Mirpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Mirpur, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK).

The High Commissioner was accompanied by Mr. Mohd. Syafiq Firdaus bin Hasbullah, Deputy Head of Mission of the High Commission. Upon arrival, the High Commissioner was received by general and executive members of the Chamber and former Presidents of MCCI. Among others, former Minister of Government of AJK Ch. M. Saeed, Chair Dist. Council Raja Naveed Akhtar Goga, former President AJK Cham-

Empowering All Abilities

A new era of inclusive play begins with funclusion

Driven by the vision to create a fun and accessible space for all, Funclusion provides a calm and entertaining environment where children can engage with activities and exhibits at their own pace. Unlike traditional recreational spaces, it ensures a predictable and comfortable experience, minimizing sensory overload and allowing visitors to make their own choices in a safe, welcoming setting

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan - 28th February 2025, Funclusion, a pioneering recreational space designed for children of all abilities, proudly announces its grand opening in Karachi. Founded by Dr. Maheen Noorani, a special education consultant and mother of two boys with autism, Funclusion is a first-of-its-kind initiative in Pakistan that offers a sensory-friendly, inclusive environment where neurodivergent individuals can engage, explore, and enjoy leisure experiences tailored to their unique needs. Driven by the vision to create a fun and accessible space for all, Funclusion provides a calm and entertaining environment where children can engage with activities and exhibits at their own pace. Unlike traditional recreational spaces, it ensures a predictable and comfortable experience, minimizing sensory overload and allowing visitors to make their own choices in a safe, welcoming setting. Dr. Noorani, who did her Masters from Columbia University and then further



earned her Doctorate Degree from the US, returned to Karachi after five years and found a lack of recreational options for her sons. Recognizing the need for a fun space, she established Funclusion

to give neurodivergent individuals a place where they could feel regulated, engaged, and included. Beyond a play area, Funclusion serves as a community hub where parents, caregivers, and educators

receive guidance on supporting neurodivergent children. Funclusion offers quiet zones to allow all visitors to enjoy their experience without overstimulation, a sensory-rich environment designed

with a variety of activities to suit different preferences, trained staff to ensure safety and provide assistance when needed, limited entry slots to maintain a calm atmosphere with ample personal space, opportunities for social engagement that foster interaction in a comfortable setting, informational resources for parents to navigate their child's needs effectively, and flexible membership options, including annual memberships, day passes, and loyalty cards. Funclusion's prelaunch event saw the presence of several notable guests, including Sindh Chief Minister Mr. Murad Ali Shah and his wife, Regional Director of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Farman Ali Tanwari, as well as renowned musician and actor Junaid Khan and Dr. Fahad Mirza.

Funclusion's mission is to expand across Pakistan, ensuring that neurodivergent individuals of all ages have access to inclusive recreational spaces that provide them with equal opportunities for joy and exploration.

Nurses playing critical role in healthcare delivery system

PESHAWAR As population grows unbridled, many sectors including health often face dearth of professionals especially well-qualified and experienced nurses although it is the most respected profession in healthcare globally. Not only in Pakistan but globally, many countries always remain in need of qualified nurses that also provides opportunities to professionals in developing countries to proceed abroad and earn respectable living. Pakistan is also not an exception where ever growing demand of professional nurses, who play a critical role in patients care, disease prevention and healthcare, is seldom met. Since, we also failed to produce well-qualified, we also miss our due share in global nursing market. "The demand for qualified nurses is ascending globally due to factors like population growth, increased chronic diseases and rapid expansion of healthcare services," said Farid Khan, a male nurse in Peshawar. "Spread of various diseases including recent COVID-19 pandemic has further enhanced the demand of nursing professionals." In many countries including developed and

progressing nations, there is a significant shortage of nursing professionals due to increased healthcare demands, heavy workloads, migration of healthcare professionals, pandemics, natural disasters and increasing population. "I do not see any chance that demands for nurses would decrease as governments have always prioritized development of healthcare delivery systems aiming the welfare and assistance of people," he remarked. "Therefore, boys and girls are seen taking admissions in Bachelor of Nursing course to seek employment opportunities in the country and abroad." He said Pakistani doctors have grabbed a reasonable share of in international job market but in nursing sector "we miss lot of opportunities due to less qualification and falling short of international criteria for hiring nurses." "Still there is demand in gulf and European countries and we can grab these slot by improving our standard of teaching and training," Farid Khan said. As quality education and training of nurses remains a challenge for us since decades, our institutions must need to revisit their syllabus and modes of training to win

due share in global market. Recently, Khyber Medical University has entered into an agreement with SAME RSP, UK to train nurses. The agreement is aimed at imparting advanced training to KP nurses through esteemed medical schools in the UK. "Through this initiative, the KP government would fund training for 503 public sector nurses to enhance nursing care across the region," said, KMU Spokesman. "Recently, the KMU has also organized nursing leadership and capacity building course in collaboration with SAME RPS UK, and health department." According to rough estimates, in Pakistani hospitals, the current nurse-patient ratio is 1:40 while the Pakistan Nursing Council recommends a nurse-patient ratio of 3:10. Deficiency in actual number of nurses is also aggravated by seats remaining vacant due to shortage of skilled nurses that also compels health institutions to compromise on quality of nursing care. Shortage in nursing strength locally is also due to an urge in professionals to move overseas particularly the Gulf countries for a better living.—APP

Pak trade with Central Asia gains importance

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik said on Sunday that Pakistan's trade relations with Central Asian states had become increasingly important due to shifting geopolitical dynamics and economic challenges in the current global scenario. In a press statement, he said Central Asia, rich in natural resources and strategically located, offers immense opportunities for Pakistan to enhance its economic footprint. The recent visits of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the region underscore Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties and unlocking mutual economic benefits. He said Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, were key players in energy, agricul-

ture, and mineral sectors, adding that Pakistan, with its growing population and strategic location as a gateway to South Asia, could serve as a vital trade and transit hub for these landlocked nations. Enhanced connectivity through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Trans-Afghan Railway project could facilitate trade and energy exports, benefiting both regions, he added. In the current global context, where economic diversification and regional integration are crucial, Pakistan's proactive approach towards Central Asia was a strategic move. By fostering stronger trade relations, Pakistan could mitigate economic challenges, reduce dependency on traditional markets, and create new avenues for growth, he said. —DNA

Pakora, Chappli Kabab, Kajoor outlets attract people

PESHAWAR: The food stalls across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially in Peshawar become bustling hubs, drawing people eager to break their first fast with delicious and traditional delicacies. Pakora, Kajoor and Chappli Kabab's stalls are among food outlets started attracting crowds for their tantalizing aroma, energy and mouthwatering delectable taste. In Peshawar, the food shops of Pakora and Kajoor (dates) besides Chappli Kabab's outlets on Sunday attracted a large number of people ahead of the first Iftar of the holy month of Ramadanul Mubarak. Pakora is a spicy food item mostly prepared of onions, potatoes and chickens, which is being sold like a hot cake due to its delicious taste, cost-efficient varieties and energy perspectives. Like Kajoor, Pakora is the most favorite item during Iftar parties in provincial capital where special shops were opened at historic Qissa Khwani, Ghanta Ghar, Firdus, Hashtnagri and others areas started making a roaring business ahead of first iftar. Different types of Pakora are being prepared such as potato pakora, palak pakora, onion pakora, Gobhi pakora, attracting people, senior citizens, children, women and youth as special iftar item. The delicious dish is being prepared from different ingredients such as onion, eggs, potatoes, chicken and cauliflower after these things are dipped in a Pakora made flour. Great rush is being witnessed on food stalls especially Pakora, Kajoor, Kachalo, Dhahi Bhalay, Nehari and Chappli Kabab at all bazaars including Qissa Khwani in Peshawar. Peshawar's famous sri paye and haleem besides beef rice polao are also the most demanding home delivery items of Rozadars. Riaz Khan, a retired employee of the Education Department on a food stall at Hashtnagri told APP that Pakora and Kajoor are his most favorite food items during Iftar parties and without it his Iftar seems incomplete. "Personally, I like chicken pakora because of its batter taste and energy's perspective," he said, adding demands of the onion and potato Pakora has also increased in local markets.—DNA

Cultural Festival at school

DNA

LAHORE: Government Girls Milli Darul Atfal High School Rajgarh organized a cultural festival, with the aim of fostering a deep love for culture, language, and traditions among the students. The event was chaired by the school's Principal, Dr. Shaukat, who emphasized the importance of such cultural activities in the development of students. During the festival, students actively participated in various cultural activities, showcasing their creativity and enthusiasm. The students wore colorful traditional attire, representing Pakistan's rich culture and heritage. The event also featured food stalls and cultural tableaux that provided glimpses of local customs and traditions. In her speech, Dr. Shaukat highlighted the significance of the cultural festival as an integral part of the school's activities. She assured that similar cultural and healthy events would continue to be organized in the future. Dr. Shaukat expressed that the school's efforts are aimed at familiarizing the younger generation with their cultural roots and nurturing feelings of love for their culture, literature, and homeland. —APP

Wingar: A beautiful tradition of assistance, community spirit

MULTAN: Once a cherished tradition in rural Punjab, the culture of "Wingar"—where people voluntarily assist each other without financial gains—is gradually fading in the face of modernization and economic challenges. For generations, Wingar symbolized unity and mutual support, as friends and neighbors came together to share labor-intensive tasks like irrigating fields, constructing homes, and organizing marriage ceremonies. This tradition not only lightened the workload but also strengthened the bonds of friendship and brotherhood among villagers. During the wheat harvest season, for instance, groups of friends would voluntarily assist each other in reaping crops. Similarly, cleaning water channels—often a daunting task for an individual farmer—became manageable within hours through collective effort. Even house construction was a shared responsibility, with villagers contributing their skills and labor to ease the process. —APP

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

BOXING
KOREANING
TAEKWONDO

Ashraf

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3256000 / 3256788
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

- March 01/Bosnia National Day
- March 03/Bulgaria National Day
- March 06/ Ghana Independence Day
- March 12 /Mauritius National Day
- March 17/Ireland St. Patricks Day
- March 20/Tunisia Independence Day
- March 21/Namibia National Day
- March 25/Greece National Day
- March 26/Bangladesh National Day
- March 27/Myanmar Armed Forces Day

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
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

ICCI -BSI join hands to unlock global market

During the discussion, the BSI representative provided an in-depth overview of BSI's global expertise, emphasizing how strategic collaboration with ICCI could enable Pakistani enterprises to achieve greater compliance with internationally recognized standards. This, in turn, would enhance export potential and attract foreign investment

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, hosted Mohammad Shohaieb, Principal Consultant at the British Standards Institution (BSI), to explore potential avenues for collaboration in quality standards, certification processes, and capacity building for Pakistani businesses.

Nasir Mansoor Qureshi underscored the pivotal role of international standards in enhancing product quality, safety, and global competitiveness. He commended BSI's initiatives in supporting businesses through expertise in standards development, certification, and sector-specific training. During the discussion, the BSI representative provided an in-depth overview of BSI's global expertise, emphasizing how strategic collaboration with ICCI could enable Pakistani enterprises to achieve greater compliance with internationally recognized standards. This, in turn, would enhance export potential and attract foreign investment. The ICCI President reaffirmed his commitment to fostering such partnerships, noting



that BSI's technical proficiency could be instrumental in equipping local businesses with the requisite knowledge and tools to meet global quality benchmarks. Both sides agreed to jointly organize awareness seminars, training programs, and advisory sessions tailored to the specific needs of various industries. Discussions also encompassed the develop-

ment of sector-specific guidelines for key industries, including textiles, food processing, construction, and information technology sectors with significant export potential for Pakistan.

Senior Advisor to the ICCI President, Naeem Siddiqui, inquired about the tangible benefits such collaboration could offer the local business community. In response,

the BSI Consultant outlined how adherence to international standards not only enhances product quality and safety but also improves market access, facilitates exports, and strengthens confidence among international buyers.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to establishing a long-term strategic alliance

between ICCI and BSI, laying the foundation for a collaborative framework aimed at embedding a robust quality culture within Pakistan's business ecosystem. ICCI Secretary General, Ghulam Murtaza, also shared his insights on the transformative potential of this collaboration in driving business growth and economic sustainability.

Modern knowledge offers diverse range of innovations in art

TAYYAB ZARIF

ISLAMABAD: Through diverse mediums such as painting, drama, sculpture, dance, literature, film, and poetry, art provides a window into the culture and experiences of its people. As societies evolve, art adapts, preserving customs and values while chronicling the transformations. The interplay between art and society is symbiotic, with various segments contributing to the development of art and artists. To foster creativity, societies have established institutions, such as schools and colleges that provide technical training and conceptual foundations, empowering artists to flourish. Same like other field of everyday life technology has entered into the field of edu-

cation of art which helps to counter the challenges faced by traditional art. The learning of art in respect of technology not only boosts the skills of the artist but also defines the new ways to present the skills. The spokesperson at Pakistan National Council of Art (PNCA), Bilal Alam Khan told APPC that PNCA considered the technology in the art as an important development which helps the artists to acquire the modern knowledge prevailing all over and it also has become a vital medium to boost their art. "The technology has increased the global reach through virtual galleries, online exhibitions and NFT marketplaces which helps the artists to monetize their art work without geographical limitation," he said further. By merging traditional

artistic techniques with modern technology, art students could unlock a diverse range of innovative work to amplify their creative expression. Industry-leading software such as adobe photoshop, Illustrator, and procreate enables students to master digital art forms, including drawing, painting, graphic design, image manipulation, 3D modeling, and animation. PNCA was incorporating different modern tools and techniques to bring innovation and creativity, said by Bilal, already the organization is already engaged with different experts to hold seminars and workshops and training to elevate the skills of the artists in modern technology. Many Pakistani artists use digital painting, 3D modeling, and video art to express contemporary themes.

Artists like Basir Mahmood and Bani Abidi use video and multimedia to explore cultural narratives and identity. The National College of Arts (NCA) in the country is positioned to be a key player in advancing the fusion of art and technology. However, when APPC approached to the Incharge Islamabad campus office, he unexpectedly choose not to engage and declined to address NCA's role. This unforeseen silence has also left numerous questions unanswered leaving many curious about the institution's potential impact on the convergence of art and technology. In general, technology has not only made art more accessible but also revolutionized how it is created, share and appreciated worldwide.

DIG Islamabad holds orderly room

ISLAMABAD :Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Islamabad, Muhammad Jawad Tariq, held an orderly room meeting on Sunday at his office to address the professional and personal concerns of police officers, ensuring their timely resolution. A public relations officer told APP that the session was attended by police officers who raised issues related to transfers, postings, and other official and personal matters. DIG Tariq issued immediate directives for the resolution of certain concerns, while instructions were given to relevant officers to address the remaining issues. DIG Tariq said the police department is committed to maintaining a system of reward and accountability to enhance institutional performance. Officers demonstrating exceptional service will be recognized with commendation certificates and prizes, whereas those showing negligence will face departmental action. DIG further stated that multiple welfare initiatives have been introduced for police personnel, including improved housing, quality healthcare, and enhanced education facilities. "If you face any difficulties, my office door is always open for you. We all must work together for the betterment of this city," he added. DIG Tariq emphasized that the objective of the orderly room was to prioritize the welfare of police officers, resolve their issues on a priority basis, and boost their morale.--DNA

NICAT's Investor Connect brings together startups,

ISLAMABAD:The National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) successfully hosted Investor Connect, a startup pitching and networking event designed to bridge the gap between startups and investors from across Pakistan. The event brought together venture capitalists (VCs), angel investors, and CXOs from the public, private, and multi-laterals, all keen on exploring and supporting the country's most promising startups, said a press release issued here on Sunday. Unlike traditional investor meetups, NICAT Investor Connect was unique in its approach. In addition to featuring NICAT-incubated startups, the event also welcomed high-potential startups from incubators and accelerators across the country, offering them a rare opportunity to connect with investors and industry leaders. The founders pitched their groundbreaking ideas, each vying for valuable investment and strategic partnerships. These startups, spanning aerospace, engineering, deep tech, and other high-impact sectors, had the opportunity to present their business models to a diverse group of investors eager to fund scalable ventures. Beyond the pitching session, NICAT also organized a startup showcase, where startups from across Pakistan displayed their prototypes, MVPs, and ready-to-scale solutions. This exhibit enabled investors and corporate leaders to engage directly with founders, understand their innovations, and explore potential collaborations beyond just funding. The event made a significant impact, bringing together 40+ investors and industry leaders in attendance, 9 startups pitching for investment opportunities, 10 startups participating in the showcase, and a total funding ask from startups of USD 6.8 million plus. Highlighting the importance of investor-startup engagement, Shayan Yar, Consultant at NICAT, stated: "The investment ecosystem in Pakistan has been on the down-low, making it essential for startups to remain resilient in the face of challenges. Events like NICAT Investor Connect align with NICAT's vision of initiating unconventional methods to bridge the gap between startups and investors. --APP

BMP for measures to curb capital flight

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has emphasized the need for curbing capital flight and brain drain, calling for measures to retain Pakistan's financial and human resources within the country. BMP Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar underscored the need for urgent reforms to restore investor confidence, address economic hurdles, and prevent further capital outflows. Expressing concern over the growing number of Pakistani businesses relocating abroad, he pointed out that thousands of individuals have transferred their businesses overseas to secure citizenship through investment programs. He expressed optimism that Pakistan could become a trillion-dollar economy within the next six to seven years if the right

economic policies were implemented. He also highlighted the progress in the agriculture sector, noting that rice exports had reached \$3.8 billion and total agricultural exports had climbed to \$9 billion, shifting Pakistan from an import-driven to an export-driven economy. BMP Chairman urged the government to focus on enhancing economic competitiveness rather than relying on trade concessions such as the European Union's GSP+ scheme. He pointed to artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and software as key sectors for economic advancement. He acknowledged improvements in economic indicators, stock market performance, and rising IT exports but noted that a significant trust deficit still hindered business confidence. He urged the government to address corruption and bureaucratic harassment, which he said were forcing people to leave the country. He emphasized the untapped potential of Pakistan's IT sector, which he estimated could reach \$30 billion in exports.

However, he warned that excessive regulatory pressure was stifling growth, particularly through changes in tax policies such as the replacement of the Final Tax Regime (FTR) with a standard taxation system. He highlighted a deteriorating business climate, with many multinational companies exiting Pakistan. Referring to the report, he said that the International Monetary Fund has revised Pakistan's economic outlook, downgrading its projected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for 2025 to 3%, down from 3.2% forecasted just three months ago. The adjustment comes amid a broader global economic assessment presented in the IMF's "World Economic Outlook Update: Global Growth - Divergent and Uncertain." The IMF's revised projections also indicate that Pakistan's GDP growth will remain at 4% in 2026. However, the latest downgrade reflects ongoing economic challenges in the country, although the IMF did not provide specific reasons for the revision.

NIRC resolves 80% backlog in 3 months with video hearings; expands nationwide

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) Justice (R) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui on Sunday said that the NIRC has cleared 80% of its pending cases in three months after introducing video-linked hearings. Talking to media persons, he said that the system, now operational in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, will soon expand to Quetta, Multan, Sukkur, and Peshawar to reduce delays and improve access to justice nationwide. On the occasion, he unveiled the digital initiative, explaining that commissioners previously traveled for days to conduct hearings, burdening staff, petitioners, and lawyers with high travel costs and delays. "Video hearings save time and resources while speeding up resolutions," he said. --APP

Development initiatives take center stage

ISLAMABAD: Tehsil Lower Tanawal witnessed a significant step toward progress as Tehsil Chairman Malik Junaid Ahmed Khan Tanoli Sunday chaired a high-level meeting at the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) office to discuss the utilization of the Beautification Fund. The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including MPA Ifukhar Khan Jadoon's focal person Hassan Khan Jadoon, MNA Ali Khan Jadoon's focal person Adil Khan Jadoon, TMO Lower Tanawal Kiran Zaib, and other prominent officials from the region. The meeting focused on a series of transformative projects designed to uplift the quality of life for the residents of Tehsil Lower Tanawal. Among the highlights was the proposal to install solar street lights across all union councils, a move aimed at enhancing public safety while promoting sustainable energy solutions. In addition, plans were unveiled for the establishment of a family park, which promises to provide a green and recreational space for families, fostering a healthier and more vibrant community. To address long-standing concerns about the preservation of graveyards, the Beautification Fund will be allocated for the construction of protective walls around all burial sites, ensuring their security and dignity. --APP

Asian Wok
by MONAL

LUNCH + BGWLS, THE ASIAN WOK WAY!

DELIGHT IN OUR HEARTY CHICKEN, BEEF, OR SEAFOOD GRAVIES, SERVED WITH YOUR CHOICE OF RICE OR CHOW MEIN AND COMPLIMENTARY MINT MARGARITA AND FISH CRACKERS.

Starting at just Rs. 1195 +tax
Available daily from 12 PM to 6 PM

Lower Ground Floor, Mosaic District, I-8 Markaz
0300-5845530 | 051-8840526 | 051-8840527

Briefs

Mansab extends Ramadan felicitations, stresses unity

ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed State Minister and MNA for PML-N, Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal Sunday extended warm greetings to the nation on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, emphasizing the crucial role of national unity in driving Pakistan's progress. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, she emphasized the need for unity among all political parties in Pakistan, stressing that they should work together for the nation's progress rather than perpetuating intolerance. Kharal also stressed the importance of promoting tolerance and civilized language among Muslims, emphasizing that this is crucial for securing a brighter future for upcoming generations. Mansab Ali praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team for their efforts in stabilizing Pakistan's economy and averting a default. She further stated that the primary objective of political parties should be to serve the nation, working together to promote the welfare and well-being of the people. Dr. Shezra Mansab expressed confidence in Pakistan's trajectory under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, observing that the country is headed in the right direction with encouraging economic indicators. She highlighted that achieving economic stability is crucial and it is heartening to see the government successfully meeting its targets in this regard.

She noted that following the achievement of economic stability, the government is now focused on driving growth and development in the country, with a particular emphasis on creating opportunities for foreign investment.—APP

Irfan Siddiqui says PTI alliance will fail

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senator Irfan Siddiqui Sunday expressed confidence that the government will remain steadfast against the opposition alliance, believing key parties will uphold democratic principles and shun PTI's chaotic politics. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Irfan Siddiqui welcomed the opposition alliance as a democratic right, but expressed confidence that key parties will not endorse destructive politics. Irfan Siddiqui stated that in a democratic setup, there should be no deadlocks, but PTI's actions led to an impasse. Siddiqui further praised Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman and Achakzai for consistently upholding democratic norms and culture, describing them as sensible politicians who have always prioritized the country's democratic values. Responding to a query, he reaffirmed their alliance, acknowledging PPP's formidable political struggle and assuring that their concerns will be prioritized and addressed promptly. He emphasized that ongoing meetings are being conducted to discuss and resolve pressing issues, further solidifying their partnership.—APP

Metro, E-bus services wide win public acclaim

The modernized transport network has not only made commuting easier but has also contributed to reducing traffic congestion and environmental pollution. These bus services, covering key areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, have significantly reduced travelling time and provided a comfortable, affordable and reliable mode of transportation

KASHIF KHAN

ISLAMABAD: As urban mobility in federal capital transforms into an affordable and comfortable journey, commuters have expressed satisfaction and appreciation for improved and time and money saving transport system. Both the Metro Bus and E-Bus services have validly won public acclaim for respectfully facilitating women and elderly people as gone are the days when commuters were left on the mercy of rude wagon and mini-bus owners. The modernized transport network has not only made commuting easier but has also contributed to reducing traffic congestion and environmental pollution. These bus services, covering key areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, have significantly reduced travelling time and provided a comfortable, affordable and reliable mode of transportation. "I was once used to see my elders suffering from pangs of travelling by privately owned vehicles as it was exhausting and sometimes intimidating to rely on those old vans," remarked Maryam Sultan, a high school teacher who commutes daily from Rawalpindi to Islamabad.

"But, now I feel much safer traveling to and from work especially during the evening hours," she shared her enthusiasm for the upgraded transport system. "As a working woman, the new bus services have been a pleasant experience for me and many others of my class." Maryam Sultan was not alone to appreciate this new mode of travelling as thousands others daily commuters like her, had the same feelings. "I used to spend hours in traffic jams daily and it was often painful to stall amidst blowing horns and smoke emitted by vehicles," said Ahmed Ali, a government employee. "It was costing me much, disturbing my monthly budget. But, now, I just hop on Metro Bus and reach my office in 30 minutes. It's affordable, comfortable and saves my time." Recent addition of E-Bus service has further upgraded public transport system in Islamabad. These eco-friendly buses running on electric power have been integrated into existing Metro Bus network, providing seamless connectivity across the city. This service operates on 14 routes, covering major destinations. "E-buses are amazing. They are quiet, clean and environmentally friendly. I feel good knowing that I'm contributing to reducing pollution by using this transport," said Ayesha Khan, a university student. Affordability of these services has also been a reason for their popularity. With fares as low as Rs. 50 per ride, the Metro Bus and e-bus services are accessible to people from all walks of life. "It's a blessing for people like me who cannot afford private vehicles," Ayesha Khan said. "I can now travel across the city without worrying about the cost." "Pink Bus Service" is yet another pleasant addition to capital's transportation system winning accolades from commuters. "This is an appreciable addition to capital's transportation system and a secure and comfortable mode of travelling especially for women," remarked Sadia Khan, another university student. "This also speaks volumes of the government's commitment to facilitate women's mobility with 10 routes designated specifically for female students, teachers and other female travelers from rural to urban areas." Introduction of 160 electric buses, allocated to feeder routes has been a significant step towards reducing carbon footprint. These buses are equipped with zero-emission technology and designed to integrate seamlessly with the city's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. Capital Development Authority (CDA) has played a pivotal role in development and expansion of Islamabad's public transport system and its Chairman was satisfied with the progress so far. "We aim to provide high-quality, affordable and sustainable transport for the residents of Islamabad while leading the way in eco-friendly urban mobility," Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said. "The CDA has also been proactive in establishing environmentally sustainable public transportation system." The CDA has also announced plans to convert the entire bus fleet in the first phase with the goal of transitioning all commercial and private transport in Islamabad to electric vehicles. With enhanced safety measures, dedicated lanes and reserved seating for women and families, the Metro Bus and E-Bus services have created a more comfortable and respectful travel environment. Although the new transport system faces certain challenges, yet it has brought about significant social and economic changes in the

lives of commuters. The main challenge is availability of sufficient charging points as some commuters complain of longer time margin of buses on some routes while others have drawn attention towards better maintenance of bus stations. Some among them also complained of heavy rush during peak hours and suggested to enhance number of vehicles. However, the CDA is committed to addressing these issues and improving frequency of the service as commuters demand grows. As Islamabad continues to grow and develop, the public transport system will play a crucial role in ensuring the city's sustainability and accessibility. The residents of Islamabad can look forward to a future where reliable, affordable and eco-friendly transportation options are readily available, making their daily travelling more convenient and enjoyable. With the people of twin cities wholeheartedly embracing this modern public transport system, the future of public transportation in Rawalpindi and Islamabad looks promising, paving the way for a more connected and sustainable urban environment.

lives of commuters. The main challenge is availability of sufficient charging points as some commuters complain of longer time margin of buses on some routes while others have drawn attention towards better maintenance of bus stations. Some among them also complained of heavy rush during peak hours and suggested to enhance number of vehicles. However, the CDA is committed to addressing these issues and improving frequency of the service as commuters demand grows. As Islamabad continues to grow and develop, the public transport system will play a crucial role in ensuring the city's sustainability and accessibility. The residents of Islamabad can look forward to a future where reliable, affordable and eco-friendly transportation options are readily available, making their daily travelling more convenient and enjoyable. With the people of twin cities wholeheartedly embracing this modern public transport system, the future of public transportation in Rawalpindi and Islamabad looks promising, paving the way for a more connected and sustainable urban environment.

lives of commuters. The main challenge is availability of sufficient charging points as some commuters complain of longer time margin of buses on some routes while others have drawn attention towards better maintenance of bus stations. Some among them also complained of heavy rush during peak hours and suggested to enhance number of vehicles. However, the CDA is committed to addressing these issues and improving frequency of the service as commuters demand grows. As Islamabad continues to grow and develop, the public transport system will play a crucial role in ensuring the city's sustainability and accessibility. The residents of Islamabad can look forward to a future where reliable, affordable and eco-friendly transportation options are readily available, making their daily travelling more convenient and enjoyable. With the people of twin cities wholeheartedly embracing this modern public transport system, the future of public transportation in Rawalpindi and Islamabad looks promising, paving the way for a more connected and sustainable urban environment.

Broiler chicken poses serious health risks

ISLAMABAD: The widespread use of antibiotics, chemicals, and steroids to accelerate growth in broiler chicken had raised alarming concerns about the health and well-being of consumers. Medical experts had sounded the alarm on the excessive use of these substances in broiler chicken, leading to a surge in antibiotic-resistant bacteria, hormone-related disorders, and other health problems among consumers. A prominent public health expert, Dr Afzal Khan said the use of sulphonamides as growth promoters in poultry feed had been linked to a plethora of devastating health consequences, including respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, sudden heart failure and tumour growth. He said 90% of broiler chicken today contains antibiotics, chemicals, steroids and these substances are administered to promote rapid growth and prevent disease in chickens, sparking concerns about the potential health risks to humans. He advised that if necessary, to eat chicken cook it to a temperature of at least 165° F, sulphonamides can be reduced below by cooking at high temperature and put the raw or cooked chicken away into the fridge immediately if you are not consuming it. He emphasizes the importance of choosing organic or free-range poultry chicken to minimize the risk of health issues associated with conventional poultry farming practices.—APP

Health experts warn against deep-fried foods

ISLAMABAD: As millions of Muslims worldwide observed their first fast of the holy month, health experts issued a timely warning about the dangers of deep-fried foods, a traditional staple of many Ramadan meals. According to nutritionists, deep-fried foods such as samosas, spring rolls, and fried doughnuts were high in calories, fat, and sodium, making them a recipe for disaster, particularly during Ramadan when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. Health experts recommend opting for healthier alternatives such as grilled meats, steamed vegetables, and fresh fruits. They also advise Muslims to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena giving prize to Eduard Preda, Deputy Head of Mission of the Romanian embassy on the occasion of prize distribution ceremony of diplomatic football league.—DNA

Two-day Aawaz Forum held

ISLAMABAD: A two-day learning and experience sharing forum titled "Empowering Communities, Amplifying Voices" organised by Aawaz II brought together members of community forums, civil society representatives and government stakeholders to showcase community-driven initiatives addressing critical social issues. The forum demonstrated how sustained grassroots engagement has transformed local responses to gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage and social exclusion in programme districts across KP and Punjab. British Council Country Director, James Hampson, emphasised the programme's remarkable impact, stating, "This is a remarkable programme with more than 35 million people reached across 37 districts, of which more than 1 million have benefitted directly from Aawaz II. The Aawaz partners, volunteers and communities have proved that when we work together, we can bring change together." Mr Ali Naqvi, UK Aid representative, echoed this view, highlighting how community-led initiatives are accelerating social behavioural change for enhancing inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Mr Wa-

zeer Zada, Focal Person to Chief Minister KP on Minorities Affairs, outlined increased resource allocation towards minority scholarships and interfaith harmony programmes. Additional Inspector General Punjab Police, Muhammad Azhar Akram highlighted institutional reforms through Tahafuz and Meesaq Centres, demonstrating how community feedback shapes government responses to GBV. Panel discussions focused on behaviour change from grassroots to policy level, featuring key initiatives from both programme provinces. The forum spotlighted the transformative role of women and youth in community change. Through participatory dialogue, panellists and audience members examined how women from diverse backgrounds are reshaping social narratives. Renowned activist Ms Zahida Hameed Qureshi emphasised the need for increased social inclusion of persons with disabilities, while representatives of religious minorities and transgender persons advocated for safe spaces promoting dialogue between vulnerable groups and wider communities.—APP



General Practice Hospital is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility offering comprehensive medical services to the community. Our hospital is equipped with advanced diagnostic and treatment modalities, including specialized OPD clinics, an urgent care unit, a modern radiology unit, well-equipped IPD rooms, operation theatres, an on-site laboratory for precise diagnostics, dialysis services, and comfortable inpatient wards. We are dedicated to providing quality, easily accessible, and patient-centred healthcare in a welcoming and professional environment.



Empathic & Caring for everyone

We know that seeking medical care can be overwhelming, but you're not alone. With empathy at the heart of our care, we listen, understand, and support you every step of the way. In our clean, premium environment, you'll feel safe, valued, and truly cared for. Book your appointment today and experience healthcare with compassion.

FOR APPOINTMENT: +92 33 47 47 47 01

Pakland Tower 2, New Blue Area, Islamabad | www.generalpractice.com.pk | @generalpracticeislamabad | +92 51 6160 474 | +92 51 6161 474

Shopping frenzy hits sasta bazaars, weekly markets this Ramadan

ISLAMABAD: With the dawn of Ramadan and the first fast today (Sunday), weekly bazaars, Sasta bazaars and roadside vendors showcase an irresistible array of fresh fruits including dates, vegetables, and traditional treats. According to a report aired by a private news channel, Pakistan's streets have transformed into vibrant hubs of activity. At the forefront of this transformation are the Sasta bazaars and weekly markets, which have taken center stage in the run-up to Ramadan. These markets have become a one-stop shop for all Ramadan essentials, offering a wide range of products, from fresh produce and dates

to traditional sweets and fruits, allowing citizens to find everything they need to observe the holy month with ease as noted by a local citizen. "Ifar is incomplete without dates and fruits," said a customer at a market in Karachi. "We always make sure to have a variety of dates and fresh fruits on our Ifar table." "We witness a significant surge in demand for fruits, especially Melon, oranges, Banana, apple, Guava, Pomegranate and strawberries during this Ramadan," said a fruit seller at Islamabad's weekly Bazaar. "People prefer to break their fast with fresh fruits and we make sure to stock up on the freshest produce to

meet the demand," said a seller. Similarly, date sellers also report a massive increase in sales during Ramadan. "Dates are a traditional staple for iftar and we sell out our stock within hours of receiving a new shipment," said a date seller in Lahore Market. "We import high-quality dates from around the world to cater to the demand, and our sales increase by at least 50% during Ramadan," he added. Some customers also complained about the high prices of fruits in the markets, urging the authorities to take action against whole sellers who are allegedly hoarding fruits to artificially inflate prices. "I am disappointed to see the

prices of fruits skyrocket during Ramadan," said a customer at Karachi Market. Apples were priced at Rs. 200 just a few weeks ago, but now they are being sold for Rs. 400. Similarly, Kinnows are also priced at Rs. 400 and bananas have doubled in price from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200." The customers demanded that the authorities should check the whole sellers who are allegedly hoarding fruits and creating artificial shortage to increase prices. Some customers in Islamabad admired the quality of fruits available at the weekly bazaars, praising the vendors for providing fresh and hygienic produce.—APP

The Russian trap

President Trump, as part of his public commitment to reduce American overall spending costs as part of his Make America Great Again agenda, is proposing a 50% reduction in the overall expenditure on the American "defense budget"; he hopes to see this reciprocated by both Russia and China. Everyone should welcome any cost cutting exercise in the eye watering budget that is the American defense industry. America has over 800 military bases ensconced in sovereign nations across the globe. While technically head of NATO with a huge presence in nearly every European nation, these bases are claimed to be purely defensive as part of a collective shield under "article five" of the NATO constitution, where an attack upon one NATO ally is attacked upon all resulting in a unified collective response from NATO members. In reality, NATO is the vehicle which allows America to maintain its foothold militarily in Europe, which in one sense it has occupied from the Second World War. With the expansion of the European Union followed by NATO into the Baltic states and former satellite states of the Soviet Union, America has thousands of troops, armaments, planes, ships and nuclear submarines permanently stationed on European land and in European territorial waters. America is an armed camp inside Europe with full autonomy to act in its own interests outside of European political structures, and could presumably stage coups and color revolutions in any European state if it so desires, even among its allies Trump, in his previous administration, expressed the opinion publicly that European nations were relying on American money and American might to protect from any third party aggression, and as such demanded all NATO members to increase their defense budgets to 2% of their gross national product. The intention even then was to reduce American spending in Europe as the deep state pivots its focus and military might towards the "yellow peril" China. Upon re-election, he has literally doubled down on this tactic and demanded Europe increase its spending on defense to 5% of GDP, lest he withdraw American support for NATO unilaterally. Europe, because of its political class who are rife with Russophobia, is becoming an armed camp. While they rail against the American-Russia "detente" and the proposed peace deal between America and Russia over Ukraine like petulant children who have been refused the opportunity to sit at the grown-ups table, Europe, as a vassal appendage of American foreign policy, regardless of their public protestations in defense of Ukraine, will literally bite the bullet and run along after Trump and whatever decisions he makes like the little boys and girls they really are. Yes, he is auditing all of American state and deep state finances, trying to end waste and bureaucracy to make savings on the national budget. His focus on USAID has already exposed the depth and reach of a pseudo charitable organization as an arm of American soft power used to influence national and international sentiment to export American foreign policy to undermine targeted independent sovereign states. It has on payroll thousands of journalists and influencers, it finances radio stations, newspapers, online media, television outlets, individuals and organizations with the sole purpose of promoting American values by using money as the oil that greases its propaganda machine.



After all, our national game is
HOCKEY

China's AI push

China's rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are reshaping the dynamics of global technology and one of the most consequential shifts is taking place beyond the traditional AI power centres of Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. China's AI influence is expanding across the Global South, from Africa to Latin America and Southeast Asia. With affordable AI-powered products, investments in digital infrastructure and a growing influence in AI governance, China is positioning itself as the dominant AI player in developing economies. This expansion is not just about technology – it is about reshaping the global digital order. China's AI expansion is guided by a clear strategy. The 2017 New Generation AI Development Plan laid out a road map to make China the global AI leader by 2030, focusing on breakthroughs in AI infrastructure, applications and industrial integration. It aligns with China's "digital silk road" initiative, which promotes digital infrastructure projects, including fibre optic networks, 5G, cloud computing and AI-powered services. While the United States and Europe adopt a more cautious approach to AI deployment, China has aggressively pushed forward, integrating AI into economic partnerships with Global South countries. One key advantage is the Chinese integration of AI into cost-effective consumer products that are widely adopted. Companies like Huawei Technologies, Xiaomi and BYD embed AI into their smartphones, home devices and electric vehicles, making AI widely accessible in markets with lower purchasing power. Unlike American AI models, which often require high-end computing infrastructure, China's AI is optimised for lower-power devices, which is more practical for regions with weaker digital infrastructure. This gives China a strategic edge in markets where Western AI solutions are too expensive or incompatible. China is also shaping the Global South AI landscape by providing digital infrastructure. The Peace Cable, a Chinese-led subsea fibre optic project, has enhanced connectivity between Asia, Africa and Europe, enabling better access to cloud-based AI services. Additionally, China has built over 1.9 million 5G base stations across Belt and Road Initiative nations. The BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, China's alternative to GPS, the US-backed Global Positioning System, is in use in over 100 countries, providing location-based AI services for industries such as agriculture, urban planning and security. China's AI technology is also influencing governance. AI-driven facial recognition, smart surveillance and predictive policing tools – many developed by Chinese companies – are being adopted in countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Indonesia. While these technologies improve security and urban management, they also raise concerns about "digital authoritarianism", as governments may use Chinese AI tools for political control and censorship. By exporting its AI-driven governance model, China is offering an alternative to the Western digital paradigm, where AI is more heavily regulated for privacy and human rights considerations. A crucial but often overlooked aspect of China's AI expansion is data collection. AI systems require massive data sets to improve performance, and China's growing digital footprint in the Global South provides access to diverse linguistic, economic and behavioural data. As more people in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia use Chinese AI-powered applications, their data is fed into China's AI models, enhancing their ability to operate in non-Western contexts. This access to large, diverse data sets gives China a competitive advantage.

Trump expels Zelensky from the White House

Qamar Bashir



This has left Europe feeling exposed, powerless, and forced to reassess its dependency on U.S. security assurances. By undermining Zelensky in such a public manner, Trump has effectively diminished the collective influence of European powers, reducing their strategic clout in the ongoing conflict. Europe's core narrative on the Russia-Ukraine war revolves around defending Ukraine's sovereignty, upholding international law, and ensuring European security. The war is seen as an unprovoked act of aggression by Russia, violating Ukraine's territorial integrity...

Donald Trump has redefined diplomatic norms by shifting high-level discussions from closed-door negotiations to public confrontations. His treatment of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the White House—inviting him as a guest only to dismiss him gracelessly—was a stark departure from traditional diplomacy. Diplomacy thrives on negotiation, compromise, and conflict resolution, with disagreements handled professionally and follow-up discussions scheduled if needed. However, in an unprecedented public spectacle, diplomacy was replaced with an open display of hostility, where accusations and counter-accusations were aired before the global audience, undermining the dignity of both leaders and their respective nations. Trump's conduct toward Zelensky was less about diplomacy and more about coercion. While he and his Vice President claimed to advocate for diplomatic solutions, their actions contradicted diplomatic norms by humiliating a sovereign leader. Trump's demand that Ukraine cede control of its natural resources and accept Russia's terms to end the war—without addressing Ukraine's security concerns or considering Europe's stakes—was not a negotiation but an ultimatum. This approach disregarded the fact that the U.S. itself played a key role in Ukraine's resistance by providing military, economic, and diplomatic support to counter Russian aggression. It also ignored the reality that the Russia-Ukraine war was largely influenced by NATO's expansion with the USA in charge, which Moscow viewed as a direct threat to its security. This pattern of shifting U.S. foreign policy is not new. Successive American administrations have started wars, supported allies, and then reversed their positions based on changing political priorities. Pakistan experienced this firsthand when the U.S. backed it during the Cold War, only to abandon it during critical conflicts with India. The same happened after Pakistan played a frontline role in pushing back the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in the 1980s, only to be left in economic and political turmoil once U.S. interests were fulfilled. A similar pattern unfolded after 9/11, where Pakistan faced the consequences of America's shifting counterterrorism strategy. Many other countries have also suffered due to the transactional nature of U.S. foreign policy, which prioritizes immediate strategic gains over long-term commitments. Ukraine has now become the latest example of this shifting U.S. approach. Under the banner of

"America First," Washington's demands for access to Ukraine's rare earth resources and its sudden disengagement from Kyiv reflect a self-serving agenda. The public humiliation of Zelensky was not just an insult to Ukraine but to Europe as a whole. European leaders now find themselves in an awkward position, having invested years in shaping a pro-Ukraine narrative with U.S. backing, only for the new American administration to discard it overnight. This has left Europe feeling exposed, powerless, and forced to reassess its dependency on U.S. security assurances. By undermining Zelensky in such a public manner, Trump has effectively diminished the collective influence of European powers, reducing their strategic clout in the ongoing conflict. Europe's core narrative on the Russia-Ukraine war revolves around defending Ukraine's sovereignty, upholding international law, and ensuring European security. The war is seen as an unprovoked act of aggression by Russia, violating Ukraine's territorial integrity and challenging the post-World War II order that forbids changing borders by force. European leaders argue that if Russia is not stopped in Ukraine, it could embolden further territorial expansion, particularly toward NATO's eastern members like the Baltic states and Poland. The conflict is framed as a battle between democracy and authoritarianism, with Ukraine representing European values of self-determination, democracy, and human rights. As a result, Europe has provided military, economic, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine while imposing severe sanctions on Russia to weaken its war efforts. The invasion has also forced Europe to rethink its energy security, accelerating efforts to reduce reliance on Russian oil and gas and diversify energy sources. At the same time, European leaders recognize the risks of escalation and have been cautious about direct military involvement to prevent a broader NATO-Russia war. While countries like Poland and the Baltic states advocate for maximum support to Ukraine, others like Germany and France have pushed for a balance between military aid and diplomatic efforts to seek an eventual resolution. The war has also prompted major geopolitical shifts, with Sweden and Finland abandoning neutrality to join NATO and European nations increasing their defense budgets. Europe views its support for Ukraine as not only a necessity for regional sta-

bility but also a test of its strategic autonomy and long-term security framework. However, as U.S. priorities shift under new leadership, European leaders now face the challenge of maintaining a unified stance without guaranteed American backing, raising concerns about the continent's future security landscape. There are three likely outcomes for Europe in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The first is to yield to U.S. pressure and abandon its efforts to bring Ukraine into NATO, withdraw from Ukraine's internal affairs, allow Zelensky to step down, and accept Russian-installed leadership in Kyiv. This would also require Europe to stop pushing the narrative that Russia poses a direct threat to other Eastern European states. In return for its past support of Ukraine, the U.S. would gain control over Ukraine's valuable mineral resources. This approach would effectively acknowledge Russia's dominance over Ukraine, reshape the geopolitical balance in Eastern Europe, and shift the focus of Western nations away from prolonged conflict. However, this would come at the cost of Ukraine's sovereignty and European credibility, as it would signal that Western security commitments are conditional and subject to political convenience. The second option for Europe is to break away from U.S. influence and adopt an independent and unified stance on the Russia-Ukraine war. This would require European nations to fill the strategic gap left by U.S. disengagement, significantly increase defense spending, and enforce even harsher sanctions on Russia. To maintain Ukraine's resistance, Europe would have to consider direct military involvement, ramping up arms production, and converting civilian industries to support the war effort, effectively committing to a long-term military confrontation. However, such a course of action would be financially and politically costly, leading to economic decline, inflation, and potential social unrest across European nations. Another alternative would be to persuade Trump to modify his stance and work toward ending the war in a way that secures Ukraine's sovereignty and ensures Europe's security. Yet, given Trump's "America First" policy, convincing him to re-engage without tangible benefits for the U.S. would be a difficult challenge.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

Franklin D. Roosevelt to Donald Trump

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The United States focused on bailing out financial institutions and protecting domestic markets, while China pursued large-scale infrastructure projects to sustain economic growth. The growing debt burdens of developing nations further fueled nationalist sentiments, as governments sought to reclaim economic control from international financial institutions. Beijing emerged as a key lender to many nations...

Donald Trump's presidency has been a transformative period in the history of U.S. foreign policy. His return to the White House solidifies his role as a pivotal figure, much like Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, who redefined the role of the United States on the global stage. While Roosevelt's multilateral approach shaped "The American Century" and Reagan championed "peace through strength," Trump embodies a new era: the age of nationalism. This shift reflects a broader global trend that began in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, characterized by protectionism, hardened borders, and economic nationalism. Trump's foreign policy approach raises significant questions about the future of U.S. relations with China, Russia, India, and emerging global powers. Under both Trump and his successor, President Joe Biden, Washington has focused on consolidating U.S. power, particularly by countering China's economic and military rise. This emphasis on great-power competition has led to an aggressive economic strategy, marked by tariffs and export controls designed to weaken China's economic influence. Instead of fostering global economic growth, U.S. policies have prioritized supply-chain resilience and economic security, leading to a more insular and protectionist stance. The resurgence of nationalism has influenced not only the United States but also other nations across the world. Figures such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, French far-right leader Marine Le Pen, and Trump himself have capitalized on nationalist sentiments, advocating policies that prioritize national sovereignty over global cooperation. Washington has played a role in reinforcing this trend rather than challenging it. The shift from economic interdependence to protectionist policies reflects a global retreat from the liberal order that defined much of the post-World War II era. The pivot to great-power competition underscores this nationalist shift. Rather than fostering a new internationalist order in the tradition of Roosevelt's multilateralism, the United States has sustained an outdated model based on U.S. primacy. This approach has limited the ability of policymakers to envision a world order that prioritizes peace and stability over geopolitical rivalry. The framing of China as an existential threat, akin to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, has exacerbated tensions and deepened the global divide between democratic and authoritarian

regimes. If the United States aims to restore its leadership in addressing global challenges such as climate change, democratic backsliding, economic inequality, and sovereign debt crises, it must move beyond the age of nationalism. Roosevelt's vision of a multilateral order sought to maintain peace and global justice by leveraging U.S. economic and military power in collaboration with international partners. The post-World War II order, though imperfect, created space for emerging economies to assert their interests through institutions such as the United Nations and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This period of international cooperation enabled economic growth and political stability, despite ongoing disparities between developed and developing nations. Following the Cold War, the United States shifted from fostering multilateralism to pursuing unilateral primacy. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the United States as the dominant global power, leading to the assumption that liberal democracy would spread worldwide without significant opposition. However, the post-9/11 "war on terror" further eroded internationalism, as Washington used its influence to pressure nations into supporting military campaigns without considering the long-term consequences for global relations. The global financial crisis of 2008 marked a turning point in the trajectory of international relations. As economic growth stagnated, governments prioritized domestic economic stability over global cooperation. The United States focused on bailing out financial institutions and protecting domestic markets, while China pursued large-scale infrastructure projects to sustain economic growth. The growing debt burdens of developing nations further fueled nationalist sentiments, as governments sought to reclaim economic control from international financial institutions. Beijing emerged as a key lender to many nations, providing an alternative to Western-controlled financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Economic nationalism gained traction in the 2010s, with populist leaders advocating protectionist policies to shield their economies from globalization. In Europe, leaders like Orban criticized international institutions, blaming them for economic instability and declining national sovereignty. In the United States, Trump capitalized on these sentiments, framing his "America First" policy as a means to reclaim economic in-

dependence and protect American jobs. During his first term, Trump embraced nationalism and great-power competition as central tenets of U.S. foreign policy. While President Barack Obama had sought cooperative engagement with China, Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy emphasized economic and military competition over global collaboration. The administration withdrew from key international agreements, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Paris Climate Agreement, signaling a retreat from multilateral commitments. Trump's trade policies, particularly the imposition of tariffs on Chinese imports, escalated tensions between Washington and Beijing. While these measures aimed to reduce U.S. dependence on Chinese goods, they also increased consumer prices and disrupted global supply chains. Despite his rhetoric, Trump's nationalist policies did not fundamentally alter global economic dynamics but instead contributed to a climate of uncertainty and instability. Although Biden initially promised a departure from Trump's "America First" approach, his administration has largely maintained key aspects of economic nationalism. While emphasizing alliances and partnerships, Biden has continued protectionist policies designed to counter China's rise. Legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act reflect a broader trend toward state-led industrial policies, mirroring strategies employed by nationalist governments worldwide. The emergence of economic nationalism and great-power competition has reshaped the landscape of U.S. foreign policy. The transition from Roosevelt's multilateralism to Trump's nationalist agenda represents a fundamental shift in how the United States engages with the world. While Roosevelt sought to build an international order based on cooperation and collective security, the contemporary era prioritizes national interests over global stability. To reinvigorate its role as a leader in international affairs, the United States must reconsider its approach to foreign policy. Addressing transnational challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and democratic backsliding requires a commitment to global cooperation rather than nationalist isolation. The lessons of history suggest that sustainable peace and prosperity depend on inclusive multilateralism rather than unilateral dominance. By broadening its strategic vision and embracing international collaboration, the United States can help shape a more stable and just world order in the 21st century.

Briefs

COAS advises youth against indulging...

FROM PAGE 01
high morale, and combat readiness. Gen Munir reiterated that rigorous training remains the cornerstone of a soldier's professional development and must continue to be the defining attribute of the Pakistan Army in overcoming the challenges of modern warfare. Upon his arrival, the COAS was received by the commander Bahawalpur Corps. He also inaugurated the CMH Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS), Innovista Cholistan and Integrated Combat Simulator Arena; pioneering initiatives aimed at advancing medical education, Information Technology and combat readiness during his visit to Bahawalpur Cantonment.

Civilian deaths from terrorism...

FROM PAGE 01
fatalities surpassed those of security forces. Civilian deaths rose by 175 per cent compared to January 2025, when 20 civilians were killed, while security forces' casualties declined by 18pc, down from 57 in January, the report said. The report stated that terrorist fatalities also dropped by 25pc, with 208 killed in January compared to 156 in February. A significant increase in arrests was recorded in February, with 66 suspects detained – the highest monthly figure since December 2023, when 139 terrorists were apprehended.

Israeli regime using...

FROM PAGE 01
exchange for Palestinian abductees. "With the end of Phase 1 of the [exchange] deal and in light of Hamas's refusal to accept the [US special envoy Steve] Witkoff outline for continuing talks – to which Israel agreed – Prime Minister Netanyahu has decided that, as of this morning, all entry of goods and supplies into the Gaza Strip will cease," the office said in a statement. "Israel will not allow a ceasefire without the release of our [captives]," Netanyahu's office added, warning of "further consequences" if Hamas insists on its decision.

'Once in a generation moment'...

FROM PAGE 01
Sweden, the Czech Republic and Romania, as well as the Turkish Foreign Minister, have arrived in central London's Lancaster House. We're now seeing some footage of the leaders around the summit table, with Sir Keir Starmer speaking to those gathered. The UK prime minister calls it a "once in a generation moment for the security of Europe", and adds that a good peace outcome for Ukraine would also be vital for the security of nations across the continent. Starmer also references people stood outside Downing Street who cheered in support of Ukraine as Zelensky arrived to No10 - he says this reflected the "strength of feeling" for the country.

PM orders for smooth supply of...

FROM PAGE 01
should be taken regarding control of sugar prices. PM Shehbaz ordered that an effective strategy should be devised regarding the supply of sugar and other food items at reasonable prices during Ramadan. He said the federal and provincial governments should work together to ensure the supply of food and drinks to the common man at cheap prices. The Prime Minister said no negligence will be tolerated in controlling the prices of sugar and other essential commodities during Ramadan. During the meeting Prime Minister was briefed that at present there is ample stock of sugar in the country. He said fair price shops have been set up to sell sugar at lower prices at provincial level.

TRACKSUITS FOR DIPLOMATS



ISLAMABAD: On behalf of the team and management of Rising Stars Hockey Club – including Mehmood Ahmed, Sohail Janjua, Asif Bhatti, and Ansar Bhatti – tracksuits were presented to Neil Hawkins, the Australian High Commissioner, Kamal Ahmed, High Commissioner of Brunei, and Eduard Preda, Deputy Head of Mission at the Romanian Embassy. Secretary of Islamabad Hockey Association, Ziaullah Shah, was also present on the occasion. – DNA

Man City survive Cup scare for the 2nd round

O'Reilly headed home a De Bruyne delivery in first-half stoppage time and City laid siege to Plymouth's goal in the second period before O'Reilly again was in the right place to head De Bruyne's corner into the net in the 76th minute

SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester City survived an FA Cup scare for the second round in succession as they beat Championship strugglers Plymouth Argyle 3-1 to reach the quarter-finals on Saturday. Teenager Nico O'Reilly saved City's blushes with two headed goals after Ukrainian Maksym Talovierov had sent thousands of visiting fans into delirium by heading Plymouth into the lead. Both his goals were set up by Kevin de Bruyne, who added a late third goal to finish off the south-coast side. While Plymouth were unable to emulate their shock victory over Premier League leaders Liverpool in the fourth round, City will now be big favourites to win the Cup for the third time under Pep Guardiola and salvage something from the season.

City also had to come from behind to beat third-tier Leyton Orient in the previous round. "We know how important it is. Now we are going to fight, and we're going to



see what happens," Guardiola said. O'Reilly headed home a De Bruyne delivery in first-half stoppage time and City laid siege to Plymouth's goal in the second pe-

riod before O'Reilly again was in the right place to head De Bruyne's corner into the net in the 76th minute. "Two goals from left back, I wasn't really expecting that,"

19-year-old O'Reilly, who also scored in the 8-0 win over Salford City in the third round, told the BBC. "Going into halftime 1-0 down would have been tough but (the first goal) lifted the spirits." De Bruyne rounded off an impressive display by making absolutely sure of City's progress in the final minute with a tap-in after Erling Haaland had been denied. The FA Cup is Premier League champions City's last chance for silverware this season after stumbling badly in the domestic league and crashing out of the Champions League to Real Madrid. Plymouth are second-from-bottom of the second-tier Championship but held their own against City with a display every bit as gritty as in their stunning victory over Liverpool. "We can only be disappointed with the result, but proud of the performance," Miron Muslic, who replaced Wayne Rooney as Plymouth's manager this season, said. "We deserved the lead, we used our chances. We concede with the last action of the first half, but that's just how it is. We tried right until the end."

Marc beats brother to win Thailand GP

The 32-year-old Spaniard extended his lead at the top of the MotoGP world championship with 37 points, eight more than second-placed Alex and 14 ahead of Italian Bagnaia

BURIRAM: Six-times MotoGP champion Marc Marquez continued his perfect start with factory Ducati as he completed a weekend double at the season-opening Thailand Grand Prix on Sunday, finishing ahead of his younger brother Alex. Pole-sitter and sprint winner Marc Marquez made an electric start in hot and humid conditions at the Buriram International Circuit but Alex, who had qualified second on the grid, took the lead on the seventh of the 26 laps. Marc snatched back the lead with three laps remaining, however, to win the opening race of the MotoGP season for the first time since 2014. Twice MotoGP champion Francesco Bagnaia, Marquez's new teammate, came in third to complete an all-Ducati podium. "Yesterday, I was happy. Today, I'm super happy," Marquez told reporters. "I mean, this is a dream! It's a dream start my new journey with Ducati like this in Thailand where I won my last four championships, to be here with my brother – incredible." Marquez had looked dominant all weekend and it seemed only a matter of time that he would overtake Alex, who is four years his junior, as he finished 1.732 seconds ahead. The 32-year-old Spaniard extended his lead at the top of the MotoGP world championship with 37 points, eight more than second-placed Alex and 14 ahead of Italian Bagnaia. – Agencies

WI vs AUS: Jamaica set to host its first day-night Test

Australia will tour the West Indies for a three-match Test series and a five-match T20I series

WEB DESK

JAMAICA: Jamaica is set to host its first-ever day-night Test match, with the historic pink-ball fixture scheduled to take place at Sabina Park in Kingston this July. The West Indies will face Australia in what promises to be a landmark event for cricket in the Caribbean. "I hope it goes off well," said Michael Holding. Multiple cricket authorities in the West Indies have confirmed the development. Sabina Park is undergoing upgrades, including the installation of additional lighting to meet the requirements for hosting a pink-ball Test. "The Jamaica Cricket Association (JCA) is best positioned to comment on this, but I can confirm that a day-night match will be played in the summer," said Daley Redcliffe, the head of Kingston Cricket Club (KCC). JCA CEO Courtney Francis highlighted the significance of the event, stating, "This Test match is significant and historic for the Jamaica Cricket Association and Jamaica. The

Government of Jamaica, in partnership with the JCA and Cricket West Indies (CWI), has invested significant funds to upgrade the lights to meet all international requirements." "This, coupled with the installation of a new electronic scoreboard before the Test match, ensures we are comfortable with the preparations and looking forward to hosting a successful game," he added. Sabina Park is jointly owned by Sabina Park Holdings, the JCA, and the KCC, with the latter two playing a key role in the venue's preparations. Jamaica's Minister of Sport, Olivia Grange, assured financial backing for the upgrades. "We are allocating funds through the Sports Development Foundation, with reimbursement from the Ministry of Finance. However, we are navigating challenges related to Sabina Park Holdings and governance issues with KCC and JCA, as there is no properly functioning entity to finalize an agreement," Grange was quoted as saying by SportsMax. This will be the second pink-ball Test in the Caribbean, following the 2018 fixture between the West Indies and Sri Lanka at Kensington Oval in Barbados, where Sri Lanka secured a four-wicket victory. Despite the growing popularity of day-night Tests worldwide, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been hesitant to make them a regular feature on its calendar, citing concerns over their shorter duration.

PML-N, PPP rift Bilawal...

FROM PAGE 01
According to sources, Bilawal is set to arrive in Islamabad today for tomorrow's meeting scheduled at PM House. Several important issues will come under discussion while heads of allied parties will also attend the high-level meeting. The meeting will focus on the administrative issues of the government and PPP chairman will raise his party's reservations. The lack of funds for the PPP's MNAs and MPAs in Punjab would also be discussed in the meeting. Earlier, PPP's MPAs from Punjab showed their reservations in a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari in Lahore.

PTI urges federal govt to approve...

FROM PAGE 01
chief ministers from Punjab and Sindh undertook foreign visits. He stated that such actions reinforce the province's sense of deprivation. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Office has confirmed reports that Afghan authorities attempted to construct a border post on the Pakistani side at Torkham. This follows the closure of the Torkham border crossing last Friday, which has disrupted movement and trade.

India thrash NZ to top Group A

FROM PAGE 01
Skipper Mitchell Santner and opening batter Will Young were the other notable run-getters for the Blackcaps, while the rest fell cheaply. Chakravarthy was the standout bowler for New Zealand, taking five wickets for just 42 runs in his 10 overs, followed by Kuldeep Yadav with two scalps. New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner's decision to bowl first paid dividends as their bowling unit dominated the strong Indian batting unit and restricted them to 249/9 in the allotted 50 overs.

CTD arrests wanted terrorist...

FROM PAGE 01
According to Rangers spokesperson, the suspect, a resident of Temp, Balochistan, was found in possession of arms and ammunition. The spokesperson stated that Zubair joined the BRA in 2016 and received six months of military training from the Masakar-e-Ghaz camp in Makran. He was involved in multiple attacks against security forces, including a rocket launcher and heavy arms assault on the Rodban FC check post, resulting in significant human and financial losses.

'He just lost it', Cunha's red card

Wolves boss Vitor Pereira said: "Of course, the emotional side was very high and not only inside the pitch, but on the bench and in the stands, a lot of pressure everywhere. In the end it happens"

LONDON: An FA Cup fifth-round defeat by Bournemouth was a disappointing blow for Wolves, but the impact of losing star forward Matheus Cunha for at least three Premier League matches may hurt even more. The 25-year-old had to be dragged down the tunnel and was unable to take part in the penalty shootout following his red card in the final minute of extra time for an unsavoury clash with Cherries defender Milos Kerkez. Wolves boss Vitor Pereira said: "Of course, the emotional side was very high and not only inside the pitch, but on the bench and in the stands, a lot of pressure everywhere. In the end it happens. s" It should not happen, but this is something that happens in football." Both Matt Doherty and Boubacar Traore missed spot-kicks for Wolves in the 5-4 shootout defeat after a 1-1 draw over 120 minutes at Vitality Stadium. It was a dramatic climax to a game where Evanilson had put the Cherries ahead on his return from injury, before his fellow Brazilian Cunha levelled with a sensational equaliser from around 30 yards. However, Cunha's display went from magical to madness with a dismissal that will leave his side - fourth bottom in the Premier League - without their best player for crucial games in their relegation fight.

The red-mist moment, where he clashed multiple times with Kerkez, including fighting, kicking out at the Hungarian full-back while he was on the ground and aiming a headbutt when Kerkez had got back to his feet. After being pulled away by team-mates, referee Sam Barrott eventually gave him a red card but a furious Cunha refused to leave the field, needing to be escorted and pushed down the tunnel. He will be suspended for three games following the red



card for violent conduct, but additional games cannot be ruled out because of the severity of the incident and having already served a two-match ban for clashing with Ipswich Town security in December. Former Arsenal defender Martin Keown said on Match of the Day: "The ability he has is top level, the goal he scored belongs in the Champions League, but then suddenly we see the ugly." "I have not seen that on the football pitch since the 1970s - he just lost it. The referee had to send him off. They couldn't get him out of the ground. This was the ugly part and it is something he has to stop. "Wolves need points to stay up. He will be a huge loss." Wolves have what could be described as a favourable run of fixtures coming up against teams in the bottom half of the Premier League. But Cunha is certain to miss matches against Everton, bottom club Southampton and West Ham, while third-bottom Ipswich follow on 5 April. Wolves have built a five-point buffer over Ipswich and Leicester City after winning two of their past four league matches. But losing talisman Cunha will be a massive blow, given he is their top league scorer on 13 goals and their attacking inspiration in this troubled campaign.

Briefs

Small industry be given top priority of govt: FRIA

DNA

LAHORE: The Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has said that the value-added small industry should be given the top priority of the government to generate employment, providing them maximum facilitation to meet their requirements.

FRIA Chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that the government needs to establish long-term and sustainable policies in consultation with the real stakeholders to enhance growth. He said that presently, the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for the small industry, as the ever-increasing energy, gas and power tariffs are the real threat to the economy amidst high markup rate and continuous fluctuations exchange rate.

FRIA Chairman asked the government to take prompt measures to bring down the production costs for the small industry to enable them to compete in the international market.

He said that exporting SMEs are currently having difficulty to compete the global market because of rapid increase in production costs. He said that the high cost of production is not good for our exports. Shahbaz Aslam said that high energy tariffs, growing rates of taxes, and lack of skilled labor are the main reasons behind the increase in the cost of production. Manufacturing and production industries have the potential to significantly impact economic growth by reducing unemployment in the country.

Chinese company, NEVs begins vehicles' deliveries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's BYD, a global leader in New Energy Vehicles (NEVs), and Pakistan's Mega Motor Company (MMC) Private Limited have commenced vehicle deliveries in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. According to an official statement, the companies plan to roll out 100 units within the first 48 hours. BYD Pakistan also announced showroom locations in the three cities, emphasizing its commitment to advancing sustainable mobility in the country.

In April, BYD partnered with MMC to introduce innovative NEV solutions to Pakistan. By June 2024, HUBCO, through MMC Private Limited, expanded into the electric vehicle sector in collaboration with BYD Auto Industry Limited, the development was shared by HUBCO in a notice to Pakistan Stock Exchange. With the launch of the SEAL and ATTO 3 models, both companies have reaffirmed their confidence in Pakistan's automobile market.—APP

CCPIT deepens global trade ties with 33 signed accords

This year, in just half a month following the Spring Festival, the organization has already arranged eight entrepreneurial delegations to countries such as Kazakhstan, Germany, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, to engage in economic and trade activities

DNA

BEIJING: The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), a national foreign trade and investment promotion agency, reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing global communication and fostering deeper cooperation with the world. At a press conference held here, CCPIT spokesperson Yang Fan shared the agency's ongoing efforts to serve both Chinese and foreign businesses. In recent years, Chinese enterprises have shown a strong desire to

expand into overseas markets and promote international cooperation within global industrial and supply chains. One notable initiative launched in 2024, has sent 2,249 business delegations to 102 countries and regions during the year, conducting trade talks and negotiations. This year, in just half a month following the Spring Festival, the organization has already arranged eight entrepreneurial delegations to countries such as Kazakhstan, Germany, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, to engage in economic and trade activities.

More than 200 Chinese companies participated in these delegations, totaling over 300 representatives. During these visits, 35 business exchange events and hundreds of one-on-one meetings were held, which garnered significant attention from international counterparts. Over 600 foreign businesses and organizations participated, resulting in 33 Cooperation Intent Agreements across various sectors, including finance, energy, infrastructure, automotive manufacturing, and digital economy. This demonstrates the strong willingness of both Chinese and

foreign businesses to pursue mutually beneficial, pragmatic cooperation and the vast potential for future collaboration. One of these trips took place in mid-February when a delegation of Chinese entrepreneurs visited Kazakhstan. In just two days, the delegation signed eight cooperation agreements, including energy and agricultural export-import deals. This spirit of international cooperation was also evident in other visits. In South Africa, the Chinese delegation was warmly received by Vice President Paul Mashatile. In Germany, senior executives from automo-

tive giants such as Mercedes-Benz, BMW, and Bosch engaged in in-depth discussions with the delegation. In the UAE, government officials and major business associations expressed strong support for deepening bilateral cooperation. Yang Fan highlighted the resilience of global economic cooperation despite challenges. Despite facing increasing protectionism and unilateralism, the momentum of economic globalization remains unchanged. "Economic globalization is a powerful historical trend, and despite facing challenges, its momentum remains unchanged," pinpointed

Yang. As the third China International Supply Chain Expo will be held in Beijing from July 16 to 20, CCPIT has already launched roadshows to promote the event in 12 countries including Vietnam, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, South Africa, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ethiopia, Egypt, and India. Yang noted that, "We would like to welcome both Chinese and foreign companies to make the most of the 3rd China International Supply Chain Expo in July, an international platform that fosters global collaboration and helps maintain the stability and smooth flow of global supply chains."

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia achieved biggest installed capacity of Solar PV

DNA

BEIJING: In the Asian market, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia achieved biggest installed capacity of Solar PV with market shares of 7.1% and 6.8% respectively. It was stated at the Photovoltaic Industry 2024 Development Retrospect and 2025 Situation Prospect Seminar hosted by the CPIA on February 27. "In 2024, China's photovoltaic industry faces a series of challenges, whereas the new installed capacity still exceeds expectations, which could be described as challenges and opportunities coexist," noted Wang Bohua, Honorary Chairman of China Photovoltaic Industry Association (CPIA), in his keynote address at the Seminar. Titled retrospect and prospect, the seminar demonstrated the overall development of China's PV industry in the past year, as well as possible trends for the new year in extenso. "In 2024, our PV newly installed capacity was 277.57 GW, which is a

year-on-year leap of 28.3%, among which the monthly installed capacity in December reached 71.27GW, setting a record high for new installed capacity in a single month. Overall, as of 2024, our cumulative installed PV capacity has reached 885.68 GW," Wang introduced. "However, blind optimism means the prelude of failure. What we also need to distinguish is that in the same year, China's total exports of photovoltaic products amounted to USD 32.02 billion, a year-on-year decrease of 33.9%. It could be said that the shuffle has begun. Survival of the fittest is accelerating. All parties need to assess the situation to take advantage of the trend." "A coin has two sides. Affected by trade barriers and changes in the overseas industrial landscape, silicon wafer exports were 60.9GW, down 13.3% year-on-year, but battery cell and module exports reached 57.5GW and 238.8GW, up 46.3% and 12.8% year-on-year respectively," Wang pointed out. At a macro level, the PV

industry maintains mushrooming, and a consensus has been reached that global renewable energy installed capacity will triple in 2030, and China is leveraging the advantages of entire industrial chain to further expand green production capacity development on a global scale. In 2024, China's PV module export regions will continue to develop in a diversified manner, with the export value of PV modules to 23 countries increasing by more than USD10 million, and the export value of modules to 33 countries increasing by more than 100%, with the top ten markets in terms of module export value maintained a share of 62%, and the number of markets with export volume exceeding 1GW increased from 29 in 2023 to 38 in 2024. In addition, based on the fact that the global photovoltaic market size has reached 530GW in 2024, a year-on-year increase of approximately 35.9% and that major markets will maintain a growth rate of more than

15%, CPIA optimistically predicts that the global PV market will maintain a scale of 531-583GW in 2025, and new installed capacity will increase by 10% year-on-year. So far, various institutions have successively raised their global installation forecasts, remaining optimistic about the global market prospects. CPIA pointed out that emerging markets are small in scale but have initial growth potential due to their rapid growth in electricity demand and great potential for renewable energy. For instance, Saudi Arabia has proposed to add 20GW of solar capacity each year starting in 2024, the UAE has proposed to increase the proportion of clean energy in the total energy structure to 50% by 2050, Pakistan has emphasized that renewable energy will account for 30% of the energy structure by 2030, and African countries including South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, and Nigeria have all proposed to increase the proportion of renewable energy to between 30% and 42% by 2030.

UN chief urges 'maximum restraint' as first phase of Gaza ceasefire expires

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 02 (APP): United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on Israel and Hamas to exercise "maximum restraint" as the first phase of their ceasefire agreement concludes. "The past six weeks have provided a fragile but vital reprieve, offering a measure of relief to both Palestinians and Israelis," the UN chief said in a statement issued by his Spokesperson. During the period of the truce, thousands of trucks carrying life-saving assistance entered Gaza, reaching nearly every person in the besieged Strip. According to media reports, the six-week long ceasefire between Israel and Hamas ended earlier on Saturday with further negotiations between the sides still pending. The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of preventing a return to hostilities, which he described as potentially catastrophic. "It is imperative that all efforts be made to prevent a return to hostilities," the statement urged. Guterres called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to find a way forward on the next phase of the ceasefire. He highlighted the necessity of a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages to prevent further escalation and protect civilians. "A permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages are essential to preventing escalation and averting more devastating consequences for civilians," the UN chief said in the statement. The statement also stressed the need for the humane treatment of all those held under power and the continuous flow of humanitarian aid. The Secretary-General called for the aid to be adequately funded and delivered in a safe environment for civilians and humanitarian workers. "Humanitarian aid must continue to flow, without impediment, ensuring the safety and security of civilians and humanitarian workers," he added. As the holy month of Ramadan, a time of peace and reflection, begins, Guterres called for an urgent de-escalation of the situation in the occupied West Bank and an end to all violence.—DNA

Trump's record-breaking flurry of executive orders

PARIS: Since returning to the White House on January 20, Donald Trump has signed a whopping 79 executive orders touching on issues from foreign policy to transgender rights. With his Republican Party only holding narrow majorities in Congress, and seeking to move quickly to remake the US government, Trump has brandished his pen as a weapon targeting trade, civil rights and federal bureaucracy. No US president has signed so many executive actions so quickly since 1937, according to the Federal Register, which has published the orders made since that date. Trump has met fierce resistance. By February 27, 16 of the orders had been challenged in court, according to monitoring by Just Security at the New York University School of Law. Here is a look at the main issues targeted by the 47th president of the United States.—Agencies

'Sustainable growth can't be achieved with low private credit'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has asked the banks to boost financial deepening and diversify beyond the government sector, stressing that no country can achieve sustainable economic growth with low levels of private credit. APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that Pakistan's banks allocate around 75 percent of their lending to established sectors, while only 5 percent goes to small and medium enterprises (SME). This imbalance highlights the need for banks to reassess their strategies, he said. With a more stable economy, he hoped that the government's borrowing would be cur-

tailed and the banking sector could look towards increasing credit to the private sector, particularly the SMEs and agriculture sector. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi observed that banks' credit to the private sector as a percentage of GDP declined to 8.4 per cent by fiscal year 2024, which is almost half the level seen in 2004. Pakistan's bank deposit and private-sector credit-to-GDP ratios have also remained among the lowest compared to the regional countries. Pakistan has lowest deposit, private credit ratios, APBF chief said. Countering the common argument that government lending has crowded out the private sector, Maaz Mahmood noted that in some countries, despite equally high or even greater government borrowing from

commercial banks, the private sector still holds a significant share of the financial sector's portfolio. However, he also acknowledged the banking sector's role in expanding bank account coverage, which has risen from 47pc of the adult population in 2018 to 64pc today. The gender gap has also narrowed from 47pc to 34pc. By 2028, the government aims to increase bank account coverage to 75pc of the adult population and reduce the gender gap to 25pc. Achieving these targets will require the financial sector to enhance its services' depth, breadth, and quality. The APBF president suggested leveraging AI, digitisation and financial innovation to fulfil these goals. He appreciated the SBP governor and Finance Minister who have already urged banks to expand lending to the SME sector.



SIUT

A COMPREHENSIVE HEALTHCARE NETWORK

4.2 Million Patient Treated Annually

صحیح سوچ کیا کر سکتی ہے
آپ کی سوچ ہے



For Zakat & Donation

021-111-366-283 | www.siut.org

Pope 'stable' after 'calm night': Vatican

ROME: Pope Francis, who has been in hospital for more than two weeks with double pneumonia, is in a "stable" condition after spending a "calm night", the Vatican said on Sunday. "The pope is still resting," the Holy See said in its latest health update on the 88-year-old head of the Catholic Church. On Saturday evening, it said the pope was still receiving oxygen, but had no fever, had been eating, was alert and praying. His haemodynamic parameters - those relating to the flow of blood - were also stable, and he did not have the high white-blood-cell count that often indicates an infection, the Vatican said, adding that the prognosis, as in previous days, remained "reserved". Francis, leader of the world's almost 1.4 billion Catholics, was admitted to Rome's Gemelli



hospital on February 14 with bronchitis that soon developed into pneumonia in both lungs. Last weekend, the Vatican reported he was in a "critical" condition, suffering a major respiratory attack and requiring blood transfusions, prompting widespread concern. After a series of incremental improvements, there was more alarming

news on Friday when the Vatican said Francis "presented an isolated crisis of bronchospasm which led to an episode of vomiting with inhalation and a sudden worsening of the respiratory picture". "It will take doctors 24 to 48 hours to evaluate the impact" of Friday's breathing crisis, a Vatican source said. Andrea Ungar, professor of geri-

iatrics at the University of Florence, told AFP on Saturday that it appeared vomit had entered the pope's lungs, which "aggravated the pneumonia". Such an issue normally required a strengthening of antibiotics, ventilation and respiratory exercises, he said. He also agreed that the first 24 to 48 hours after an incident were crucial, adding the pontiff would likely stay in hospital for some time - "at least 10 days" in the most optimistic scenario. Catholics and other well-wishers around the world have been praying for the Argentine pope, a liberal reformer who has led the Church for almost 12 years. Pilgrims have flocked to the Gemelli hospital, praying for the pontiff and leaving handwritten messages, including posters illustrated by children, and balloons bearing his image.—DNA

Briefs

Economic crisis to end soon: Rana

DNA

FAISALABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Sunday claimed that Pakistan would overcome the ongoing economic crisis within two years if another "October 12" – a reference to the 1999 military coup – was not imposed. The ruling PML-N senior leader made the remarks while addressing a ceremony in Faisalabad today that was held to distribute Minority Cards among religious minorities of Punjab. On October 12, then-army chief General Pervez Musharraf dissolved the parliament and ousted then-prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup. Speaking on the occasion, the PML-N leader said: "In 1999, Pakistan was making progress on a fast track under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif but the incident of October 12 occurred and the country plunged into unprecedented terrorism and load-shedding." The PM's aide said that in 2013, people again voted for Nawaz and he overcame issues and put the country on the track to development again.

Rs4tr revenue stuck due to 100,000 pending cases

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Amid an expected shortfall of over Rs600 billion in the current fiscal year, it has come to the fore that more than Rs4 trillion of tax revenue is stuck due to over 100,000 pending cases in the courts. The revelation was made during a meeting chaired by CJP Yahya Afridi on November 7, 2024, and attended by officials from FBR and the Ministry of Finance where it was disclosed that an amount of Rs4.457 trillion in tax revenue was involved in more than 108,000 cases pending in higher courts across the country. The development comes against the backdrop that PM Sharif-led government looking ahead to first IMF review of the loan programme amid a Rs604 billion tax shortfall.

Embassies of Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece celebrate spring traditions

The event held at the Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2 on 28 February 2025. This vibrant event, marking the arrival of spring, was hosted in alliance with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in the prestigious public institution of ICG

DNA

ISLAMABAD – The Embassies of Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria in collaboration with Ministry of Federal Education came together to celebrate the rich cultural traditions of Martisor (Romania and Republic of Moldova), Martenitsa/мартеница (Bulgaria), and Martis/Μάρτις (Greece) at the Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2 on 28 February 2025. This vibrant event, marking the arrival of spring, was hosted in alliance with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in the prestigious public institution of ICG.

These ancient customs, deeply rooted in the folklore of the three nations, symbolize renewal, hope, and the changing of seasons. The traditions involve the exchange of red and white woven symbols, which are worn as charms for good fortune and prosperity at the beginning of March. Distinguished guests, faculty members, and students gathered to witness a colorful showcase of cultural performances, presentations, and interactive activities highlighting the shared heritage of Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece. Representatives from the respective embassies wearing traditional dresses delivered insightful remarks on the historical significance of these traditions, emphasizing the values of unity, friendship, and cultural appreciation. Dr Dan Stoenescu, ambassador of Romania, added: "The red and white threads of the Martisor symbolize rebirth, vitality and purity, strength and resilience - values deeply rooted in our culture and history – that we also share with the Pakistani people. As we wear and exchange Martisor, we celebrate the spirit of unity and optimism. Martisor's recognition by UNESCO as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, reinforces its significance beyond Romania and South-Eastern Europe."

Ambassador of Bulgaria Irena Gancheva stated: "As we celebrate the beautiful Bulgarian and Balkan tradition of Martenitsa, we embrace a centuries-old custom that symbolizes health, happiness, and the arrival of spring. This tradition, deeply rooted in our culture, is a testament to our rich heritage and the values we cherish—friendship, unity, and renewal. As we exchange Martenitsi and wish each other 'Chestita Baba Marta,' we also share a piece of Bulgaria's soul with the world. It is heartwarming to see this tradition resonate beyond our borders, connecting cultures and fostering goodwill." The Chargé d'Affaires of Greece Eleni Porichi also underlined: "Martis is a cherished Greek and Balkan tradition that welcomes the arrival of spring, symbolizing protection, health, and renewal. Wearing the red and white bracelet from March 1st reflects our deep connection to nature and the continuation of a custom rooted in ancient times. This simple yet meaningful tradition unites generations and reminds us of the beauty of seasonal change and new beginnings." The Federal Secretary for Education, Mr Mohyud-din Ahmad Wani in his message, expressed that such vibrant multicultural events bring together



diverse communities to honor unity, heritage, and cultural exchange. He added that the traditions of Martisor is a testament to the beauty of diversity and the strength of unity. Through this event, we aim to promote cross-cultural understanding and create meaningful connections among communities. He expressed his gratitude to the embassies for

fostering cultural exchange and providing students with an opportunity to experience global traditions firsthand. "Events like these not only enrich our students' knowledge but also strengthen the bonds between Pakistan and these three European nations through shared customs and celebrations," he said. The event concluded with the symbolic distribution

of Martisor, Martenitsa, and Martis tokens among students and attendees, reinforcing the message of optimism and new beginnings that these traditions represent. Later, police officials, after completing all legal proceedings, handed over bodies of the victims to their respective heirs for burial. According to police, children were among those injured in the blast.

Quetta gas blast claims 2 lives

ISLAMABAD: At least two persons were killed, including a girl, while five others were critically injured when a blast caused by a gas pipeline leakage ripped through the Pash-tunabad area of Quetta on Sunday. The devastating blast, which occurred at 3 am on March 2, 2025, was attributed to gas load-shedding, according to the victims' families, a private news channel reported. Soon after receiving the report of the incident, local police reached the area and shifted bodies and injured persons to the civil hospital. – DNA

Pakistan calls for UNSC reforms, more transparency

Ambassador Akram proposes focus on all fronts to reform UN bodies

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council must be more transparent and inclusive in conducting its business to meet the challenges posed by current global, regional conflicts and crises, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN Munir Akram has said. Delivering Pakistan's statement at a debate on Working Methods under the long-running Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reforms, he said that while everyone was agreed on early restructuring of the 15-member body, the 'Pact for the Future', which the world leaders adopted last September, calls for strengthening the entire UN system, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Ambassador Akram therefore proposed focusing on moving on all fronts to reform the UN bodies. Responding to a suggestion during the debate for reflecting on "new realities", he said doing that would again freeze the Council at a particular time in its 1945 framework – when the world body was established. "Any expansion of perma-

nent members would freeze the Council at that moment; It is only through the process of elections that the new realities that constantly change can be reflected in the composition of the Security Council, not by adding new permanent members," the Pakistani envoy said. He was obviously referring to the intensive campaign by India, Brazil, Germany and Japan – known as the Group of Four – for permanent seats as they seek expansion of the Council by 10 seats, with six additional permanent and four non-permanent members. On the other hand, the Italy/Pakistan-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group, which firmly opposes additional permanent members, has proposed a new category of members – not permanent members – with longer duration in terms and a possibility to get re-elected, raising the number of elected seats to 21. The Security Council is currently composed of five permanent members – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – and 10 non-permanent members elected to serve for two years. The discussions over the years have revealed convergences as well as divergences on various elements of reform – convergence on priority for Africa, expanding the membership of developing countries and on the need for representation of regional and cross-regional groups, the Pakistani envoy said.

CM Maryam steps up efforts to control inflation in Punjab

CM directs officials to prominently display official price lists

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered an effective and comprehensive crackdown to curb inflation across the province. The chief minister directed all commissioners and deputy commissioners to launch an effective campaign against price gouging and instructed them to prominently display the official price lists.

MURREE SPARKLETT'S
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE

330ml Murree Sparkletts
750ml Murree Sparkletts

For Sales & Supply Contact:
Adeel Butt 03334131756
Qaiser Waheed 03325808422
Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043

MARCH 2025

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165