



# Islamabad POST

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**Djokovic set to rewrite Masters 1000 history with Miami victory**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Chairman Senate calls for stronger Pakistan-US ties**

Detailed News On Page-08

**IG KP seeks salary raise for cops**

Detailed News On Page-08



**DPM stresses sustained dialogue**

## Pak pledges to have robust Afghan ties

Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq, provided a detailed briefing on his recent visit to Kabul

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has emphasized the importance of sustained dialogue with the interim Afghan government to address Pakistan's concerns and promote bilateral relations. He was chairing a meeting in Islamabad regarding Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan.

Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq, provided a detailed briefing on his recent visit to Kabul, highlighting key engagements with Afghan authorities and discussions on bilateral cooperation.

The Foreign Secretary and other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry also attended the meeting. On the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq Khan paid a three-day visit to Kabul from Friday last. During the visit, he called on Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on all issues of mutual concern.

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**Balochistan govt to take action against anti-state officials**

Balochistan Govt employees involved in anti-state activities to face the music: CM Sarfraz Bugti

DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan government has decided to take strict action against government employees involved in anti-state propaganda and subversive activities. Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, while chairing a high-level meeting, emphasized that officials promoting anti-state narratives will be closely monitored at the district level and included in the Fourth Schedule. During the meeting, administrative officers were briefed on the law and order situation and service delivery across the province. CM Bugti directed all com-

missioners and district officers to take immediate action against any government employees engaged in subversion and activities against the state. He further stressed that every educational institution in Balochistan must ensure the hoisting of the national flag and the singing of the national anthem. Heads of institutions failing to comply with these directives were asked to resign, as implementing state orders is part of their official duties. The chief minister reaffirmed that government officers must remain committed to their constitutional oath and resist any pressure from anti-state elements or political pressure. He stated that maintaining law and order is the government's top priority, adding that the government gives the policy, but its implementation is the responsibility of field officers.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing regarding the Aeroponics Technology Complex for Potato Seed Production at National Agricultural Research Centre. - DNA

**President confers military awards on armed forces officers**

Sitara-i-Basalt was conferred on Captain Syed Amir Raza of Pakistan Navy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has conferred military awards on the officers of the Pakistan Army, Navy and Air Force at a special ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Sitara-i-Basalt was conferred on Captain Syed Amir Raza of Pakistan Navy, while 43 general officers received Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military). The recipients of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) include Air Marshal Muhammad Sarfraz, Air Marshal Kazim Hammad, Air Marshal

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**Bilawal urges govt to take opp on board**

PPP chief says it is indispensable to establish consensus on national issues

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday called upon the incumbent government to take on board all political parties, including those that skipped the high-level moot on national security, to counter rising incidents of terrorism. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif should convene another meeting, even if after a month... We hope to build a national consensus to

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**Directs audit of Ramazan package**

**Agriculture plays key role in country's development: Shehbaz**

He was addressing a ceremony at the National Agricultural Research Centre

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has inaugurated the Seed Potato Production and Processing Complex for the production of potato seed through modern method of aeroponics. Addressing the inaugural ceremony at the National Agricultural Research Centre, Islamabad on Monday, he expressed the confidence that this initiative will help produce high-quality potato seed. He said that the initiative will further contribute in saving foreign exchange reserves being spent on the import of the potato seed. The prime minister said agriculture is the backbone of country's economy as 65pc population of Pakistan is linked with farming. He said Pakistan's farmer is very hard working and energetic and he can do miracles if he is provided with the quality seed, fertilizer and genuine pesticides at affordable prices. Shehbaz Sharif stressed the need to manufacture combine harvesters

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**IMF turns down FBR's request to reduce property taxes**

Senior officials previously asserted that global lender had agreed to reduce withholding tax on property buyers by 2%

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has ultimately declined the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) request to lower transaction taxes for the property sector at this stage. Previously, senior officials asserted that the Washington-based lender had,

Continued on Page 06

### Briefs

**'Sugar price hike reports baseless'**

Federal Minister said that govt is working closely with provincial authorities to monitor situation

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain has denied reports claiming that sugar is being sold at Rs180 per kilogram, calling them "baseless" and "propaganda meant to create panic among the public." Speaking to the media, the minister said no significant increase in sugar prices has occurred, and in fact, government action has led to a Rs5 per kg reduction. "Media rumours are designed to spread uncertainty. The current market price is Rs164 per kg, not Rs180," said Hussain.

**PTI consults over top office of opp. alliance**

The leaders have agreed over a middle path for the alliance's chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI hierarchy has been engaged in consultations over the head of the expected grand alliance of the opposition parties, sources said. The leaders have agreed over a middle path for the alliance's chief after opinions from the JUI and other opposition parties, sources said. Some leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have suggested, the chairman and president, two top offices for the opposition's alliance. "They have proposed one from Mehmood Achakzai and Fazlur Rehman to make chairman and other as president," sources said.

**Bars media talk after meetings**

**IHC restores visiting days for Imran Khan**

PTI founder allowed to hold meetings on every Tuesday, Thursday; meetings limited to names given by his coordinator

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: In a sigh of relief for the ousted prime minister, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday restored visiting days for incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, allowing people to meet him every Tuesday and Thursday. Only those individuals whose names are provided by the PTI founder's coordinator Salman Akram Raja will be permitted to meet him. The latest development in the legal saga pertaining to the former prime minister's visitation rights as IHC Acting Chief Justice Justice Sarfraz Dogar heard the combined pleas on the said issue. The three-member bench, which also includes Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, was formed by Justice Dogar last week who also merged various petitions about Khan's meeting rights in response to a plea filed by jail Superintendent Abdul Ghafour Anjum.

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**IHC summons Islamabad IG**

Noorani's two brothers, Muhammad Saifur Rehman Haider and Muhammad Ali, went missing from their residence

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday summoned the Islamabad Inspector General of Police (IGP) during a hearing on a plea filed by journalist Ahmad Noorani's mother for the recovery of his two brothers. The US-based Noorani, who works for a news outlet called FactFocus, recently published an investigative report regarding a serving high-ranking military official and his relatives. Noorani's two brothers, Muhammad Saifur Rehman

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**Sadiq Khan's prompt trip to Kabul, is Pakistan really sidelined on Afghan front?**

Prior to Sadiq Khan's visit, a high-powered US delegation, facilitated by Qatar, visited Kabul. Led by Ambassador Adam Boehler, the delegation successfully negotiated the release and airlifting of George Glezzmann, an American airline mechanic

SHAMIM SHAHID

PAKISTAN'S special envoy to Afghanistan, Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Khan, made a swift trip to Kabul in what appears to be an immediate response to the United States' recent direct engagement with the Taliban. The US, bypassing Pakistan, has initiated direct diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime, which has been in power since August 15, 2021. This development follows a high-level National Security discussion in Pakistan's parliament, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif playing a pivotal role. Prior to Sadiq Khan's visit, a high-powered US delegation, facilitated by Qatar, visited Kabul. Led by Ambassador Adam Boehler, the delegation successfully negotiated the release and airlifting of George Glezzmann, an American airline mechanic, to the US via Doha. The very next day, Sadiq Khan, a

well-regarded diplomat in Afghanistan, arrived in Kabul for a three-day visit. Although details of Sadiq Khan's meetings in Kabul remain sparse, Pakistan's media released a brief statement, stating that "Pakistan and Afghanistan vowed to sustain their diplomatic engagement to address ongoing bilateral challenges, including trade, security, and the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan." The statement confirmed that Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq met with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi. Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan has been marked by uncertainty. Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, like his predecessor Mullah Muhammad Omar, remains firm on the contentious Durand Line issue. Meanwhile, Pakistan's policymakers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad are facing increasing diplomatic isolation as global

players such as the US, China, Russia, and the European Union establish direct relations with Kabul. Unlike in the past, Pakistan is no longer the primary intermediary for international engagement with Afghanistan. Following his visit to Kabul, former US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad criticized Pakistan's military establishment, warning that time is running out to prevent further turmoil. This marks his second strong statement against Pakistan since May 9, 2023, when he supported the deposed Prime Minister. Khalilzad's political standing in the US, particularly within the Republican establishment, suggests he may have a broader agenda regarding Pakistan and Afghanistan. In response to the US delegation's visit to Kabul, Pakistan ordered the reopening of the Torkham border, a critical trade corridor between the two nations.

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# Over 30,000 digital skills scholarships to empower youth

KARACHI: The Sindh government, in collaboration with Google and Tech Valley, has announced more than 30,000 Google Career Certificate scholarships for public sector universities across the province to empower youth with globally recognised digital skills. The meeting held at CM House was attended by Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Secretary to the Chief Minister Raheem Shaikh, Chairman of HEC Sindh Prof Tariq Rafi, Secretary of School Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary of IT Noor Samoo, Secretary of U&B Abbas Baloch, the Vice Chancellors of 30 public sector universities, CEO of Tech Valley Pakistan Umar Farooq, and other concerned parties. The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting to formalise the initiative with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here at CM House on Monday. The Chief Minister stated that the aim of the initiative is to equip students with in-demand digital skills in fields such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, Digital Marketing, IT Automation, and Project Management, ensuring they are prepared for the evolving job market. Murad Shah said that following the success of the 2024 Google Career Certificate Sindh Programme, in which 1,500 students from 10 universities achieved a 100 per cent success rate, the 2025 expansion underscores this government's commitment to digital transforma-

tion and workforce development. Mr Shah emphasised the importance of the programme, commenting: "This partnership is a testament to our vision of transforming Sindh into a hub of innovation and skill development." He added that by offering over 30,000 scholarships, we are not merely investing in education; we are investing in the future of our youth and the economic prosperity of our province. Developed by Google experts, the Career Certificate programme provides flexible online learning, enabling students to gain industry-recognised credentials within three to six months, even without a traditional degree. Talking about success stories and career growth, CM Murad Shah said that the previous cohort witnessed graduates securing jobs and internships at leading companies, with salaries ranging from Rs 70,000 to Rs 1.6 million per month. "One such success story is Leena Kumari, a student from the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, who completed the Google AI Essentials course and secured a project internship at Evolution," he said and added that her story was featured by Google, highlighting the real impact of this initiative. Kyle Gardener, Government Affairs & Public Policy Lead at Google, highlighted the importance of this initiative as "Google is committed to equipping individuals with the digital skills necessary to thrive in today's economy. Through this

partnership, students across Sindh will have access to world-class training, unlocking new career opportunities and driving economic growth." Secretary IT Noor Samoo briefing the CM stated that 2025 program aims to promote inclusivity and accessibility by ensuring that at least 30 per cent of participants are female, thereby fostering gender inclusion. It will also focus on reaching marginalised and underserved communities to provide equitable access to education. To expand its outreach, the program will collaborate with 30 public sector universities across Sindh. Participants will receive training in nine specializations, including the AI Essentials Course, as well as two new courses: Prompting Essentials and Agile Essentials. Moreover, the Soft Skills & Career Kamyabi Sindh Programme, introduced last year, will continue to train students in CV writing, interview skills, and communication, enhancing their employability, CM said. The Minister Education Sardar Shah said that by offering over 30,000 scholarships, Tech Valley is not only imparting skills but also shaping futures and cultivating a talent pool that will propel Sindh's digital economy forward. With strong government-industry collaboration, this initiative is set to redefine digital education in Sindh, ensuring that students possess the skills to compete in the global digital economy and contribute to the province's socio-economic progress, the CM concluded.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Imtiaz Abbasi Saheb presents Mubarak on getting star Imtiaz Bilal Abbasi and Qasim Abbasi.—DNA

## AIU's science faculty holds its faulty board meeting

ISLAMABAD: The 28th meeting of the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Sciences at Allama Iqbal Open University was held on Monday under the chairmanship of Dean, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad. The meeting approved the scheme of studies for various departments, including BS, MPhil, PhD, and diploma programs, along with other relevant academic and curriculum matters. All faculty members attended the meeting, along with external members. The board decided to introduce PhD in Rural Development, BS Software Engineering, Associate Degree in Mathematics, BS Environmental Science, and Diploma in Cyber Security programs through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. On this occasion, Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad emphasized that, following the directives of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, special attention will be given to quality education. He stated that all degree programs at the Open University will be aligned with contemporary requirements in accordance with the guidelines of the Higher Education Commission (HEC).—APP

## CDA plans possessions in E-12 after Eid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting regarding sector development was held at the CDA Headquarters on Monday under the chairmanship of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by members of the CDA Board and senior officers from the relevant wings. During the meeting, CDA Chairman was given a detailed briefing on the development works in new sectors. Chairman CDA directed that the possession of developed plots in Sector E-12 should be handed over to owners in phases upon completion of development works subject to the payment of development charges after the Eid ul Fitr. He emphasized that possession of plots in Sector E-12 must be promptly transferred to owners after the completion of development works and payment of development charges.

CDA Chairman instructed to expedite development activities in all new sectors including C-14 and stressed the need to accelerate work in Sector C-14. He was briefed that the road infrastructure in Sector C-14 has reached its final stages of completion, while other development works, including roads, drainage, sewerage, and streetlights, will be completed by June. It was also apprised in the meeting that IESCO has issued demand notices to ensure electricity supply in Sector C-14. CDA Chairman directed that possession of Sector C-14 must be handed over with the payment of the final installment. CDA reviewed the progress of development works in Sector E-12 and instructed the Member State to present a comprehensive solution. He stated that after Eid-ul-Fitr, development activities in the new sectors should be further accelerated, and all obstacles must be resolved on a priority basis. Moreover, The Directorate

Genl Building and Housing Control Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with Enforcement Directorate CDA, carried out a Sealing operation today against illegal and unapproved marquee and commercial structures in Zone-IV and Zone-V of Islamabad. The operation was conducted in accordance with the Building Control Regulations 2020 (as amended in 2023) to curb unauthorized construction and occupancy and ensure compliance with building bylaws. The CDA had previously issued notices, including 15-day notices and subsequent 7-day show cause notices, to the owners of these illegal structures, directing them to obtain necessary approvals and clear outstanding dues. However, due to non-compliance, enforcement action was initiated today. The CDA remains committed to ensuring planned urban development in Islamabad and will continue its crackdown against unauthorized constructions.

## Documentary series launched to highlight climate change

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has taken a proactive step by launching a series of documentaries aimed at raising awareness about climate change, hazard profiles, and area-specific vulnerabilities. This initiative is part of NDMA's robust risk communication strategy, designed to enhance public understanding and foster a culture of preparedness among communities. Pakistan, ranked as the 5th most climate-vulnerable country globally, continues to face the increasing challenges of climate change. Recognized as one of humanity's greatest security threats, climate change acts as a risk multiplier, exacerbating hazards with profound potential consequences. In this video, we explore retrofitting the process of upgrading existing buildings and infrastructure to improve safety, resilience, and efficiency. Whether it's for earthquake resistance, flood protection, energy efficiency, or structural reinforcement, retrofitting plays a crucial role in disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. This video features building of Girls School in Nomal Valley, retrofitting undertaken by AKAH. This documentary highlights the transformative power of collective action, demonstrating how retrofitting efforts supported by global and local partnerships can strengthen infrastructure, protect communities, and build a safer, more resilient future. NDMA invites everyone to watch the documentary to learn more about this important work. Together, we can work towards a prepared and resilient Pakistan.—APP

## Labour's digitalization, social protection discussed

DNA

PESHAWAR: In a significant step toward modernizing labour administration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Provincial Minister for Labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan on Monday met with representatives of the German development organization GIZ here at his office. The meeting was attended by key officials, including Secretary Labour Department, Captain (Retd) Mian Adil Iqbal, Vice Commissioner of Employees' Social Security Institution Khurshid, and GIZ Adaptive Social Protection Project representatives Hameedullah

and Adnan Ahmed. During the discussion, the delegation briefed the minister on the Adaptive Social Protection Project and its initiatives within the province's public sector. A key focus of the meeting was the implementation of the E-Mazdoor Card and the digitalization of the Labour Department, aimed at enhancing transparency and efficiency in service delivery. The establishment of the KP Social Protection Authority and the launch of the Social Protection Strategy were also deliberated upon, marking a significant move toward strengthening the social safety net for workers. Minister Fazal Shakoor Khan expressed gratitude to GIZ for its unwavering support in

advancing the Labour Information Management System (Labour IMS) and emphasized the government's commitment to improving the welfare of workers through digital initiatives. Hameedullah from GIZ assured the minister that he would convey the details of the discussion to GIZ leadership, reinforcing the organization's support for the province's labour reforms. Minister Fazal Shakoor Khan further announced that the Labour IMS inauguration would take place soon, stating that digitalization of the Labour Department will lead to a more efficient and transparent system, ultimately benefiting workers across KP.

## Call for uniform law to protect girls from early marriages

DNA

LAHORE: The speakers and participants unanimously endorsed the demand to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls in Punjab to 18 years. They emphasized the need for a uniform amendment across the country to effectively reduce child marriages and prevent violators from exploiting loopholes in different provinces. In connection with the International Women's Day, a seminar was held at the University of Punjab's Department of Social Work, supported by the Norwegian Embassy, Islamabad. Currently, the legal age of marriage in Pakistan varies by province. In Sindh, the minimum age is 18 years, while in Punjab, it remains at 16 years. The Islamabad High Court has



also declared that girls under 18 cannot marry. However, a uniform national law is still lacking. To address this issue, the speakers proposed a comprehensive program focusing on education and skill development. This would not only elevate the status of women but also contribute to Pakistan's socio-economic growth. Sameena Nazir, Executive Director of PODA-Pakistan, highlighted the inconsistency in Pakistan's laws,

where 18-year-olds can vote and drive, but girls can be married off below that age. She emphasized the need for well-researched policies that address the realities of child marriages and empower girls. Ms. Nazir's statement underscores PODA's mission to promote and protect human rights in rural Pakistan, particularly for women and girls. PODA's efforts to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years in Pakistan is

aligned with the country's constitutional provisions and supported by the Lahore High Court's verdict. This verdict deemed it "unconstitutional" to define a girl below 16 years as a child, while a boy is considered a child until 18 years old. Prof. Dr. Uzma Ashiq, Chairperson of the Department of Social Work, emphasized that raising the minimum age of marriage for girls must be accompanied by a comprehensive plan to engage them in activities that foster their development. This holistic approach is crucial to empower girls and ensure they reach their full potential, she said. "Simply increasing the minimum age of marriage is not enough; it's essential to address the root causes of child marriages and provide girls with access to education, healthcare.

## Emirates donates 107 Aircraft kids special edition bags

DNA

LAHORE: Education is one of the greatest engines for societal development, laying a strong foundation for economic empowerment. To support Pakistan's initiatives of making education accessible to its children, Emirates, the world's largest international airline, has donated essential supplies and limited-edition, hand-crafted backpacks from its 'Air crafted by Emirates' collection to a non-profit organisation in Pakistan. Pakistan has made significant reforms in its education system, continuously improving its infrastructure and resources to provide equal opportunities to chil-

dren across the country. To support their efforts in rolling out access to education for children in rural areas, Emirates assisted the students of SOS Children's Villages by donating 107 practical, stylish backpacks filled with stationery, books and hygiene supplies. The NGO was selected carefully as it serves local communities by creating a nurturing and inspirational space for financially disadvantaged youths to continue their education. The institute has a long-standing legacy of supporting youth and a particular focus on education. The initiative reinforces the airline's commitment to 'connecting communities' by building enduring relationships and making meaningful differ-

ences in the destinations it serves. Mohammed Al Nahari Al-hashmi, Vice President, Pakistan for Emirates said: "We are pleased to collaborate with organizations such as SOS Village that share our commitment to advancing UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 to ensure every child has access to quality education and gets a chance to learn, thrive and unlock their full potential. With 17 branches across Pakistan, SOS Children's Villages has a wide network in the country. They have been carefully selected for their dedicated work in providing abandoned or orphaned children with a safe and stable home where they can pursue their education. "Donating

the Aircraft KIDS bags made with recycled materials and filled with essential stationery, learning and hygiene items will equip children with confidence and tools to make their everyday learning journey easier. We take pride in sharing our upcycled bags as this initiative not only promotes sustainability but also connects children in Pakistan with a piece of our history." Saba Faisal, the National Director of SOS Children's Villages Pakistan, said: "It was a pleasure to host the Emirates team, and we would like to thank them for supporting the educational development of our children, who come from vulnerable backgrounds yet possess immense potential to achieve success and positively con-

tribute to society. We are grateful for companies such as Emirates for their contribution towards the wellbeing of our students and impact them in such a positive way. It was a delight for our children to meet the Emirates team, receive the bags, and create happy memories they will cherish forever." To ensure exactly what they needed for each and every student, SOS Children's Villages handpicked the specific bags they required from the 'Aircraft KIDS by Emirates' collection, accounting for children of all ages. The backpacks were then handmade by Emirates Engineering in-house, with materials upcycled from the airline's iconic A380 and B777 aircraft that underwent refurbishments.

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## 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



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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



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PIA Flight Info.....114  
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Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555864  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Indian High Commission celebrates Holi festival in Islamabad

Usually, a large number of Pakistanis from various walks of life are invited to the Holi celebration at the Indian High Commission. However, this year, in consideration of the sacred month of Ramadan, the High Commission chose not to extend invitations to Pakistani friends out of respect for the observance of fasting and religious practices during this important period. This thoughtful gesture highlighted the High Commission's sensitivity to the cultural and religious sentiments of the region, ensuring that the celebrations were held with due consideration to the spirit of Ramadan

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Indian High Commission in Islamabad organized a vibrant celebration of the Holi festival, bringing together diplomats, community members, and friends of India to revel in the joyous occasion. Holi, the festival of colors, is one of India's most celebrated and widely recognized festivals, symbolizing the arrival of spring, the triumph of good over evil, and the spirit of unity and joy.

Held at the Indian High Commission's premises, the event was a beautiful reflection of India's rich cultural heritage. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and energy as attendees of various nationalities, including diplomats and local friends of India, gathered to celebrate. Traditional music, dance performances, and, of course, the playful throwing of colors were the highlights of the celebration.

The charge d'affaires Geetika Srivastava, along with key embassy staff, greeted the guests and shared festive wishes. The charge d'affaires spoke about the importance of Holi, not just as a festival of colors, but as a time to foster goodwill, understanding, and closer bonds between nations. The message emphasized the significance of unity and harmony among people, irrespective of their background. During the celebrations, attendees were encouraged to participate in the traditional practice of throwing vibrant colored powders at each other. The playful and spirited atmosphere reflected Holi's essence of breaking barriers, bringing people together, and celebrating diversity. The event also featured a traditional Holi feast with delicious Indian sweets and snacks, allowing guests to indulge in the culinary delights that are an integral part of the festival. The High Commission had ensured that the celebrations not only highlighted India's cultural heritage but also promoted the values of friendship and understanding. The joyful colors and lively interactions underscored the spirit of Holi – a celebration of life, renewal, and the beauty of human con-



nections. The Holi celebration at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad is not just a cultural event, but a diplomatic gesture aimed at strengthening the bonds between India and Pakistan. Despite the political challenges, events like this help maintain cultural diplomacy and create a space for people-to-people contact. The festival of colors transcends boundaries

and offers a platform for building friendships and fostering peaceful relations.

Usually, a large number of Pakistanis from various walks of life are invited to the Holi celebration at the Indian High Commission. However, this year, in consideration of the sacred month of Ramadan, the High Commission chose not to

tend invitations to Pakistani friends out of respect for the observance of fasting and religious practices during this important period. This thoughtful gesture highlighted the High Commission's sensitivity to the cultural and religious sentiments of the region, ensuring that the celebrations were held with due consideration to the spirit of Ramadan. For many

attendees, the Holi celebration was a rare opportunity to come together in a spirit of camaraderie. The joyful occasion was a reminder of the universal appeal of festivals, which bring people together to share in the warmth of community and the joy of life. As the colors flew through the air, the Holi celebration at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad

stood as a testament to the enduring power of cultural exchange in creating meaningful ties, promoting mutual understanding, and fostering peace.

The success of the event further exemplified the role of cultural diplomacy in bridging divides and bringing people together in a shared celebration of life, joy, and color.

## Firing outside district court claims one life, another injured

ISLAMABAD: A firing incident outside the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) District Court claimed the life of one individual, while another sustained injuries on Monday. An official told that the incident occurred when Shahbaz and Nasir arrived at the court for a hearing. Three unidentified assailants on a motorcycle opened indiscriminate fire, resulting in the immediate death of Shahbaz, while Nasir was critically injured and shifted to PIMS Hospital for medical treatment. He said that initial investigations suggest the attack was motivated by personal enmity. He said that police teams have launched a search operation to apprehend the culprits. Meanwhile, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq took notice of the incident and formed an investigation team under the supervision of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation Islamabad. He said that the team includes SP Saddar Zone, SP Swan Zone, SDPO Ramna, and SDPO Koral, who will lead the probe into the case. He said that further investigations are underway.—DNA

## CDA chief discusses tourism projects with Chinese consultants

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, held a significant meeting with a Chinese delegation, including consultant from China, at the CDA Headquarters on Monday. The meeting focused on promoting tourism and recreational projects in Islamabad. The Chinese delegation, along with CDA's Member Environment, Member Planning, Member Finance, and other senior officers, participated in the discussions. During the meeting, detailed deliberations took place on the proposed cable car and chairlift pro-

ject from Daman-e-Koh to Saidpur. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa stated that the cable car and chairlift would be among Islamabad's top tourist attractions, not only increasing visitor numbers but also boosting the city's economy. He further emphasized that the revenue generated from this project would be reinvested in Islamabad's development. Chairman CDA directed to promptly complete the initial feasibility study reports for the cable car and chairlift project. He also instructed a comparative analysis to determine whether the cable car is safer than the chairlift to ensure optimal planning. Additionally, he ordered the preparation of PC-1 for the

project and a phased action plan to outline future steps. The Chinese delegation commended Chairman CDA's efforts to enhance tourism and recreational facilities in Islamabad and assured full cooperation by sharing China's technical expertise and experience in such projects. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted that Islamabad holds immense potential in the tourism and hospitality sector, which can be further improved with China's collaboration. At the conclusion of the meeting, both parties reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening mutual cooperation and working together for the progress and betterment of Islamabad.

## Pakistan-China friendship based on shared progress: Syedaal

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan has said that the friendship between Pakistan and China is built on mutual respect, trust, and a shared goal of development. Speaking as the chief guest at a photo exhibition and Ifar dinner at the Silk Road Cultural Center, he said this strong bond is a source of stability and prosperity for both countries. He said that Pakistan and China have always supported each other in difficult times. He also stressed the need to further strengthen these ties in every possible way. The event was held as part of Pakistan Day celebrations and was attended by the Chinese Ambassador, officials from both countries, diplomats, and other prominent personalities. Syedaal Khan said that increasing cultural and trade exchanges between the two countries are bringing their people closer. He mentioned that visits by Chinese artists and craftsmen would further deepen this friendship. Talking about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China made this major project possible. He added that CPEC is not only connecting the people of both countries but also creating new opportunities for economic growth and regional development.—APP

## Business community backbone of economy: Ahsan

President of F-10 Markaz, Ahmad Khan, stated that Ahsan Bakhtawari played a vital role in resolving traders' issues during his tenure and provided them with a strong platform, which remains a guiding light for the...

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Member Central Core Committee of the United Business Group (UBG) and former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has stated that the business community serves as the backbone of the national economy, and resolving their issues has always been his top priority. He acknowledged Ajmal Baloch's unforgettable services for traders and expressed his willingness to support him everywhere for trader unity. He emphasized that instead of relying on any institution, traders must resolve their issues through mutual strategy and unity. He has always worked for the welfare of traders and the beautification of Islamabad's markets. He urged Ajmal Baloch to take the lead and bring everyone together. He expressed these views while addressing an Ifar dinner held in honor of the presidents of various markets in Islamabad at his residence today. On this occasion, the President of Anjuman-e-Tajirran Pakistan and President of Aabpara Market, Ajmal Baloch, along with the President of G-10 Markaz, Ikhlaz Abbasi, President of Jinnah Super Market, Asad Aziz, President of F-10 Markaz, Ahmad Khan, President of Super Market, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, President of I&T Center G-10, Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, President of G-13, Riaz Khan, President of I&T Center G-9, Nisar Ahmed Langah, President of I&T Center G-7, Raja Safer, as well as Arshad Abbasi, Chaudhry Ehtesham, Chaudhry Mazhar Hussain, Aslam Khokhar, Tanveer Khokhar, Umar Farooq, Brigadier Sajjad Hussain, Owais Khokhar, and several other business leaders and prominent personalities participated. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, in his address, stated that as the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, he has always raised his voice on every platform for the rights of traders and has taken all possible measures to resolve their issues. He further said that the "Clean and Green Islamabad" movement was launched with the same mission—to keep our city clean and free from environmental pollution. To further expand this initiative, all market associations must become actively involved so that Islamabad can truly be transformed into a model city. Ajmal Baloch, while addressing, said that Ahsan Bakhtawari has always taken practical steps to protect the rights of traders, and the progress made in resolving traders' issues during his tenure was exemplary. Ahsan Bakhtawari was the first president who opened the doors of the chamber to everyone. His tenure was a golden era in which traders were given respect, and practical measures were taken to resolve their problems. Today, there is a need to unite the chamber once again, and I stood with Ahsan Bakhtawari in this struggle and will always stand with him. Ajmal Baloch also expressed gratitude to Ahsan Bakhtawari for spending a significant amount on the installation of a water filtration plant and security cameras in Aabpara Market. President of Jinnah Super Market, Asad Aziz, stated that welfare projects like water filtration plants are excellent initiatives for both traders and the public. He emphasized the need to expand such efforts so that more people can benefit from them. He further added that the installation of water filtration plants and security cameras in all commercial centers of Islamabad by Ahsan Bakhtawari reflects his strong commitment to public service. President of G-10 Markaz, Ikhlaz Abbasi, remarked that Ahsan Bakhtawari has set a new precedent of public service within the business community of Islamabad by personally funding the installation of a water filtration plant in G-10 Markaz. He assured full support for such initiatives. President of F-10 Markaz, Ahmad Khan, stated that Ahsan Bakhtawari played a vital role in resolving traders' issues during his tenure and provided them with a strong platform, which remains a guiding light for the...—DNA

## Briefs

## Toll tax hike on highways, motorways from April 1

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) has announced increase in toll tax on national highways and motorways, set to take effect from April 1. According to an official notification, under the new toll structure, charges for cars on national highways will be Rs 70, while vans will be charged Rs 150 and buses Rs 250. Two- and three-axle trucks will face a toll of Rs 300, and larger trucks will be charged Rs 550. This new tax applies to several major motorways, including M1, M3, M4, M5, M14, and E35. The car toll on the M1 Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway has risen from Rs 500 to Rs 550, while the M3 Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway now charges Rs 800 instead of Rs 700. Similarly, the toll for cars on the M4 Pindi Bhattian-Faisalabad-Multan Motorway has increased from Rs 950 to Rs 1,050, while the M5 Multan-Sukkur Motorway now charges Rs 1,200, up from Rs 1,100. On the M14 Dera Ismail Khan-Hakla Motorway, the car toll has gone up from Rs 600 to Rs 650. Meanwhile, the E35 Hasan Abdal-Havelian-Mansehra route now costs Rs 300 for cars, compared to the previous Rs 250. For larger vehicles, toll rates across these motorways now range from Rs 850 to Rs 5,750.—APP

## IRSA releases 47,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 47,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 51,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, River Indus stood at dead level of 1402 feet at Tarela Dam. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 15,300 cusecs and 15,700 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1068.75 feet, which was 18.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 17,400 cusecs and 14,400 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kala-Bagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 23,000, 23,900, 18,300 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 1,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## Pakistan, Netherlands discuss trade, investment expansion

Agriculture and Fisheries were central to the talks, with Pakistan seeking Dutch support in precision farming, AI-based solutions, and Karachi's fish harbor to meet EU export standards in fisheries. An EU fisheries audit is scheduled next month, and Pakistan urged Dutch assistance in ensuring compliance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and the Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan Henny Fokel de Vries on Monday discussed enhancing trade, investment, and economic cooperation between the two nations, focusing on agriculture, technology, fisheries, and textiles. The minister stressed the need to diversify trade beyond GSP+ by exploring investment in agriculture and industrial innovation, said in a release on Monday. The Ambassador highlighted Dutch expertise in agricultural technology and water management, offering potential collaboration. The EU-Pakistan Business Forum was discussed as a key platform to boost trade. Pakistan's exports to the Netherlands rose to US\$1.48 billion in 2023-24, with textiles, rice, and alcohol as top products. Agriculture and Fisheries were central to the talks, with Pakistan seeking Dutch support in precision farming, AI-based solutions, and Karachi's fish harbor to meet EU export standards in



fisheries. An EU fisheries audit is scheduled next month, and Pakistan urged Dutch assistance in ensuring compliance. The minister also called for investment in Pakistan's textile sector, em-

phasizing the modernization of outdated machinery. The Ambassador suggested exploring Dutch FMO funding for industry upgrades. Pakistan requested a review of the Netherlands' decision

to discontinue technical programs like PUM and CBI, stressing their role in strengthening trade potential. The meeting concluded with an invitation to the Dutch foreign trade Minister to visit Pakistan

with investors in IT, agriculture, and renewable energy. Ambassador de Vries reaffirmed the Netherlands' commitment to fostering strong economic ties with Pakistan.

## Egyptian envoy greets nation on 85th Pakistan Day

The ambassador of Egypt said that with joy and respect, "I extend my congratulations to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, its noble people, and wise leadership on the occasion of Pakistan Day

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan on Sunday greeted the nation on the auspicious occasion of 85th Pakistan Day and wished for prosperity of the country. In a message issued here, he said that with joy and respect, "I extend my congratulations to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, its noble people, and wise leadership on the occasion of Pakistan Day." The Ambassador said that this historic day marks a key moment in Pakistan's journey toward independence and unity, reflecting the determination of the Pakistani people in achieving their national goals. On behalf of Egypt and its people, "I offer my warmest congratulations, wishing Pakistan continued success and prosperity. We are confident that the strong ties of friendship and cooperation between our nations will continue to grow" he said. "We pray that this day remains a source of pride for the Pakistani nation and that the people of Pakistan continue their path toward progress and prosperity.—DNA

## Indian forces harass Hurriyat leaders' families in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Indian forces during house raids have harassed the families of Hurriyat members in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian police raided the house of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) member Farooq Ahmad Dar in Handwara for his sustained association with a Democratic Freedom Party headed by jailed leader Shabbir Ahmed Shah. During the search operation, house, bank documents and mobile phones were seized and police claimed it as a part of the investigation. Indian police, during the house raids on other Hurriyat activists, Bashir Ahmad Butt, Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, Ghulam Mohammad Waza and Sajad Ahmad Nawoo, in Bandipora district, questioned them on their affiliations with the Hurriyat camp. The Indian authorities, headed by New Delhi-installed communal and corrupt LG Minhaj Sinha, believe these individuals have been involved in supporting the right to self-determination struggle and demand of azaadi from Indian hegemony rule. During the house raids and search operations, the families of the activists were harassed and terrorized and warned not to support the Hurriyat camp.—APP

## Ministry resolves 94% of public grievances

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has made significant progress in legislative effectiveness and public service delivery, enacting 39 laws and facilitating the passage of 30 bills in the National Assembly and 27 in the Senate. According to an official document, the Ministry's initiatives align with the government's vision of inclusive and citizen-centric governance. A key milestone is the establishment of the "Public Grievances Management System," approved by the Minister, which offers a comprehensive framework for complaint resolution and strategic public outreach.

Through this system, over 94 percent of public grievances have been addressed, underscoring the Ministry's commitment to timely and effective service delivery. As of February 2024, the Ministry has focused on enhancing legislative processes, promoting transparency, and ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution. Annual legislative calendars have been prepared to streamline session planning and parliamentary business. The Prime Minister's Public Affairs and Grievances Wing facilitated several high-profile interventions, including the safe return of IT graduates from illegal captivity in Cam-

bodia and the swift disbursement of delayed pensions at Radio Pakistan. In another case, concerns raised by two schoolgirls from Swat about the Swat River project were promptly addressed by local authorities. Under the Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package 2024, the Ministry played a pivotal role in establishing a Gender Mainstreaming Parliamentary Committee in the National Assembly, with representation from both Houses. Similar committees have been formed in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. To improve citizen access, the Ministry

introduced a Universal Access Number (UAN) for grievance registration, particularly benefiting remote areas. Daily monitoring systems and a Legislative Coordination Report have been implemented to ensure the swift resolution of complaints and legislative matters. Transitioning to a fully digital workspace through the e-office system has enhanced the Ministry's operational efficiency and sustainability. Public outreach initiatives, including a Quarterly Newsletter and the upcoming Yearbook (2023-24), have further strengthened citizen engagement and transparency.—DNA

## MoDP contributes over Rs 260b to national's economy

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Defence Production (MoDP) has contributed over Rs 260 billion to the country's economy during the incumbent government one year period. According to official documents, out of total Rs 160.15 billion, the MoDP contributed Rs 88.6 billion through in land sales, exports Rs 116.25 billion, Taxes/duties Rs 21.75 billion, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Rs 1 billion and Imports Substitution Rs 32.50 billion during the last one year. In keeping with the vision of the Prime Minister, the MoDP has realigned its role with the Private Sector, the local and international market to develop a self-reliant and a self-sustained defense production industry along with increasing job opportunities, generation of revenue through taxes, decreasing dependence on imports and increasing the exports to earn foreign exchange. Pakistan's defense production industry began with the establishment of Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) in Wah in 1951. Over time, additional entities were set up, expanding the sector. Today, under MoDP, numerous defense Production Establishments (DPEs) operate, including POF, Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT), Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC), National Radio & Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC), and Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW). This public sector network is further supported by over 150 private industries contributing to national defense production. The MoDP successfully organized IDEAS-2024, attracting 557 firms, including 333 foreign, with 300 foreign delegates from 50 countries, leading to 82 MOUs signed for JVs and collaborations, boosting export potential, the documents further said. Stakeholders appreciated the Ministry of Defense Production for its consistent and reliable support in providing arms, ammunition, and security equipment to various defense and security agencies. However, there is a need for continued transparency and efficiency in the supply chain to meet the evolving security requirements.—DNA

## Crackdown on illegal SIM issuance

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, Lahore, conducted a successful raid on a franchise of cellular company in Mianwali. The franchise was found to be involved in the illegal issuance of SIMs. According to a news release, 496 digital fingerprint impressions (single impressions), Biometric Verification System (BVS) devices, two scanners, and a laptop were seized during the operation. The FIA team confiscated these items as evidence, and the franchise owner was arrested with an FIR registered for further legal action. The FIA Cyber Crime Circle has launched an investigation to identify additional offenders. The raids are part of PTA's ongoing efforts to prevent the circumvention of the Multi-Finger Biometric Verification System (MBVS). This resolute and unwavering commitment underscores the Authority's dedication to eradicating the illegal issuance of SIMs.—APP

## SECP appellate bench achieves 100 appeal disposals yearly

ISLAMABAD: The Appellate Bench of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SECP), the apex quasi-judicial appellate forum, has successfully disposed of 100 appeals from March 2024 to March 2025. This milestone marks a significant step forward in expediting justice and reducing the backlog of pending cases. All orders issued by the Appellate Bench appear on the official website of the SECP, according to a release issued here on Monday. The Appellate Bench Registry has demonstrated efficiency and dedication in assisting the Appellate Bench in upholding the rule of law by ensuring the timely resolution of diverse legal matters. Among the 100 appeals successfully disposed of, 26 cases pertained to the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, while six were related to the Securities Act, 2015. Additionally, 22 cases involved matters under the Companies Ordinance, 1984, and the Companies Act, 2017, whereas six cases were associated with violations of the Non-Banking Finance Companies Regulations, 2008. The remaining 40 cases addressed breaches of various provisions of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Regulations, 2018 and 2020.—APP



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the award of Nishan-i-Khidmat upon Mr Sultan Ali Akbar Allana in recognition of his public services, at the investiture ceremony to confer the insignias of Civil Awards, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Rupee sheds 10 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday depreciated by 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.36 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.26. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.60 and Rs 282.1, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 34 paise to close at Rs 304.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 303.67, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.87, whereas a decrease of 56 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 363.17 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 362.61. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise each to close at Rs 76.33 and Rs 74.74 respectively.—APP



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## Planes, planes and planes

It was a pleasant night in Beirut. The seaside cafes were full late into the night. The city has a habit of concealing its wounds and disappointments, to challenge death and the rubble and to convince the visitor that bright days are ahead despite the challenges. We used to count the losses and gains and tried to fend off despair. However, the constant buzzing overhead hampered our attempts to forget the pain. A wandering killer roams the skies. It never tires and it never sleeps. It counts breaths and captures photos. It searches for its prey, corners it and then makes the call to kill it. The wandering killer flies over the killing fields in Gaza and the West Bank. It violates Lebanon and does not forget to reap woes in Syria. It targets a camp in the West Bank and a car in southern Lebanon. Neither Gaza, Beirut nor Damascus can stand against it. When the opportunity for a mass killing presents itself, the drone turns into the advanced fighter jet. Funerals ensue. Artificial intelligence is a formidable thing. It strengthens the ability of planes to kill and leave maps awash with blood. The planes are like militias: they don't respect international law or borders. I paused at two articles in Asharq Al-Awsat. The first said that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force commander conveyed a clear message from the Iranian leadership to the Iraqi factions demanding that they "avoid all forms of provocations against the Americans and Israelis" to avoid the consequences. The second article reported Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein as saying: "Iraq is not part of the 'axis of resistance' and does not agree to the unity of arenas. We believe in the Iraqi arena alone." I also noted the Palestinian Health Ministry's announcement that 50,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the launch of the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation. A retired general said he feared that the Israeli jets may have broken the "balance" in the region more so and more dangerously than during the 1967 war. He noted that Benjamin Netanyahu's planes have completely eliminated what remained of the arsenal of Bashar Assad's army. It destroyed all weapons and facilities as if to make sure that no power hostile to it could emerge in the years to come. The current Syrian authorities had no choice but to watch as the jets struck airports, facilities and barracks. Perhaps the jets wanted to deliver a message that there can be no stability under President Ahmad Al-Sharaa's rule in Syria if he does not completely abandon the idea of ever waging a confrontation with Israel. He must agree to the removal of Syria from the Arab-Israeli conflict, even as the Golan Heights continue to be occupied by Israel. Israel went beyond that by demanding the establishment of a "safe zone" for itself deep into Syrian territory, even threatening to play the minority card in its favor. The same planes changed the scene in Syria. No one had imagined back then that, when the Israeli jets were striking the positions or hideouts of the IRGC generals in Syria, that the IRGC would rush to flee Syria years later. No one imagined that the jets would cause Assad to flee and Al-Sharaa to appear from the palace where Hafez Assad and his son used to sit. The planes carried out a complete coup in Syria. The so-called axis of resistance lost the Syrian link in the chain that took Qassem Soleimani's dreams all the way to the Mediterranean. The jets excessively punished Hezbollah in Lebanon after the party launched its "support front" in solidarity with Gaza following Yahya Sinwar's Al-Aqsa Flood Operation. Hezbollah lost thousands of fighters and the most charismatic leader in its history, Hassan Nasrallah. It was an obvious coup.

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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



## China & new globalization

CHINESE Premier Li Qiang attended the opening ceremony of the China Development Forum (CDF) 2025, which is being held from Sunday to Monday in Beijing, and delivered a keynote speech. This year's forum, with the theme of "unleashing development momentum for stable growth of global economy," attracted more than 100 representatives both from home and abroad, including entrepreneurs, government officials, experts, scholars and representatives of international organizations, to discuss development and win-win cooperation. Since its first annual meeting, the CDF has gone past a quarter of a century. Through this high-profile international dialogue, China has sent a clear signal to the world: Amid the turbulent global situation, the country has chosen to use the key of "development" to reset the globalization narrative of win-win cooperation. Right now, the global economic recovery is sluggish, the cloud of trade friction has not dissipated, and there is no lack of clamors for antagonism and confrontation in the arena of international public opinion. However, the convening of the forum has provided ideas to navigate out of the haze. Development is the path to economic growth, the cornerstone of people's happiness, and the antidote to conflicts. While certain countries are busy building walls and drawing lines, caught in the quagmire of the "zero-sum game" mentality, China insists on paving the way and building bridges, and extends a sincere invitation to the world by "comprehensively releasing the kinetic energy of development." As the world's second-largest economy, the country has always promoted the construction of an open world economy based on the concept of universal benefits and inclusiveness. This not only reflects the role of a major country, but also injects valuable stabilizing factors and anticipatory support into the global economy. Development is the common aspiration of people from all countries, and China is becoming a powerful magnetic field for forging consensus on development. Many people have two prominent feelings about this year's CDF. One is more "new friends" are attending this year's event which sees multinational enterprises from 21 countries. Business executives from US companies Apple and Pfizer, Europe's Siemens and BMW, South Korea's Samsung, Japan's Mizuho Financial Group, as well as companies in Malaysia, Brazil and other Global South countries, are actively participating in the forum. From manufacturing, finance to services, the international business community's "leaders" and "new forces" have gathered in Beijing. The other is the vibrant "new atmosphere." The release of positive signals from the two sessions about "stimulating domestic demand across the board," "fostering emerging industries and industries of the future," and "broadening international cooperation through further opening-up" has boosted the confidence of multinationals, and more and more people have become more determined to "go long" China. Over the past few days, Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao met with business executives from companies such as Broadcom, Mercedes-Benz and BMW AG, showing China's determination to continue to expand opening-up.

## Palestinian women resilience

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Palestinian women's strategies of resistance, while sometimes appearing vague and limited in scope, resonate deeply within their communities due to their compatibility with local political ethics and the social limitations imposed on their activism. The seemingly modest nature of these tactics does not indicate a lack of ambition or radical potential. Rather, they reflect an understanding of the necessity for sustainable, culturally rooted, and context-sensitive approaches to resistance. In an environment where open confrontation with the Israeli occupation is fraught...

THE fluid way in which Palestinian women devise and revise strategies and narratives of resilience reflects a dynamic responsiveness to both local and international events, forces, and discourses. These women navigate a complex socio-political landscape, responding to the shifting political realities of occupation, economic hardship, and the growing influence of international institutions in their daily lives. The contemporary, post-Oslo, neoliberal, fragmented, NGO-ized West Bank presents a unique set of challenges that require Palestinian women to adopt innovative and adaptive resistance strategies. Given this evolving context, Palestinian women have increasingly chosen incrementally transformative tactics as a means of navigating and countering both structural and direct forms of oppression. Their desire to identify a resistance strategy that meets three crucial criteria commanding local legitimacy, possessing the potential to produce radical outcomes, and remaining feasible in a context of gendered violence, patriarchal social norms, and marginalization illustrates the depth of their political engagement and strategic acumen. Palestinian women's strategies of resistance, while sometimes appearing vague and limited in scope, resonate deeply within their communities due to their compatibility with local political ethics and the social limitations imposed on their activism. The seemingly modest nature of these tactics does not indicate a lack of ambition or radical potential. Rather, they reflect an understanding of the necessity for sustainable, culturally rooted, and context-sensitive approaches to resistance. In an environment where open confrontation with the Israeli occupation is fraught with danger and where patriarchal norms continue to shape women's roles in political life, Palestinian women have strategically crafted forms of activism that subtly challenge and erode these constraints over time. This approach, often termed "transformative incrementalism," allows women to make gradual yet profound contributions to their communities and to the broader project of national liberation. By emphasizing the value of small, cumulative acts of resistance, this strategy offers a means of preserving political agency in an era characterized by fragmentation and disillusionment. A crucial aspect of transformative incrementalism is its function as both a demonstration and a source of resilience for Palestinian women. The process of engaging in resistance even in forms that appear non-confrontational or limited enables women to assert their agency and maintain their connection to the broader struggle for self-determination. Many women repeatedly affirm the significance of feeling that they are contributing to their communities and the larger liberation move-

ment. This contribution is not merely symbolic; it provides a tangible sense of purpose and empowerment that counteracts the disempowering effects of occupation and socio-political marginalization. The meaning derived from participation in transformative resistance serves as a crucial psychological and emotional resource, reinforcing women's commitment to their struggle despite the obstacles they face. Furthermore, transformative incrementalism presents an important means of subverting the constraints of a 'resilience' framework championed by international NGOs. In recent years, the development sector has increasingly co-opted radical concepts, repackaging them in ways that align with neoliberal ideologies and governance models. Resilience, once understood as a collective capacity for resistance and endurance, has been redefined within NGO and development discourse to emphasize individual adaptation and coping mechanisms. By promoting a neoliberalized version of resilience, international organizations present Palestinians with a model of survival that focuses on personal psychological fortitude and medical intervention rather than collective political action. This reframing subtly shifts the responsibility for overcoming political violence from structural change to individual perseverance, undermining the legitimacy of broader resistance efforts. In this context, Palestinian women's adoption of transformative incrementalism represents a critical intervention. By redefining resilience on their own terms, they challenge the passive, depoliticized version advocated by international organizations and reassert the radical ethos of earlier Palestinian resistance movements. Their approach to resilience is not about mere survival or psychological adjustment; rather, it is about fostering a foundation for sustained resistance that addresses both immediate and long-term challenges. Unlike the resilience framework promoted by NGOs, which encourages Palestinians to 'bounce back' by accepting their circumstances as an immutable reality, transformative incrementalism insists on the possibility of change even if that change is slow and difficult to achieve. Despite the radical potential embedded in transformative incrementalism, it remains vulnerable to the creeping effects of NGO-ization. Over the past few decades, international funding and institutional partnerships have played an increasingly significant role in shaping Palestinian activism, often steering movements away from grassroots organizing and toward professionalized, donor-driven initiatives. This shift has, at times, led to a dilution of radical politics and a reliance on frameworks that prioritize bureaucratic compliance over genuine political engagement. Palestinian women's resistance is not

immune to these pressures. While transformative incrementalism offers a promising alternative to co-opted notions of resilience, it must constantly navigate the risks associated with NGO-ization, ensuring that it remains rooted in local political aspirations rather than donor agendas. Nevertheless, Palestinian women's determination to begin a transformative process that starts from society's foundations provides greater prospects of sustainability and grassroots legitimacy. By prioritizing community engagement, cultural continuity, and locally driven initiatives, women's resistance efforts foster a deeper and more enduring form of resilience one that is less susceptible to external manipulation. This grassroots orientation not only enhances the legitimacy of their strategies but also increases the likelihood of their long-term impact. By reclaiming mobilizing concepts and ideas from the development sector's attempts at depoliticization, Palestinian women assert their right to define their own modes of resistance and resilience. Moreover, transformative incrementalism allows for the construction of alternative social and political structures that challenge both occupation and internal systems of oppression. By engaging in forms of activism that are embedded in everyday life such as community education, economic empowerment projects, and grassroots organizing, Palestinian women are able to create spaces of resistance that are both practical and radical. These initiatives contribute to the broader liberation movement by building the capacity for sustained resistance at the societal level, ensuring that political struggle is not confined to moments of crisis but remains an ongoing, lived reality. Palestinian women's engagement in transformative incrementalism represents a nuanced and strategic approach to resistance that is both adaptive and deeply rooted in local political ethics. By choosing incrementally transformative tactics, they navigate the complexities of the contemporary Palestinian context, balancing the need for local legitimacy, radical potential, and feasibility. Their approach challenges the depoliticized resilience framework promoted by international NGOs, reclaiming the concept of resilience as a tool for collective empowerment rather than individual adaptation. Despite the challenges posed by NGO-ization and external pressures, Palestinian women's commitment to grassroots organizing and community-driven change offers a model of resistance that is both sustainable and politically significant. Through transformative incrementalism, they assert their agency, challenge structural injustices, and contribute to the ongoing struggle for national liberation in ways that are both innovative and deeply rooted in historical traditions of resistance.

## Sustainable cities: Cleanliness as a collective responsibility

Ghazala Anbreen

The community must be encouraged to maintain personal hygiene (physical and mental) and keep public spaces clean, reflecting the same diligence and care they take for their own homes. This will ensure a healthy and harmonious environment for everybody. Everyone must reflect on the responsibilities as agents of their environment. In this way the situation will be favorable for a city that aligns with Islamic values of respect and responsibility towards one another and the environment

CLEANLINESS is half of faith" (Sahih Muslim). This is said by our beloved Holy Prophet PBUH. But are we observing it in the real sense? There is a lack of civic sense on the part of the community. Let us look at some of the countries where cleanliness is maintained rigorously. Singapore is famous for its immaculate public spaces and enforces strict anti-littering laws with fines at \$220. In Japan littering is taken as a serious offence. The people who violate laws may face fines and public shaming. In Switzerland littering is regulated and fines can be imposed for violations. Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Scotland, all these countries have specific national litter legislation. Likewise, there are countries like Germany, France, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. In all these countries littering is regulated by legislation and is subject to fines in case of violations. All these countries put a special focus on maintaining cleanliness and imbibe a civic responsibility in the citizens for a good, healthy environment for everybody.

It is an ethical duty for the people to take care of their surroundings and maintain its cleanliness. It is important for the authorities that they encourage responsible behavior among citizens and encourage measures that help maintain a clean environment. The community must be encouraged to maintain personal hygiene (physical and mental) and keep public spaces clean, reflecting the same diligence and care they take for their own homes. This will ensure a healthy and harmonious environment for everybody. Everyone must reflect on the responsibilities as agents of their environment. In this way the situation will be favorable for a city that aligns

with Islamic values of respect and responsibility towards one another and the environment. Instilling consciousness about clean environment is essential. We all should gather together for this cause. On 6th January, 2025, the Senate Sub Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination highlighted the need for improved waste management, noting concerns about untreated sewage reaching Rawal Dam. (Business Recorder, January, 2025) Here it is noteworthy that this dam is considered one of the main sources of drinking water for the people living in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It is worth noting that concerns about water pollution in Rawal Lake have been raised for years. A 2010 news report mentioned the discharge of untreated sewage, highlighting the ongoing need for sustainable solutions. (Daily Dawn, August 2010). In Rawal Lake in Bani Gala Islamabad the people's negligence to keep such places clean has led to poor hygiene conditions. This place may be turned into a beautiful and delightful place for families to visit on weekends for picnic with their kids. Scavengers hover overhead the dirt further adding to the distressing sight. Just a little effort and ownership on the part of the citizens could have preserved its natural beauty. It is imperative for all of us to restore the beauty of this lake otherwise destroying nature and our being insouciant towards it will definitely result in dire consequences. This is our own city and our own country and we ourselves should take care of it. It is very important to teach our kids the value and significance of safeguarding the environment. They should be taught to add value to the beautiful environment. The students must be sensitized about

the importance of green spaces in urban areas. This is vital for fighting global warming and addressing the threats of climate change as it will contribute for a better air quality. They should be informed that green areas reduce the heat and improve health and wellbeing, and these are good for flora and fauna as well. Initiatives relating to tree plantation drives and waste management disposal methods leading to clean and Green Islamabad should also be projected and promoted in the schools and colleges. Focus should also be on teaching them to learn advanced technology in materializing these objectives for guaranteeing sustainable development. GIS (Geographic Information System) can be helpful for monitoring and recording green areas and also at indicating the possibility for afforestation and landscaping ingenuities for increasing the urban greenery. These tools can assist in categorizing and recognizing the lands for planting trees in distant areas and impact evaluation can also be done for identifying the effective growth of trees. Local schools and NGOs can work in collaboration to brief about environment. Symposiums can be arranged on waste management on the issue of sustainable living for educating the community. The city administration, in collaboration with citizens, can further strengthen efforts to expand green belts along main roads and adopt environmentally friendly initiatives for a cleaner and greener urban space. Other practical steps include installing of the solar panels in the public spaces and parks for lights and other services. With the help of proper planning and strict enforcements these challenges may be overcome.

## Briefs

## Pak pledges to have robust Afghan ties

FROM PAGE 01 including peace and security, trade and economic cooperation, as well as people-to-people contacts. The Special Representative reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continued engagement and mutually beneficial ties with Afghanistan, and underscored the importance of addressing all issues of concern, particularly security, to further consolidate bilateral ties. Both sides agreed to enhance high-level engagement and dialogue to strengthen bilateral cooperation. The two sides also reinforced the commitment to a mutually beneficial bilateral relationship, with a view to achieving lasting regional peace and stability.

## IHC restores visiting...

FROM PAGE 01 Before today, the Adiala jail Superintendent Anjum, using his discretionary powers, had limited the former premier's meetings to Tuesdays. The issue of access to the incarcerated PTI founder has been a point of contention in recent times with various people moving the court to seek its permission to meet him. The IHC, in this regard, had previously sought Khan's virtual appearance via video link and later ordered authorities to produce him before the court during a hearing of a plea filed by PTI's Mashal Yousofzai. However, the cricketer-turned-politician was not produced before the court with the Islamabad advocate general (AG) citing security concerns as its reason. The issue further escalated after IHC's Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan initiated suo motu contempt proceedings after the case was delisted and transferred to another bench.

## IHC summons Islamabad IG

FROM PAGE 01 Haider and Muhammad Ali, went missing from their residence in the early hours of Wednesday. Noorani's mother Amina Bashir had filed a plea with the IHC for the recovery of his two brothers. She said that her two sons were "forcibly disappeared" from their Islamabad home at 1:05am by "unknown officials ostensibly belonging" to the country's intelligence agencies. "It is quite clear that his brothers have been subjected to enforced disappearance as a clear reprisal aimed at silencing Noorani's journalism," the petition said. The petition cited the government, Ministry of Defence, Islamabad IGP, and station house officer (SHO) of Noon Police Station as respondents in the case. On Saturday, the IHC ordered the SHO to submit a detailed report on the disappearance. Meanwhile, Advocate Imaan Hazir Mazari, representing the petitioner, criticised authorities for not registering an FIR despite three days passing since the incident.

## Agriculture plays key role in...

FROM PAGE 01 and other farm-machinery in the country instead of relying on imported equipment. He further stressed to enhance yield in other crops like cooking oil seeds, sugar and cotton. He said Pakistan imports cooking oil worth 4.5 billion dollars annually and this amount can be saved by locally producing the commodity. The prime minister also expressed his deep gratitude to the Republic of Korea for its cooperation in the Seed Potato Production and Processing Plant. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the third-party audit of Ramazan relief package. Chairing a review meeting on Prime Minister's Ramazan Relief Package in Islamabad on Monday, he appreciated the efforts of the State Bank of Pakistan, NADRA and tech companies in ensuring transparency of the package.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan Dr. Ramez Alraee along with his spouse distributing the meal among deserving people during Iftar by Monal Foundation along the 7th Avenue during the month of Ramadan in Federal Capital. – Online

## Djokovic set to rewrite Masters 1000 history

The 6-1, 7-6(1) win over Carabelli at the Miami Open moves him closer to his 100th title

## SPORTS DESK

MIAMI: Novak Djokovic, the Serbian tennis legend, proved that he is far from finished by securing his 411th Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Masters 1000 match victory on Sunday. The 6-1 7-6(1) third-round victory over Argentine lucky Camilo Ugo Carabelli at the Miami Open also brings him closer to his 100th singles title. With over 400 weeks at world number one, Djokovic currently ranks fifth, but at 37, he emphasises that reclaiming the top spot is no longer his primary goal. "If it comes as a consequence of great results and titles that I win in a season, then that's amazing. But that's not my objective," Djokovic told reporters. The 24-time Grand Slam champion said that he will happily take major tournament victories over the top spot

in the twilight of his glittering career. "My objective is to be able to play my best tennis at the Grand Slams and the tournaments where I participate. My schedule is revised, so obviously I'm not chasing ranking points. "It's different nowadays, maybe, than it was a few years back (or) for most of my career, to be honest. I'm happy to win a Grand Slam and a big tournament rather than getting to number one. Right now that's more important for me." Jimmy Connors with 109 and Roger Federer with 103 are the only men with more titles than Djokovic but he said climbing to the top of the list could be difficult. "It would definitely be amazing to get to that record," Djokovic added. "Connors is someone that I truly admire and respect. He's always very supportive of me in public. I'm thankful for that. It would be amazing. "But again, it's probably more difficult to achieve that nowadays for me than maybe

it was some years ago. I'll go step by step. I'll see. I don't know how long I'm going to compete for. But I'm still enjoying myself when I play well." Meanwhile, Britain's Emma Raducanu is through to the last 16 of the Miami Open after opponent McCartney Kessler retired injured at the start of the second set. Raducanu had been utterly dominant and needed just 30 minutes to take the first set 6-1. An early break in the second set saw the 22-year-old race into a 3-0 lead, before American Kessler, 25, was forced to retire because of a back issue. "I could tell something was up and it is hard to stay focused when your opponent is struggling," Raducanu said in her post-match interview. "I wish her a speedy recovery because she has been playing so well. "I am happy with my focus, it is such a big part of tennis. I haven't been at this stage of a tournament for a while. "I returned

really well and put pressure on the serve, imposing myself from the first game." Raducanu came into the tournament with five defeats from six matches since the Australian Open and last week ended her partnership with coach Vladimir Platenik after only two weeks. "I think it's a different approach this week," she added. "I think five minutes before the match I was playing spike ball with the team. It helps me to relax. "When I'm playing my best tennis I'm really expressing my personality. I'd say I'm a bit of a free spirit so I don't need restrictions or being told what to do. "I think when I'm being really authentic, that's when I'm playing my best." Raducanu will play Amanda Anisimova in the next round after the American defeated Mirra Andreieva 7-6 (7-5) 2-6 6-3. The 17-year-old Russian has risen to sixth in the world after winning the previous two WTA 1,000 events at Indian Wells and Dubai.

## IMF turns down FBR's request...

FROM PAGE 01 in principle, agreed to reduce the withholding tax on property buyers by 2% starting April 1, 2025, contingent on obtaining formal approval in writing. Now the IMF has stated officially that it has not agreed to slash the transaction taxes for property. The IMF had also refused to lower tax rates for tobacco and beverages and now refused to entertain the last and final plea of the FBR to slash the tax rates for the property sector. On the other hand, Pakistan and the IMF were moving towards striking a Staff Level Agreement (SLA) but Pakistan will have to give assurances to the IMF in writing that the provinces would not plunge into procurement of wheat.

## President confers military awards...

FROM PAGE 01 Shakeel Ghazanfar, Major General Saeed Ur Rehman Sarwar, Major General Nadeem Afzal, Air Vice Marshal Shakeel Safdar, Major General Tahir Masood Ahmad, Major General Sohail Sabir, Major General Foad Ahmad Siddiqi, Major General Zeeshan Ahmad, Major General Sohail Ilyas, Rear Admiral Muhammad Hussain Sial, Major General Syed Mukarram Hussain, Major General Iftikhar Ahmed Satti, Major General Ghulam Shabeer Narejo, Major General Shahid Pervaiz, Major General Muhammad Asim Khan, Major General Nadeem Yousaf, Major General Gulam Muhammad, Major General Noor Wali Khan, Major General Muhammad Naeem Akhtar, Major General Raja Muhammad Naeem Ashraf, Major General Naseem Anwar, Major General Umar Ahmad Shah.

## Bilawal urges govt to take opp on board

FROM PAGE 01 combat terrorism," he said while addressing a ceremony at Governor House Lahore. The in-camera national security meeting was held as the country struggles with a new wave of terrorism, with security forces and law enforcement agencies facing increasingly frequent attacks. The meeting was attended by PM Shehbaz Sharif, COAS General Asim Munir, DG ISI Lieutenant General Asim Malik, chief ministers of all four provinces, and other top officials. The major opposition alliance, TTAP, chose not to attend the meeting, citing the absence of PTI founder Imran Khan, who is incarcerated in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. The meeting came against the backdrop of rising terrorism in Pakistan, including a major terrorist attack on a passenger train in the Mushqaf area of the Bolan district in Balochistan.

## Sadiq Khan's prompt trip to Kabul, is Pakistan really sidelined on Afghan front?

## FROM PAGE 01

Additionally, Sadiq Khan in Kabul and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in Peshawar engaged with delegations of traders involved in bilateral trade. Several contentious issues continue to strain Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, including the mistreatment of Afghan citizens, the frequent closure of the Torkham border, the imposition of transit and bilateral trade taxes, and the unresolved Durand Line dispute. While details regarding Pakistan's stance on terrorism were not disclosed in media reports, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, during discussions with traders, reiterated concerns about terrorists infiltrating Pakistan from Afghanistan. Unlike many Pakistani officials, Sadiq Khan has long advocated for a pragmatic approach toward Afghanistan, emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy. However, many decision-makers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad remain committed to expansionist policies inherited from British colonial rule. To foster stability, Pakistan must prioritize diplomatic engagement, respect Afghanistan's internal affairs, and adopt a more balanced approach. The regional landscape has shifted significantly. Previously, Pakistan dealt with Afghanistan as a landlocked and underdeveloped nation reliant on Karachi's seaport. Today, Afghanistan has diversified its trade routes and strengthened ties with global powers such as the US, China, and Russia. Additionally, with Washington seeking to mend ties with Moscow under Donald Trump's leadership, regional dynamics are evolving. The rise of terrorist factions, including IS-Daesh along the Pak-Afghan border, further complicates security concerns for Pakistan.

## NIP IT specialist permanently inducted into PSB

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The practice of favoring certain individuals in the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) continues, as IT specialist Athasham Ahmed from the National Internship Program (NIP) has been permanently inducted into PSB in Grade 17. The Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) initially transferred Ihtesham Ahmed to PSB on deputation basis from NIP. However, influential figure within the IPC ministry played a key role in securing his permanent induction. The PSB has also issued an office order number 42-2/2024/PSB (Admin) confirming his induction as well. According to sources, following his regularization, Athasham Ahmed has begun leveraging his influence to seek a promotion to Grade 18 and to have his induction formally approved in the upcoming PSB Board meeting.

## NZ seal return to WC stage with win over New Caledonia

Boxall scored his first goal for New Zealand in his 55th int'l with a header

## WEB DESK

AUCKLAND: New Zealand qualified for the 2026 World Cup on Monday with a 3-0 defeat of New Caledonia as veterans Michael Boxall and Kosta Barbarouses scored in a second-half burst to help the All Whites return to the finals for the first time since 2010. Boxall scored his first goal for New Zealand in his 55th international with a header on the hour-mark before Barbarouses volleyed over the goalkeeper five minutes later to send a crowd of more than 25,000 into ecstasy at Eden Park. Substitute Elijah Just added the third goal in the 80th minute to ensure New Zealand advance to their third World Cup following the 1982 and 2010 finals. New Zealand missed out on the last three World Cups after defeats in intercontinental play-offs. But with Oceania given a berth at the finals for the first time, the All Whites were a shoo-in as the region's dominant team. New Zealand became the second nation through to the tournament co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, with Japan qualifying with a home win over Bahrain last week. "We're going to another World Cup. I'm ecstatic," said 35-year-old winger Barbarouses, who missed out on selection for New Zealand's World Cup squad in 2010. "This is my fifth attempt to get to a World Cup. So I'm really sort of emotional, very happy and sort

of had flashbacks of the last 15 years. "I'm very happy to contribute and help the team get over the line." New Zealand's players put on white T-shirts emblazoned with "Qualified" and sprayed champagne on each other. The celebrations were tempered slightly with an apparent hip injury to captain Chris Wood who limped off early in the second half. Ranked 152nd in the world and dominated by amateur footballers, New Caledonia battled hard to keep the match scoreless for more than 60 minutes of the Oceania final. The French territory will have another chance to qualify via intercontinental play-offs.

"We knew it was going to be hard against New Zealand on their home soil," said coach Johann Sidaner. "We've got time to think about the play-offs for 2026." New Zealand scored quickly in their 7-0 win over Fiji in the Oceania semi-finals last week but they had to wait on Monday as early chances went begging. Boxall bounced a header over the bar in the 14th minute while Marko Stamenic had two headers saved on the line six minutes later. Wood sent a third header pinging off the right post and a fourth flying over the bar late in the half. Home fans grew restless as the game remained locked into the second half but New Zealand coach Darren Bazeley's substitutions ultimately paid off. Francis de Vries came off the bench to produce the corner kick that set up Boxall's goal. Wood's replacement, Barbarouses, latched onto a through ball from his Wellington Phoenix teammate Tim Payne and volleyed over the rushing keeper Rocky Nyikeine.

## Serena Hotels hosts final leg of Tennis Masters

Mr. Fahim Inam, Chief Marketing Officer of Serena Hotels, highlighted Serena Hotels continued commitment to Sports Diplomacy

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels commences the final leg of the Serena Tennis Masters

Cup 2024-2025 under its Sports Diplomacy Initiative, taking place in Islamabad. Following the successful completion of the first two legs in Peshawar and Faisalabad,

this event now culminates in the capital with an exciting series of matches featuring Pakistan's top tennis players. A press conference was held, 24 March 2025, at Islam-

abad Serena Hotel, where Mr. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President Pakistan Tennis Federation, briefed the media about the significance of the tournament and its role

in promoting talent and the sport across the country. He highlighted how important tournaments like this are for improving tennis in Pakistan and giving young players a chance to show their talent. Mr. Fahim Inam, Chief Marketing Officer of Serena Hotels, highlighted Serena Hotels continued commitment to Sports Diplomacy, stating, "Serena Hotels has always been a strong supporter of sports as a uniting force. Through our Sports Diplomacy Initiative, we aim to promote healthy competition, encourage young talent, and create opportunities for players to excel on national and international levels." The tournament features some of the best players in Pakistan, competing to win in both the

men's and women's matches. **Men's Players:** Aqeel Khan & Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil & Barkatullah, Abid Mushtaq & Heera Ashiq, Hamza Roman & Sami Zeb. **Women's Players:** Ushna Sohail & Maheq Kokha, Sheeza Sajid & Marukh Sajid, Lala Rukh Sajid & Labika Durab, Fajar Faiz. The matches commence today and will continue until March 26, 2025. The grand closing ceremony will be held at the Pakistan Tennis Federation complex following the final match, where winners will be honored for their outstanding performances. Serena Hotels remains dedicated to its mission of promoting sports and community engagement, through such initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Tennis Federation Aisam-ul-Haq interacting with media persons during Press conference to announce Serena Tennis Masters Cup 2025, in Federal Capital. – DNA

## Briefs

## Lebanese defense minister to visit Syria

BEIRUT: Lebanese Defense Minister Michel Menassa will visit Syria on Wednesday to discuss recent tensions along the border between the two countries, a Lebanese official said. "The defense minister will head a security delegation to Damascus to meet with his counterpart, Marhaf Abu Qasra," the official told AFP on Monday on condition of anonymity. The aim of the visit was to "discuss ways to manage the situation at the border, strengthen bilateral coordination and prevent cross-border aggression," the source said. Ten people were killed in clashes that broke out along the frontier in mid-March. Damascus accused Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group once allied with deposed president Bashar Assad, of abducting and killing three Syrian soldiers, which the Iran-backed movement strongly denied. Subsequently, seven Lebanese were killed in air strikes from Syria, according to Lebanese authorities. A Lebanese security source told AFP that Syrian forces shelled the border area after three Syrian soldiers were killed by armed Lebanese smugglers. Both countries later announced they had reached a ceasefire agreement. Syria shares a 330-kilometer (205-mile) border with Lebanon, with no official demarcation. In February, Syrian authorities announced the launch of a security campaign in the border province of Homs aimed at shutting down routes used for arms and goods smuggling. Hezbollah, which fought alongside Assad's forces during the Syrian war, has long exerted influence over large parts of the Lebanese-Syrian border. The group was massively weakened in its war with Israel late last year.—APP

## UK's Heathrow defends decision to shut airport amid blame game

LONDON: Britain's Heathrow defended its decision to shut down operations at Europe's busiest airport last Friday as the blame game intensified over an 18-hour closure which cost airlines tens of millions of pounds and stranded thousands of passengers. As questions mounted over how such a critical part of Britain's infrastructure could fail and whether all Heathrow's four terminals needed to shut, both National Grid and Heathrow agreed that the failure of the transformer was an unprecedented event. But the airport was forced to defend its closure after the boss of National Grid told the Financial Times that the electricity transmission network remained capable of providing power to the airport throughout the crisis. Heathrow said the fire at a nearby substation late on Thursday interrupted its operations, forcing it to shut while it reconfigured systems and switched to power from an alternative substation. "Hundreds of critical systems across the airport were required to be safely powered down and then safely and systematically rebooted," a Heathrow spokesperson said. "Given Heathrow's size and operational complexity, safely restarting operations after a disruption of this magnitude was a significant challenge." John Pettigrew, the CEO of National Grid, said there were two other substations able to provide power to Heathrow, showing that the grid was resilient. "Two substations were always available for the distribution network companies and Heathrow to take power," he told the FT. While airlines such as British Airways, the worst affected, add up the bill for the closure, the government and Heathrow have both commissioned reviews into what happened. "It's really important that we do learn the lessons from this, and that's why I think those two reviews...are going to be really critical," Transport Minister Heidi Alexander told Sky News on Monday.—APP

## Hanif directs to enhance Carriage Factory production capacity

The Minister met with Project Director Wulei during the visit and discussed increasing the factory's production capacity. He emphasized the need to enhance the factory's production capabilities so that Pakistan Railways can reduce its reliance on imports and become self-sufficient. The Minister also issued instructions for measures to enhance the factory's capacity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Monday directed to enhance the production capacity of Islamabad Carriage Factory. During a visit to the factory, he was also briefed on the technology being transferred from China, under which Pakistan Railways is manufacturing its new coaches. He said modernization of the factory is crucial for the future of Pakistan Railways. This factory is the largest industrial unit under Pakistan Railways, which operates under the Ministry of Railways, Government of Pakistan. The factory has the capacity to produce 120 new passenger coaches annually. The Minister inspected various departments of the factory and received a detailed briefing on the production process, quality, and use of modern technology. The Minister also reviewed the passenger coaches being manufactured at the facility. In response to the evolving needs of the industry, the factory entered into an agreement with the Chinese company, Changchun Car Company, to manufacture a new generation of Chinese-designed coaches. These coaches include advanced features such as air spring bogies, electric hot axle detection, improved ride quality, durability, and speed capabilities, with a top speed of 180 kilometers per hour. The Minister met with



Project Director Wulei during the visit and discussed increasing the factory's production capacity. He emphasized the need to enhance the factory's production capabilities so that Pakistan Railways can reduce its reliance on imports and become self-sufficient. The Minister also issued instructions for measures to enhance the factory's capacity. Furthermore, Minister Abbasi met with the factory's workers.

He expressed pride in the workers and stated, "Our railway workers are our strength, and it is with their help that we run the railway system." The Minister listened to the workers' concerns and issued orders for the immediate resolution of their issues. He assured the workers that the government would take all necessary steps to ensure their welfare. Minister Abbasi praised the factory's workforce and empha-

sized that the local transfer of technology and modernization of the facility is critical for the future of Pakistan Railways. He assured full cooperation to further enhance the factory's production, quality, and efficiency. The Minister also issued directives to the Director-General of Food to visit railway stations immediately and inspect the quality of food at station hotels and tuck shops, providing a detailed report. Islamabad Carriage Factory was

established in 1970 with the cooperation of the French company Alstom (formerly known as Linke Hofmann Busch). The purpose of the factory was to promote the local production of electric and diesel locomotives and coaches in Pakistan, reducing the reliance on imported machinery. Initially, German-style coaches were produced using technology transferred from Linke Hofmann Busch.

## In Turkiye, a vote of confidence for Istanbul's embattled ex-mayor

ISTANBUL: "We won't give in to despair," insisted 38-year-old Aslihan, referring to the massive protests sweeping across Turkiye since the arrest of Istanbul's popular mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. She was waiting in line to vote in a long-planned primary organized by the main opposition CHP to choose Imamoglu as its presidential candidate. Following his arrest, the party opened the poll beyond its 1.7 million members to anyone who wanted to vote, turning it into a de facto referendum. In the end, some 15 million people voted, of whom 13.2 million were not party members, said Istanbul city hall, which organized the vote. It extended voting by three-and-a-half hours because of the turnout. Widely seen as the only politician capable of challenging President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the 53-year-old's lightning arrest and jailing has sparked Turkiye's biggest protests in more than a decade. Polling stations opened at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) and voters of all ages began flocking to vote at 5,600 ballot boxes installed in 81 cities. But the party said "millions" had turned out, pushing it to extend the closing time from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. due to "overwhelming turnout." "Whenever there's a strong opponent (to Erdogan), they are always jailed," shrugged a 29-year-old voter called Ferhat, who like many, did not want to give his surname. "There is a dictatorship in Turkiye right now, nothing else, it's politics in name only." "We've come to support our mayor," said her neighbor Kadriye Sevim inside a tent set up outside City Hall, the epicenter of the massive protests since Imamoglu's March 19 arrest. "No power has the right to do this to Turkish youth or the people in Turkiye. We will stand against this until the end," said Ece Nazokoc, an 18-year-old student. Similar crowds were seen waiting to vote in Kadikoy, a trendy district on the Asian side of the city, as well as in Kasimpasa, a working-class neighborhood on the Golden Horn estuary where Erdogan spent his childhood. The scenes were repeated across the country, from the capital Ankara to Diyarbakir in the mainly-Kurdish southeast, and to Thrace in the far northwest near the Greek and Bulgarian borders. "We all voted, it was like a party! The CHP people manning the ballot boxes said it was really busy with lots of people from other parties," grinned Sevil Dogrugeven, 51, who works in the private sector in the northwestern city of Edirne. In the countryside near Thrace, people even came to the town halls to cast their ballots," she told AFP in Ankara. Nurcan Kabacioglu, a retired 57-year-old teacher, was defiant. "There is no such thing as a hopeless situation, just discouraged people. I never gave up hope," she said. Others were feeling a new sense of hope. "This is the first mass protest since the Gezi protests," said Aslihan, referring to a small 2013 environmental protest against the destruction of a city park that snowballed into vast nationwide rallies in one of the biggest threats to Erdogan's rule. "After Gezi, we got used to the feeling of hopelessness but the injustice we're seeing now (and the subsequent protests) have given us new hope," she said. "I feel much stronger and more hopeful. But I feel this is our last chance," she told AFP.

## Israel shooting attack kills one, gunman 'neutralized'

JERUSALEM: A shooting attack in northern Israel on Monday killed a 75-year-old man and wounded another, first responders said, with police saying officers had "neutralized" the gunman. The "ramming, stabbing and shooting" attack, according to emergency services provider Magen David Adom, was the first in Israel since it resumed bombardment of the Gaza Strip last week following a January truce in its war with Hamas. A police statement said that "a terrorist opened fire at civilians and was immediately neutralized by police forces present at the scene" at a junction southeast of the coastal city of Haifa. Magen David Adom said that a 75-year-old man was killed by the shooting, and that the attack also left a 20-year-old man in critical condition. A paramedic said in a statement that first responders provided "medical treatment to a young man... who had been hit by a vehicle and suffered penetrating injuries in the attack." Israeli police label as "terror" attacks those connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.—APP

## National flag hoisted at Pakistani Consulate in New York

NEW YORK: The national flag was unfurled at the Pakistan House in New York to celebrate Pakistan day, with Consul General Aamir Ahmed Atozai underscoring the need for following Quaid-e-Azam's Mohammad Ali Jinnah's golden principles of "unity, faith, and discipline" to strengthen the country and make it prosperous. Addressing members of the Pakistani community residing in and around New York, Atozai said that March 23 represented a landmark in Pakistan's history when Muslims of the sub-continent resolved to establish an independent state of their own under the dynamic leadership of the Quaid-i-Azam. The ceremony began with recitation of the holy Quran, and, as the Consul General raised the green-crescent-and-star, the national anthem was played. Messages from President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif were read out on the occasion. The Deputy Consul General, Umar Sheikhji, moderated the ceremony, which was attended by a large number of Pakistani-Americans as well as Consulate officials. In his remarks, Consul General Atozai highlighted the importance of the Pakistan Resolution and underscored the need for unity, commitment, and continued contributions toward a progressive and prosperous Pakistan. He also commended the role of the Pakistani-American community in strengthening ties between Pakistan and the United States. The Consul General expressed appreciation for the efforts of the American Pakistani Advocacy Group (APAG) and its President Ali Rashid for their role in the recent adoption of two resolutions by the New York State Assembly and Senate, declaring March 23, 2025, as 'Pakistan-American Heritage Day' and March 19, 2025, as 'Pakistani-American Business Celebration Day.' Atozai noted that these recognitions represent a significant milestone for the community and are a testament to the growing acknowledgment of Pakistani-Americans contributions to the cultural and economic fabric of the State of New York. A soulful rendition of a national song by Pakistani singer and Pride of Performance recipient Amjad Hussain added a special touch to the evening, evoking patriotic sentiments among the attendees. The event served as a reminder of the unity, resilience, and aspirations of the Pakistani nation, and reinforced the important role the diaspora plays in projecting Pakistan's values, culture, and positive image abroad.—DNA

## Egyptian envoy visits ICCI to strengthen trade and business ties

President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi emphasized the need to improve business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to maximize trade potential

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan, Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan paid a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Monday and held a productive meeting with President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi. The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral trade and strengthening economic cooperation between Egypt and Pakistan. During the discussion, both sides explored opportunities to boost trade in key sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and construction materials. President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi

emphasized the need to improve business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to maximize trade potential. The

Egyptian Ambassador highlighted Egypt's growing market and invited Pakistani businesses to explore investment opportunities in sectors

like energy, tourism, and infrastructure. He assured the ICCI of the Egyptian Embassy's full support in facilitating stronger trade ties and

exchange of business delegations. President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi expressed ICCI's commitment to fostering partnerships that would create new avenues for investment and mutual growth. Both sides agreed to hold joint events, including trade fairs and business forums, to connect entrepreneurs from both nations. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both parties reaffirming their dedication to strengthening economic ties for the benefit of their respective countries. Prominent among the attendees included Embassy's Political Officer Ahmed S. Zoweil, ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry and Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza.



## Egypt new proposal to restore Gaza ceasefire deal

CAIRO: Egypt made a new proposal last week aimed at restoring the Gaza ceasefire deal, security sources told Reuters on Monday. The proposal follows an escalation in violence after Israel resumed air and ground operations against Hamas last Tuesday, effectively ending a two-month period of relative calm. The Egyptian plan suggests Hamas release five Israeli hostages each week, with Israel implementing the second phase of the ceasefire after the first week, the sources said. Both the US and Hamas agreed to the proposal, the security sources said, but Israel had not yet responded. The sources said Egypt's proposal also includes a timeline for the release of all hostages in exchange for a timeline for Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza, backed by US guarantees. Hamas has accused Israel of breaking the terms of the January ceasefire agreement but has said it is still willing to negotiate a ceasefire and was studying proposals from US President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff.—APP

## Russia launches third consecutive overnight air attack on Kyiv

KYIV: Russia launched its third consecutive overnight air attack on Kyiv, wounding one person and damaging several houses in the region surrounding the Ukrainian capital, a Kyiv's regional governor said on Monday. A 37-year-old person received shrapnel wounds in his upper body and head, governor Mykola Kalashnyk said in a post on Telegram messaging app. "The person has been hospitalized," Kalashnyk said. Late on Sunday, in the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, Russia's attack injured a 54-year-old woman and damaged windows of multi-story and residential buildings, the region's administration said on Telegram. The attacks came after a Ukrainian delegation met with US officials for peace talks in Saudi Arabia, and ahead of Russia-US talks there on Monday to discuss ways to ensure the safety of shipping in the Black Sea. The United States is pushing for a peace deal between Ukraine and Russia, and hopes to reach a broad ceasefire in the war by April 20, Bloomberg News reported on Sunday, citing people familiar with the planning. But despite the peace push, both sides have been reporting continued strikes. The full scale of the overnight attack was not immediately clear. There was no immediate comment from Russia. Both sides deny targeting civilians in the war that Russia started with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.—APP

## Sri Lanka to host India PM Modi next month

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will host Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week, an official said Monday, as Colombo grapples with the competing interests of its powerful northern neighbour and China, its largest lender. A member of leftist President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's office said Modi will be the first foreign head of government to visit the island nation under the new administration. "It must be recalled that President Dissanayake's first foreign visit after his election in September was to New Delhi in December," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP. He said Modi was due to hold bilateral talks on April 5 and travel to the northern Buddhist pilgrimage city of Anuradhapura before returning the following day. Dissanayake travelled to Beijing in January for his second foreign visit as president, underscoring Sri Lanka's delicate balancing act of maintaining ties with the two regional rivals. New Delhi has been concerned about China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, which it considers to be within its sphere of geopolitical influence. China has emerged as Sri Lanka's largest single bilateral creditor, accounting for more than half of its \$14 billion bilateral debt at the time the island defaulted on its sovereign debt in 2022.—APP

## Briefs

### APNS to observe two holidays on Eid

DNA

KARACHI: Muhammad Athar Kazi, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society has announced that the member publications of the APNS will observe two closed holidays on account of EID-UL-FITR as per following: In case the Eid falls on Monday March 31, 2025. There will be no morning newspapers on Tuesday, April 01, 2025 and Wednesday, April 02, 2025, whereas the evening newspapers not appearing on Monday, March 31, 2025 and Tuesday, April 01, 2025 may bring out their edition on Wednesday, April 02, 2025, if they so desire. However, if Eid falls on Tuesday, April 01, 2025. There will be no morning newspapers on Wednesday, April 02, 2025 and Thursday, April 03, 2025, whereas the evening newspapers not appearing on Tuesday, April 01, 2025 and Wednesday, April 02, 2025 may bring out their edition on Thursday, April 03, 2025, if they so desire.

### US talks with Russia begin in KSA

RIYADH: US and Russian officials began talks in Saudi Arabia on Monday aimed at making progress toward a broad ceasefire in Ukraine with Washington eyeing a Black Sea ceasefire deal before securing a wider agreement. The talks, which followed US talks with Ukraine on Sunday, come as US President Donald Trump intensifies his drive to end the three-year-old conflict after he last week spoke to both Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin. A source briefed on the planning for the talks said the US side was being led by Andrew Peek, a senior director at the White House National Security Council, and Michael Anton, a senior State Department official. The White House says the aim of the talks is to reach a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, allowing the free flow of shipping. Russia will be represented by Grigory Karasin, a former diplomat who is now chair of the Federation Council's Foreign Affairs Committee, and Sergei Beseda, an adviser to the director of the Federal Security Service. - Agencies

### Lebanon contacts US, France against Israel

BEIRUT: Lebanese leaders have been in intensive contact with Washington and Paris to prevent Israel from bombing Beirut, a Lebanese official said Monday, after heavy Israeli strikes on the country at the weekend. Israel launched air strikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday, killing eight people, in response to rocket fire that hit its territory for the first time since a ceasefire took effect on November 27. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said that following rocket fire on Metula, a town in northern Israel, "Metula's fate is the same as Beirut's." The official, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, said Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam "made diplomatic contact with France and the United States... as well as with the UN to achieve de-escalation following Israeli threats to target Beirut." The US, France and the United Nations belong to a ceasefire monitoring mechanism. During two months of full-scale war leading up to the ceasefire, Israeli air strikes pounded the south Beirut bastion of Iran-backed Hezbollah but sometimes also struck in the city center. Salam "emphasized the need to control security and prevent a repeat of rocket fire" against Israel, the official added. No party has claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. - Agencies

# Chairman Senate Gilani calls for stronger Pakistan-US ties

Ms. Natalie Bakar Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy thanked the Chairman Senate for the warm welcome. She said that Pakistan is an important country and President Trump has also appreciated Pakistan's role in counter terrorism efforts



KHAYAM ABBASI

Islamabad: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan's relations with the United States constitute an important element of its foreign policy and Pakistan has a longstanding and broad-based relationship with the U.S. The Chairman Senate expressed these views in a meeting with Natalie Bakar, Chargé d'Affaires in Islamabad on Monday. He said that our bilateral relationship is on the upward

trajectory, and it is important to maintain the current positive momentum. Mr. Gilani observed that mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual interests should be the defining principles of this relationship. "We wish to further deepen and broaden this relationship", he remarked. Chairman Senate highlighted the significance of people to people contacts and called for enhanced interaction at different levels to promote understanding. He said that Pakistan highly values relations with United States and desires to further

deepen the cooperation through exchange of delegations at political, parliamentary, business and education and people to people levels. He said that Pakistan is encouraging US companies to explore new areas for investment in Pakistan. The U.S. remains Pakistan's largest export market and we are desirous of diversifying our bilateral trade relationship with the U.S., Chairman Senate stated while emphasizing the significance of trade and business relations. He also observed that Pakistan wants to have better and constructive relations with all re-

gional countries despite bilateral challenges that afflict the region. Mr. Gilani also mentioned special endeavours made by him to augment US-Pakistan relations during his tenure as Prime Minister. He recalled visiting the United States as Prime Minister of Pakistan in July 2008 and having productive and cordial meetings with the US administrations, especially the then President George W. Bush. Chairman Senate further recalled having a very fruitful meeting as Prime Minister of Pakistan with US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of a nuclear summit in Seoul in 2012. He commended the U.S. assistance and contributions as an important economic and developmental partner. He underscored the need to diversify the relations while expressing the desire to work with US in diverse areas including climate change, mitigation and adaptation, energy transition, water management, climate smart agriculture biodiversity and waste management. In addition to the economic relations, Chairman Senate also highlighted that Pakistan enjoys robust defense ties with the U.S. that has a long history, especially mentioning Pakistan's role as a frontline state during the global war on terror. We must continue to explore new avenues for trade and investment, leveraging our unique strengths to drive growth and innovation, he observed. He welcomed the new US administration under President Donald Trump's leadership and expressed hope for continued improvement in bilateral relations with the newly formed government. Mr. Gilani also appreciated the U.S. assistance in flood relief efforts and other natural calamities.

## IG KP seeks 'hard area' status, salary raise for cops

IGP Hameed says that pay disparity is causing unrest and dissatisfaction within the force

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Inspector General of Police (IGP) Zulfikar Hameed has formally written to Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, urging the provincial government to declare the province a "hard area" and raise police salaries to match those offered in Balochistan. In his letter, the IGP noted that KP faced persistent threats from both internal and cross-border terrorism, making policing in the province as demanding as in Balochistan, which had already received "hard area" status. He argued that KP police personnel continued to make greater sacrifices but were compensated less than their counterparts in other provinces, and this pay disparity was causing unrest and dissatisfaction within the force. The letter said

that implementing the proposed changes would place an annual financial burden of Rs2.199 billion. KP, the province most affected by terrorism, currently offers the lowest police salaries in the country. The disparity in compensation becomes more glaring at higher ranks, with many officers from KP seeking transfers to other provinces for better financial opportunities. Conversely, officers from other provinces are hesitant to accept postings in KP due to the added security risks and lower pay. At the basic pay scale (BS-7), a constable in KP earns Rs69,127, compared to Rs73,000 in Punjab, Rs69,520 in Sindh, and Rs69,885 in Balochistan. A head constable (BS-9) earns Rs76,996 in KP, while in Punjab the pay is Rs80,198, in Sindh Rs76,895, and in Balochistan Rs77,211. Similarly, an assistant sub-inspector (BS-11) in KP gets Rs86,579, compared to Rs88,583 in Punjab and Rs88,488 in Sindh. Sub-inspectors (BS-14) in KP receive Rs107,904, lagging behind Punjab's Rs114,503, Sindh's Rs114,871, and Balochistan's Rs109,510. For inspectors (BS-16), the salary in KP is Rs137,081, compared to Rs141,680 in Punjab, Rs144,738 in Sindh, and Rs137,444 in Balochistan.

## Mahrang, 150 others face terrorism, rebellion charges

Case is related to incident at Civil Hospital where bodies were forcibly taken from the morgue

QUETTA: Dr Mahrang Baloch has been named among 150 individuals, including prominent leaders from the Baloch Yakehti Committee (BYC), facing charges encompassing various serious offences such as terrorism, incitement to rebellion, and murder. A first information report (FIR), lodged at the Saryab Police Station on Saturday, also named Beebow Baloch, Gulzadi Satakzai, Sabiha Baloch, Sabatullah Baloch, Gulzar Dost, Riaz Gashkori, Dr Shali Baloch, and others among the accused. Charges against these individuals in-

clude violations of Sections 7 and 11W of the Anti-Terrorism Act, as well as 16 sections of the Pakistan Penal Code. These charges cover terrorism, murder, attempted murder, incitement to violence and rebellion, creating disorder, promoting racial hatred and damaging property. Mahrang, along with 17 others, was arrested and is currently being held at the Quetta District Jail under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance. The case accused Mahrang and the BYC leadership of assisting rioters in shooting police officers, passersby, civilians, and their protesting colleagues, which resulted in the deaths of three individuals and left 15 police officers injured. The group is also facing charges for their involvement in a chaotic attack on the Civil Hospital and forcibly taking the bodies of attackers from the Jaffer Express train bombing. The FIR related to the Civil Hospital incident, which was lodged at the Civil Lines Police Station in Quetta last week, states that 100 to 150 people had stormed the medical facility and forcibly took the bodies of attackers involved in the Jaffer Express train attack from the hospital's morgue upon the instigation of the BYC leadership. The FIR states that the accused stopped a private ambulance at Hockey Chowk, beat the driver, and loaded the bodies into the ambulance. Additionally, another FIR was filed against BYC leaders Gulzadi Baloch, Ali Jan, Shoaib, Syed Noor Shah, Waheed, Jahanzeb, Zohaib Baloch, and over 100 other individuals, at the Brewery Police Station in Quetta. - DNA

## Israel kills over 60 including two journalists in Gaza Strip

Hossam Shabat, a journalist was killed in northern Gaza on Monday as his car was targeted in the eastern part of Beit Lahiya. Earlier, the Israeli army killed journalist Mohammad Mansourin Khan Younis

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: The Health Ministry in Gaza says Israel's unrelenting strikes on the strip have killed at least 61 Palestinians in the past 24 hours. In a statement on Monday, the ministry said four bodies were recovered from under the rubble, and 134 injured people were admitted to hospitals over the last day. According to the statement, the latest deaths have brought to 50,082 the number of Palestinians who lost their lives since the start of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. The war has also wounded 113,408 others. "A number of victims remain under the rubble and on the roads, unable to be reached by ambulance and civil defense crews," the ministry added. The ministry also decried Israel's bombardment of the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, which killed two people and destroyed the male surgical ward. Ismail Barhoum, a member of Hamas's political bureau, was killed in the attack while receiving treatment, along with a 16-year-old boy. "This attack constitutes a new war crime added to the record of repeated Israeli violations against civilians and medical facilities, which flagrantly violate the rules of international humanitarian law," Munir al-Bursh, the ministry's director general, said in a statement. This "not only demonstrates a blatant disregard for the lives of innocent

people but also hinders the provision of life-saving medical services, at a time when patients and the wounded need the utmost care," the official added. Al-Bursh urged the international community and humanitarian organizations to take urgent action against Israeli crimes and for an independent international investigation to be launched. "We also call on all people of conscience around the world to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and pressure international bodies to hold the Israeli occupation accountable for its ongoing crimes against humanity." Israel launched the campaign of genocide in Gaza in October 2023. In January, the Israeli regime was forced to agree to a ceasefire deal with Hamas given the regime's failure to achieve any of its objectives, including the "elimination" of the Palestinian resistance movement or the release of captives. The 42-day stage of the truce, which was marred by repeated Israeli violations, expired on March 1, but Israel is refraining from stepping into talks for the second stage of the agreement. Since March 18, the regime has launched strikes on Gaza, breaking the ceasefire and prisoner-captive exchange agreement that lasted nearly two months. Separate Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip have killed two media workers, including an Al Jazeera journalist. Hossam Shabat, a journalist for the Al Jazeera Mubasher channel, was killed in northern Gaza on Monday. Witnesses told the network that his car was targeted in the eastern part of Beit Lahiya.

## Jailed Istanbul mayor named presidential candidate

ISTANBUL: Turkey's opposition and the second largest party in parliament has officially nominated jailed Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu as their candidate for the 2028 presidential election. A spokesman for the Republican People's Party (CHP) made the announcement on Monday, after Imamoglu spent his first night in detention following corruption charges brought against him. Imamoglu, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's key political rival, has been arrested, interrogated, imprisoned and stripped of his mayorship in less than a week following a graft and terror probe that the opposition has condemned as a political "coup." Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) said in a statement that authorities detained 10 Turkish journalists, who covered the widespread demonstrations triggered by his arrest, early on Monday. The rights group added that most of those detained were covering the mass demonstrations outside City Hall, where tens of thousands of protesters rallied late on Sunday. Officers were seen firing water cannons at some protesters and using pepper spray.

## Putin thanks UAE for its 'active mediation'

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday thanked the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for its "active mediation" during prisoner swaps conducted between his country and neighboring Ukraine. "The Russian side expressed gratitude for the active mediation assistance provided by the UAE in the implementation of the exchange of detainees between Russia and Ukraine," the Kremlin said in a statement following a phone conversation between Putin and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Indicating that the two presidents discussed the current development of Russia-US talks regarding Ukraine and the restoration of diplomatic ties, the statement said bin Zayed expressed his support for Moscow and Washington's efforts in this regard. The statement added that the UAE president welcomed today's consultations taking place between Russia and the US in Saudi Arabia. - Agencies

## Police disperse BYC protesters in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI police on Monday dispersed protesters and arrested key members of the Baloch Yakehti Committee (BYC) as the group held a protest against the recent arrests of its leadership and a crackdown on its Quetta sit-in. The BYC had announced a protest at the Karachi Press Club (KPC) against the "illegal detention" of its key leaders, including Dr Mahrang Baloch who was arrested on Saturday along with 16 other activists from their protest camp in Quetta, a day after claiming that three protesters had died due to police action. Subsequently, in a notification dated today, Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi imposed a ban on all types of gatherings across the city under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). As BYC supporters tried to reach the KPC, they were intercepted by the police at the Fawara Chowk, where they were met with resistance by the law enforcers. After an hour-long protest, police began dispersing the demonstrators and took Sammi Deen Baloch and other BYC supporters into custody. BYC supporter Sadaf Ameer, who alleged her father Ameer Bakhsh had been forcibly disappeared, told media: "Before the protest even began, a heavy police contingent came and subjected us to torture.

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