

Islamabad POST

Friday, December 05, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Russian President wants to end war, says Donald Trump

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan wants closer ties with Iran, says Hanif

Detailed News On Page-07



France is a trusted friend, says Azam Nazir

Detailed News On Page-04



PM invited to Kyrgyzstan

Pak, Kyrgyz leaders vow to boost ties

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif noted that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan share links that are not merely historic but are timeless

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have reaffirmed the shared resolve to elevate their relations by enhancing cooperation in political, trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, education, defense and cultural domains. The affirmation was made at a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov in Islamabad. Later addressing a joint press stakeout along with the Kyrgyz President, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif noted that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan share links that are not merely historic but are timeless. He mentioned that both the countries have nurtured a relationship grounded in mutual trust, respect and shared aspirations since the establishment of their diplomatic relations. Describing his talks with the Kyrgyz President as fruitful, Shehbaz Sharif said we have detailed exchange of views in bilateral relations as well as important regional and international developments. The Prime Minister said the fifteen MoUs and agreements signed today between the two countries will serve as a framework for structured and result oriented engagement and closer institutional linkages in various fields of mutual interest. Shehbaz Sharif highlighted that the two countries will also sign an MOU later this evening

Continued on Page 06

Kyrgyz President Zhaparov accorded guard of honour at PM House

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Nurgozhoevich Zhaparov on Thursday was accorded a guard of honour as he arrived at the Prime Minister's House for one-on-one meeting and delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Prime Minister Shehbaz received the Kyrgyz leader at the PM House's entrance where the formal reception ceremony took place. The national anthems of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan were played while both leaders stood on the saluting dais. A smartly turned-out contingent of the three services of the Pakistan armed forces presented

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the President of Kyrgyzstan H.E. Sadyr Nurgozjo uulu Japarov in Islamabad on 4 December 2022. – DNA

Indonesian President arrives on December 8

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The President of Indonesia, [insert full official name], is arriving in Pakistan on December 8 for a two-day official visit, a development expected to open a new chapter in bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries. During his stay, the Indonesian President will hold separate meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. A number of important MoUs are likely to be signed to enhance

Continued on Page 06

Center to help provinces

Working groups formed after maiden meeting of finance commission

Federal govt is here to hear provinces' position, FinMin Aurangzeb tells provinces' representatives

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 11th National Finance Commission (NFC) meeting in Islamabad concluded on Thursday with a decision to form six to seven working groups to advance discussions on fiscal matters. The maiden NFC meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, was attended by the chief ministers of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who participated in their capacity as provincial finance ministers, while Punjab and Balochistan were represented by their respective finance ministers. Adviser to KP CM on Finance, Muzzamil Aslam, also joined the meeting alongside the CM Afridi. Federal Board of

Continued on Page 06

Meetings with prisoners regulated by law: Tarar

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar has said meetings with prisoners, including the PTI founder, are regulated by the jail manual, which prohibits detainees from discussing politics or making their conversations public. He was speaking at a news conference in Islamabad this evening, alongside Minister for Information and

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Verdict in Faiz Hamid's case expected this month

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah, said on Thursday that the verdict in the case of Faiz Hamid, the former chief of Pakistan's top spy agency, was expected this month. Sanaullah, stressed: "As per my knowledge, the verdict on Faiz Hamid's case is expected this December. We should avoid making forecasts regarding Faiz Hamid's punishment." Hamid, who is facing court martial for allegedly engaging in political activities and misuse of authority, rose to prominence when he was heading the counter-intelligence wing of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in the backdrop of the Faizabad sit-in in 2017.

UK varsities limit Pak students' admission

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Several universities in the United Kingdom have suspended or restricted admissions for students from Pakistan and Bangladesh following tougher immigration rules introduced by the Home Office and rising concerns over alleged visa abuse, the Financial Times has reported. At least nine higher education institutions have placed the two countries in a "high-risk" category for student visas and have tightened their enrolment policies to protect their ability to sponsor international applicants, according to the report published on Thursday. The move follows a surge in asylum claims lodged by international students, prompting UK ministers to warn that the study route "must not be used as a backdoor" to settlement.

Two years extension for air chief

Asim Munir appointed Pakistan's first Chief of Defence Forces

The federal government may authorise the Vice Chief of Army Staff or Deputy Chief of Army Staff to exercise the powers of the COAS under written orders issued on the recommendation of the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday appointed Field Marshal Asim Munir as Pakistan's first Chief of Defence Forces (CDF). The top army official – who was promoted to the Field Marshal rank earlier this year – will simultaneously hold the office of Chief of Army Staff, according to a notification issued from the President's Office. President Asif Ali Zardari approved Field Marshal Munir's appointment as the CDF following a summary sent earlier in the day by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan will now soar to greater heights

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir said on Thursday that, from here onwards, Pakistan would soar to greater heights. "Everything is fine; it's all in front of you. Things are moving towards improvement, and Pakistan will now soar to greater heights from here," he told journalists during an informal conversation at Awain-e-Sadar in Islamabad.

Continued on Page 06

Saudi Arabia rolls over \$3bn deposit support for Pak

Rollover will contribute to country's economic growth and development, says central bank

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has extended the term of its \$3 billion deposit placed with Pakistan for another year to support the country's economy, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) announced on Thursday. In a statement, the central bank said: "The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has extended the term for the deposit of \$3 billion maturing on December 8, 2025, for another year." The SBP said the fresh extension of the deposit's term would help strengthen foreign exchange reserves and contribute to the country's economic growth and development. The amount has been placed with the SBP on behalf of the state, said the central bank. It is pertinent to mention here that the \$3 billion deposit was initially placed with the SBP in 2021 and subsequently rolled over since then. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was prevented for the ninth time by prison authorities from meeting PTI founder Imran Khan at Adiala Jail on Thursday. Imran's sister Uzma Khan met the party founder in prison on Tuesday after weeks of effort, with CM Afridi and other party leaders scheduled to meet him today.

Continued on Page 06

Man arrested in US is Afghan National: FO

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday clarified that the individual – arrested in Delaware state of the US and charged with illegally possessing a machinegun – is not Pakistani but an Afghan national. The ministry issued the statement in response to a wave of propaganda by Indian media outlets that falsely tried to link the arrested man to Pakistan. The man, identified as Luqmaan Khan, 25, hailed from Wilmington, was charged this week with

Continued on Page 06

Govt bars Imran Khan's sisters from meeting him

Attaulah Tarar vows strict action against anyone found disturbing law and order outside Adiala jail

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaulah Tarar on Thursday said the government has stopped Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, from meeting him at Adiala jail. Addressing a press conference along with Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar in Islamabad, the information minister vowed strict action against anyone found disturbing law and order outside the Rawalpindi prison. "There should be no doubt that directives have been issued to maintain law and order outside the jail. Anyone found disturbing the peace will be dealt with iron hands," he added. Tarar assailed the PTI for spreading unfounded claims about Khan's health, saying that Uzma herself confirmed the former pre-

mier was safe and sound. "No prisoner has ever been provided a jogging machine," Tarar said, while accusing a female PTI leader of feeding Indian and Afghan media with claims that the PTI founder's life was under threat. Referring to the PTI founder's past remarks, Tarar said that Khan – during his premiership – used to "run his hand over his face and say he would get so and so arrested, remove their AC". Tarar further said that the international media was being used to push propaganda against Pakistan. "His [PTI founder] three sisters create law and order situations outside the jail. This cannot continue – you meet inside and run propaganda outside. You were given an opportunity, and whoever violated the rules has had their meetings stopped."

Continued on Page 06

DECEMBER 2025

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk

www.dnanews.com.pk

www.islamabadpost.com.pk



@Postislamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-8488394



CDA, PCB join hands to boost cricket in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to upgrade cricket grounds and promote cricket in the Federal Capital. The agreement was signed by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa and PCB Chief Operating Officer Sameer Ahmed, in the presence of senior CDA officials. As part of the MoU, a Talent Hunt Program will be launched to provide boys and girls equal opportunities for coaching and training at international standards. PCB will also support the up-gradation of two cricket grounds in Islamabad. Sameer Ahmed said the board is committed to fostering young talent in the city. Chairman Randhawa highlighted that the initiative is part of broader plans to develop Islamabad as a hub for national and international sports, including hockey and football. He added that revenue from sports facilities will be reinvested to improve infrastructure, and a women's cricket team is being formed to encourage female participation. **_APP**

NUST showcases growing drone innovation ecosystem

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Drone Techx NUST, the Aerial Tech Expo, concluded at the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) on Thursday, bringing together Pakistan's young innovators, industry leaders, and drone technology enthusiasts. The event attracted an overwhelming number of registrations, representing a wide range of industries, demonstrating the rapid growth of Pakistan's drone ecosystem and the increasing national focus on autonomous technologies. The first day of the event was dedicated to Aerothon, Pakistan's premier drone innovation competition. Whereas a Seminar and Expo on UAS and Counter-UAS were held on the second day. **_APP**

NAB Balochistan observes Anti-Corruption day with seminar

QUETTA: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Balochistan in compliance of the directions of the Chairman NAB Lt. (R) Nazir Ahmed Butt commemorated International Anti-Corruption Day 2025 by organizing a seminar and awareness walk at the NAB Balochistan Complex. The event brought together faculty and young students from various universities, competition winners, senior officers from NAB Balochistan and media personnel to reaffirm the province's commitment to fostering accountability and integrity. The SMBR and Secretary Revenue also attended the ceremony. Addressing the participants, the Director General NAB Balochistan Nauman Aslam underscored that corruption continues to hinder socio-economic progress and weaken public trust in institutions. He reiterated the vision of Chairman NAB to focus on mega cases and avoid frivolous complaints. The Chairman NAB has inculcated vision into the organization to play its role in achieving the sustainable growth and prosperity of our beloved Pakistan. DG NAB Balochistan further emphasized that International Anti-Corruption Day serves as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility shared by citizens, government bodies, academia, and the media to stand united against corrupt practices. **_APP**



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani federal minister exchange MoUs with their Kyrgyz counterparts at the ceremony of exchange of MoUs between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan in various sectors.

Work begins on N-25 Pak Expressway in Balochistan: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority has formally started construction on the 800-kilometre-long N-25 Pakistan Expressway in Balochistan, a strategic highway linking Karachi, Quetta and Chaman, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said on Thursday. Chairing a high-level meeting at the National Highway Authority (NHA), the minister said that this Highway in Balochistan will serve as a strategic milestone and also be a transformative step for the socio-economic development of the country's largest province in area, said a press release. He added that the construction of such roads is a major breakthrough for Balochistan. Federal Minister reviewed the pace of ongoing projects in the province of Balochistan including the M-8, which is crucial for enhancing connectivity with Gwadar Port. During the meeting, the Federal Minister was also briefed on security matters and other aspects related to NHA's construction activities in Balochistan. During briefing the projects in Sindh, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan directed the early completion of the remaining works on Lyari Expressway. He said that the National Highway Authority will develop Lyari Expressway

as a model road for the entire city of Karachi, where special arrangements for cleanliness, landscaping and beautification will set a new benchmark for quality infrastructure. Abdul Aleem Khan said that Lyari Expressway will be a valuable gift for Karachi and people of this district. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan was informed that work on the toll plaza, lining, and lighting of the Lyari Expressway has been completed upon which he directed that M-Tag and other facilities should also be ensured. He further instructed that rest areas and other amenities, similar to those on the Islamabad-Murree Expressway, be extended on Lyari Expressway, as well. Abdul Aleem Khan also directed the NHA Chairman to personally visit the Lyari Expressway. Abdul Aleem Khan noted that several tough decisions had to be taken to ensure quality and improved work on this important project. He informed the meeting that the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Sindh will be invited for the inauguration of Lyari Expressway. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Communications, Chairman NHA, and other relevant officers who briefed the minister on key matters. **_APP**

bad-Murree Expressway, be extended on Lyari Expressway, as well. Abdul Aleem Khan also directed the NHA Chairman to personally visit the Lyari Expressway. Abdul Aleem Khan noted that several tough decisions had to be taken to ensure quality and improved work on this important project. He informed the meeting that the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Sindh will be invited for the inauguration of Lyari Expressway. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Communications, Chairman NHA, and other relevant officers who briefed the minister on key matters. **_APP**

bad-Murree Expressway, be extended on Lyari Expressway, as well. Abdul Aleem Khan also directed the NHA Chairman to personally visit the Lyari Expressway. Abdul Aleem Khan noted that several tough decisions had to be taken to ensure quality and improved work on this important project. He informed the meeting that the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Sindh will be invited for the inauguration of Lyari Expressway. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Communications, Chairman NHA, and other relevant officers who briefed the minister on key matters. **_APP**

New partnership paves way for Chinese literature promotion

PESHAWAR: China Window and Dosti Welfare Organization have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly promote academic, literary, and cultural activities across Peshawar and the wider Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The collaboration aims to strengthen cultural ties while highlighting and celebrating Chinese literature and cultural heritage. The signing ceremony took place at China Window. The MoU was signed by Arslan Naseer, Executive Director of Dosti Welfare Organization, and Amjad Aziz Malik, Administrator of China Window. Under this partnership, both institutions will work closely throughout the province. Dosti Welfare Organization is a registered non-profit entity, recognized by the Social Welfare Department, Economic Affairs Division, and KP Charitable Commission. China Window, a leading cultural and educational center in Peshawar, continues to serve as a vibrant platform showcasing China's history, development, and culture under the leadership of Mr. Amjad Aziz Malik. Both institutions expressed confidence that the partnership will contribute significantly to cultural understanding, educational enrichment, and people-to-people connectivity between Pakistan and China. **_DNA**

ly on the 5th Dosti Peshawar Literature Festival (DPLF) 2026, scheduled from February 9-15, 2026, at the University of Peshawar. Organized with support from NCHD, CSP, and other partner organizations, the festival will be a week-long celebration of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rich literary and cultural traditions. It aims to encourage reading habits, creative expression, youth participation, and inclusive cultural dialogue. The MoU establishes a collaborative framework for the effective planning and execution of DPLF 2026, while also promoting Chinese literature and broader cultural activities

throughout the province. Dosti Welfare Organization is a registered non-profit entity, recognized by the Social Welfare Department, Economic Affairs Division, and KP Charitable Commission. China Window, a leading cultural and educational center in Peshawar, continues to serve as a vibrant platform showcasing China's history, development, and culture under the leadership of Mr. Amjad Aziz Malik. Both institutions expressed confidence that the partnership will contribute significantly to cultural understanding, educational enrichment, and people-to-people connectivity between Pakistan and China. **_DNA**

18 held on illegal kidney transplant networks in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched a major crackdown against illegal kidney transplant networks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, uncovering the involvement of five organized groups engaged in unlawful organ transplantation. According to FIA officials on Thursday, 18 suspects have been arrested over the past year, while five illegal transplant centers have been sealed during the operations. Investigations revealed that patients in need of kidney transplants were being charged between Rs. 4 to 5 million per procedure. Authorities disclosed that patients from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Peshawar were mostly shifted to Rawalpindi for surgeries, whereas medical samples of both patients and donors were collected in Peshawar. It was further revealed that most agents and surgeons involved in the illegal trade belong to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the crackdown, four illegal centers operating in residential houses in Peshawar, Nowshera, and Mardan were sealed. It was also disclosed that setting up such a center costs approximately Rs. 3 million and to avoid detection, these facilities were often established inside private homes. The investigation found that patients were charged up to Rs. 5 million, while donors received only a small share of around Rs. 300,000. The remaining amount was distributed among agents, surgeons, and other staff. Sources confirmed that eight FIRs have been registered this year against those involved in the illegal organ trade. Under the law, the accused face up to 10 years of imprisonment and the professional licenses of the involved surgeons are also being suspended.

Participants of marsew-8 visit Naval Headquarters

ISLAMABAD: The participants of 8th Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-8) visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacted with the participants. The Admiral highlighted emerging maritime challenges, evolving opportunities in the maritime domain and the immense potential of Pakistan's blue economy. The naval chief also dilated upon the impregnable deterrence of Pakistan Navy during Marka-e-Haq and contributions toward regional peace and stability through active participation in the Combined Maritime Forces and Regional Maritime Security Patrols. Earlier, participants were briefed on contemporary maritime threats, Pakistan Navy's initiatives for

maritime domain awareness and coastal community development. The delegation comprising parliamentarians, politicians, bureaucrats, senior armed forces officers, media representatives, entrepreneurs, business leaders and academia acknowledged the significant role of MARSEW in maritime awareness and its contribution towards maritime policy making. They also lauded Pakistan Navy's commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests. The eleven-days workshop aims to enhance understanding of maritime security and the geopolitical significance of the Indian Ocean, while providing a platform to deliberate on key national maritime challenges and opportunities. **_DNA**

A professional par excellence

ANSAR BHATTI

Imran Ghaznavi stands out as a professional of rare calibre. His career across Pakistan's leading regulatory and public sector institutions reflects depth, discipline and a steady commitment to institutional integrity. He has worked at the frontlines of governance, communication and reform, where judgment and credibility matter



the most. What sets him apart is his range. He has shaped narratives in national media, strengthened compliance frameworks in key regulators, guided policy work at the Planning Commission and represented Pakistan with confidence and clarity abroad. Few professionals combine regulatory insight, strategic communication experience and policy understanding with the

same balance and maturity. Colleagues often describe him as calm under pressure, consistent in his values and precise in his work. His record shows that he does not simply fit into systems, he strengthens them. In a field where many excel in one dimension, Imran Ghaznavi operates at a different league, bringing integrity, strategic thinking and a steady hand to every role he takes on.

STATE LIFE
INSURANCE CORPORATION OF PAKISTAN

Scan to Download the Mobile App

IOS Play Store

Pakistan's Largest Life and Health Insurer

IT JUST GOT EASIER AND EVEN MORE CONVENIENT!

Revive your lapsed policies before December 31, 2025 and get 100% late fee waived.

Secure your family's financial wellness and revive your lapsed policy (within 5 years) to get your full late fee waived and reinstate your paid-up policies to get your late fee waived upto Rs. 25,000. Please visit our Zonal Office to get your policy updated.

Pay your premiums & loan online:

Visit statelife.com.pk and pay via e-Pay, Jazz Cash, Quick Pay or through mobile app and e-Wallet

Pay your premiums & loan in person:

At any State Life office or at any partnered bank branches

CALL US TODAY 051-111-777-542 VISIT www.statelife.com.pk

THE ONLY INSURANCE COMPANY IN PAKISTAN AWARDED AAA RATING

THE ONLY INSURANCE COMPANY IN PAKISTAN AWARDED 5 STARS RATING BY TRACFIN

PID(K)1741-D/25

Briefs

Philanthropists to drive Nationwide edu revolution with GCT

ISLAMABAD: The leading Sindh-based educational charity, Green Crescent Trust (GCT), is set to hold consecutive get-togethers in Lahore and Islamabad, seeking philanthropic support from prominent businessmen and industrialists in Punjab and the federal capital to accelerate its mission of enrolling out-of-school children across Sindh. GCT CEO Zahid Saeed will deliver a compelling presentation highlighting key facts and figures related to the current education in Pakistan. He will also outline a practical and impactful way forward, proposing sustainable solutions to address the serious challenges facing school education—particularly for underprivileged children—through GCT's proven and scalable model. For the past 31 years, GCT has been working tirelessly to eradicate illiteracy and provide quality education to children from underprivileged communities. The trust has established a network of 173 charitable schools in remote areas of Sindh, with a total enrolment of 34,660 students, over 40 per cent of whom are girls. Among these students, 2,150 orphans receive specialized support for both their education and welfare, delivered by more than 2,000 qualified teachers committed to serving deprived communities. The upcoming event in Lahore will be graced by Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman as the chief guest, with Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir attending as the guest of honor. In Islamabad, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan will grace the event as the chief guest. Both events will be conducted by Renowned artist Adnan Siddiqui, whose continued support adds powerful voice and visibility to GCT's mission. Renowned business leader Khawaja Shahzeb Akram and Usman Shaukat, President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, will graciously host the upcoming fundraising dinners in Lahore and Islamabad, respectively. Both are widely respected for their dynamic leadership and unwavering commitment to social development.—APP

PAL hosts Muqalma with poet, writer Sarmad

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), under its well-known literary series "Meet the Writers," has hosted a special session titled "Muqalma with Sarmad Sehbai" to honor the remarkable contributions of the renowned poet, writer, dramatist, filmmaker, and intellectual Sarmad Sehbai. The event was held at the Sheikh Ayaz Conference Hall of PAL, drawing a large number of writers, poets, and literary personalities from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and other cities. Chairperson of PAL, Prof. Dr. Najeeba Arif, delivered the opening remarks, welcoming participants and acknowledging the distinguished presence of senior literary figures. She recited selected verses from Sehbai's celebrated ghazal "Banati hai nazar tasveer-e-aab ahista ahista. The dialogue formally began with remarks by Shahid Masood and Akhtar Usman, who briefly spoke about Sehbai's multifaceted personality and artistic contributions. The session was conducted by Munir Fayyaz, who introduced the guest of honor and engaged him in an in-depth conversation. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Arif described Sarmad Sehbai as an accomplished poet, dramatist, filmmaker, and intellectual whose diverse creative expression has earned him acclaim across generations. She invited attendees to participate in an informal exchange of ideas with the distinguished guest. Recalling his four-decade-long association with Sehbai at PTV, Shahid Masood said he had learned immensely from him and considered their friendship both inspiring and rewarding. Akhtar Usman discussed Sehbai's poetic qualities, emphasizing the uniqueness of his creative voice. He described Sehbai as a "major cultural figure of the subcontinent" who never compromised the dignity of others.—APP

Pak, France pledge enhanced coop on human rights

The French Ambassador acknowledged Pakistan's efforts and welcomed the positive advancements in legislation and institutional safeguards. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment from both sides to continue collaboration in promoting human rights, legal development, and inclusive policy reform

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France, called on the Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, to discuss cooperation in promoting and strengthening human rights in Pakistan. The Minister highlighted recent improvements in the human rights landscape, noting a decline in rights-related violations and enhanced institutional responsiveness. The Ministry of Human Rights, in coordination with relevant departments, is actively working to strengthen legal protections and improve mechanisms for redress and accountability. He underscored recent legislative reforms, including over 110 amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), which aim to improve access to justice and reflect the government's commitment to legal modernization and inclusive governance. The Minister also noted ongoing discussions on proposing life imprisonment for selected offences, demonstrating Pakistan's alignment with evolving global human rights principles. The Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the GSP+ framework, emphasizing its role in governance reforms, institutional strengthening and sustainable development. He highlighted the framework's contribution to advancing human rights protections and aligning domestic legislation with international standards, as well as Pakistan's recent election to the UN Human Rights Council, reflecting international confidence in the country's constructive role. The Minister further highlighted the work of Independent Commissions, including the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), National Commission for Rights of Children



(NCRC), and the Commission for the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals. He pointed to the NCHR's accreditation as an "A-status" institution by the UN-linked Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) as a testament to Pakistan's commitment to international standards. The Minister also noted the recent passage of the National Commission for Minorities

Bill, which the French Ambassador welcomed as a positive step toward protecting minority rights. Addressing concerns regarding the misuse of laws, including the Blasphemy Law, the Minister emphasized the development of comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure forensic investigations, credible witness protection, and impartial legal processes to uphold jus-

justice and safeguard vulnerable communities. The French Ambassador acknowledged Pakistan's efforts and welcomed the positive advancements in legislation and institutional safeguards. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment from both sides to continue collaboration in promoting human rights, legal development, and inclusive policy reform.

NUML hosts moot on building sustainable cities

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, hosted the 2nd Three-Day International Conference titled "Building Sustainable Cities: Balancing Profit, People and the Planet", organized by the Faculty of Management Sciences. The conference brought together policymakers, representatives of the real estate industry, faculty members, and a large number of students, creating an engaging forum to discuss challenges and opportunities in sustainable urban development. This year's conference marked significant milestones, including the participation of 50 representatives from regulatory bodies, industry leaders, and developers across 10 industrial sessions, as well as 65 academicians from 25 universities presenting 45 research papers. Additionally, NUML launched five major policy working papers developed collaboratively by A&F faculty, regulators, industry experts, academics, and developers. A major highlight was the completion of Climate Action training for the first batch of 60 students from NUML's six campuses, main campus, and ten knowledge partners, an initiative funded by UN-Habitat. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Kareem Kundi, attended the event as the Chief Guest. In his remarks, he appreciated NUML for arranging a conference of such high relevance and timely importance. He noted that the state has a pivotal role in development and that universities play a key part in guiding and channelizing national policies. He emphasized the need for more such academic and industry-focused engagements that contribute to infrastructure improvement and national progress. Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani (R), delivered the welcome address. Speaking on the broader theme of sustainable cities, he said that the most critical challenge facing Pakistan today is not economic or administrative, but ideological and intellectual. He stated that the country must decide how to build cities, communities, and an economy that do not separate profit from human dignity, do not turn development into a source of class division, and do not sacrifice the environment in the name of progress. He stressed the importance of viewing urban development not merely as economic transactions, but as responsibilities rooted in human empathy, social justice, and environmental care. The inaugural session featured keynote addresses from prominent industry leaders. Muhammad Ejaz, CEO Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited, spoke on "The Role of REITs in Building Sustainable and Inclusive Cities." CFO Askari Bank delivered an address on "The Role of Banks in Expanding Affordable Housing." Ch. Ahmad Naeem Qamar, CEO Garden Residence, shared insights on "The Role of Private Developers in Shaping Sustainable and Livable Cities." Their contributions highlighted the collaborative importance of financial institutions, real estate developers, and policymakers in strengthening Pakistan's urban future. The International conference is also featuring parallel sessions on diverse topics; people-centered streets, restoring trust through secure property rights, Re-claiming the vertical city, Islamic Finance as an alternative source of responsible development, Building equity through tax reforms, Urban inequality and Housing affordability, Bridging the valuation Dichotomy, Integration Informal settlements for inclusive informal growth, and Urban Climate and Flood Resilience. Earlier in the day, Rector NUML inaugurated the NUML Equity Lounge, an initiative powered by ZLK Islamic Financial Services, aimed at enhancing financial literacy and promoting informed investment practices among students.

Call for strong regional coop on economy and climate change

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), held its flagship event, the Islamabad Conclave-2025, on the theme "Reimagining South Asia: Security, Economy, Climate, Connectivity." On the second day of the Conclave, the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at ISSI hosted the fourth working session on the theme "Regional Cooperation on Economy and Climate Change." The session brought together an eminent group of speakers including Mr. Haroon Sharif, Former Minister of State and Chairman, Board of Investment; Dr. Safdar Sohail, Executive Director, Social Policy Resource Centre (SPRC); Dr. Pema Gyantsho, Director General International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD); Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal, Founder Chairman of the Institute for Policy Research and Development (IPRAD); and Ms. Aisha Khan, Chief Executive of Civil Society Coalition

for Climate Change (CSCCC). The session was moderated by Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP at ISSI. The session opened with a compelling and forward-looking keynote address by Mr. Haroon Sharif, who urged the audience to rethink South Asia's future considering global disorder, shrinking development finance and rising regional investment risks. He emphasized that the political issues confronted few countries in the region have prevented the region from benefiting from its economic potential and argued for a brick-by-brick, results-driven approach to cooperation. Mr. Sharif proposed a framework based on digital cooperation, climate-focused partnerships, and the inclusion of emerging economic actors, such as China and Gulf states. He stressed that bilateral water treaties can no longer address the rapidly changing Himalayan hydrology and advocated for trilateral water-management arrangements. He also called for the creation of a regional climate and development bank, driven by the private sector, to help South Asia navigate the shrinking pool of global climate finance. He closed his remarks with an optimistic message centred on youth empowerment and private sector leadership. Dr. Safdar Sohail highlighted the deep link between industrial policy and climate action, noting that South Asia cannot move towards regional integration without modernising its domestic industries. He underscored Pakistan's weak alignment between climate and industrial policy and pointed to global measures like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as emerging non-tariff barriers.—DNA

RCCI meet Station Commander Rawalpindi

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by President Usman Shaukat along with Group leader Sohail Altaf called on Station Commander, Brigadier Ali Anjum Syed. Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sha- keel, Lieutenant Colonel Wali representing Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment Boards were also present on the occasion, while RCCI's Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, former presidents Asad Mashadi and Saqib Rafique were part of the delegation. The meeting discussed development work in the Saddar area, immediate construction of parking plazas, issues related to the Old Grant Lease, and construction of public toilets in Tench Bhata. The delegation apprised the Station Commander that immediate construction of a parking plaza is essential for the convenience of customers in Saddar, and



suggested to constitute a committee to resolve the issue of the Old Grant Lease amicably. The Station Commander assured the delegation that a help desk will be established to promote business activities and facilitate chamber members and trad-

ers. He said that the chamber and the Station Commander Office will also organize events together so that commercial and activities can increase in the city. A parking plaza will be constructed in Saddar Cantt to solve the parking problem, he added.

Permanent confiscation of vehicle imported in violation of law

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that vehicles imported in violation of the Import Policy Order cannot be released and will remain confiscated. The ruling came in a detailed written judgment issued for reporting purposes. The Court issued an important decision concerning vehicles imported in breach of the Import Policy Order 2022, holding that importing vehicles beyond the prescribed age limit is illegal and such vehicles cannot be released even after payment of fines. A three-member bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui and comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghani and Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb, heard dozens of similar appeals together and disagreed with earlier judgments of the Lahore High Court and the Customs Appellate Tribunal. Importers had brought vehicles under the baggage, gift, and transfer of residence schemes. Customs authorities, however, argued that these vehicles exceeded the three- or five-year age limit allowed under the Import Policy Order. Customs confiscated the vehicles and imposed penalties on importers and clearing agents. The Tribunal and the Lahore High Court later allowed conditional release upon payment of a 35% redemption fine and due duties. The Supreme Court rejected this approach, ruling that vehicles older than the permitted age are not importable under Appendix-E of the policy. Therefore, such vehicles cannot be regularised through a redemption fine, as the law provides no such authority. The judgment also clarified that SRO 499 (2009) does not permit release of goods that fail to meet the procedural requirements of the Import Policy. The Court stated that the age limit—not the fact that the vehicle is second-hand—is the decisive factor. It also dismissed the importers' argument that past court orders allowed similar releases, noting that those were leave refusing orders without binding legal findings.—DNA

Outsourcing PR schools: key move for modern education

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Thursday said that the outsourcing of Pakistan Railways (PR) schools marks a major stride toward promoting modern and quality education. The minister made these remarks at a signing ceremony held under his supervision, during which three major railway schools were formally outsourced, said a news release.

Under the agreement, Railway Boys & Girls School Karachi has been handed over to TYMS Education System, while Railway Girls High School Mughalpurah Lahore and Railway Girls Saint Andrews School/College Lahore have been transferred to SAGE/DAGE Education Pvt. Ltd.

The Karachi agreements were signed by Tayyab Mirza, and the Lahore agreements by Dr. Nasir Mahmood. The initiative is part of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model aligned with the Prime Minister's vision to modernize educational institutions across the country. It also ensures the protection of the rights of railway employees and their children. Under the arrangement, the private partners will introduce a modern curriculum, advanced teaching methodologies, an upgraded examination system, fully equipped science and computer laboratories, sports facilities, and renovated school buildings.—APP

Jaggery-coated corns remain seasonal favorite

ISLAMABAD: As Islamabad's street food culture continues to evolve, jaggery-coated corns remain a humble yet enduring symbol of the city's culinary tradition. Loved across seasons, they continue to hold their place as one of the capital's most cherished snacks — a timeless reminder of its rich street-food heritage. One street-side snack that continues to grip the taste buds of residents is the jaggery-coated corn. The crackling sound of boiling pots and the sweet scent of jaggery drifting through markets ensure that this simple delight stays firmly in the hearts — and hands — of people across the city. Sold from wooden carts in markets, roadside stalls, and residential neighborhoods, the traditional treat remains a year-round favorite, drawing queues of customers of all ages. Despite rising prices of corn and jaggery, vendors report strong sales throughout winter and summer in the federal capital, similar to other cities in Pakistan.—APP

MOST EXPERIENCED
MANUFACTURERS &
EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
BOXING
KICKBOXING

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

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

Ashraf

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

Can Trump really ban the Muslim Brotherhood?

ABDULRAHMAN AL-RASHED

SINCE their emergence, modern Arab nation states have found themselves in constant tension with transnational ideological movements that challenge their authority and pull loyalties beyond national borders. Chief among these groups is the Muslim Brotherhood, a cross-border organization whose ideas and objectives clash with most governments in the region, including those that permit it limited parliamentary or Cabinet participation. The Brotherhood resembles other ideological currents with formal party structures such as the Baathists, communists and Arab nationalists, along with socialist and Nasserist offshoots. All promote political concepts that undermine existing state systems. Unsurprisingly, none of these movements ever succeeded sustainably while in power and those that briefly did were unable to hold onto it.

US President Donald Trump last week shocked many observers when he directed the State Department and Treasury Department to prepare a report recommending a ban on dealings with the Muslim Brotherhood and the sanctioning of certain branches in the region. The first entities likely to be targeted are its branches in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. Once the 45-day review is complete, these branches could be designated foreign terrorist organizations, placing their leaders and activists on sanctions lists. It is a significant development given that the Brotherhood remains the Arab world's largest and most active political movement.

Just days earlier, the governor of Texas designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. It is unclear how large or influential the group is within the state, but the move serves as both a symbolic beginning and an early test case for pursuing the Brotherhood inside the US.

Such a step is unusual. The US Constitution protects freedom of thought, belief and political association. This is why the Communist Party has operated legally for a century and why neo-Nazi groups are permitted to exist as political movements, unlike in Europe. Yet those movements are marginal, while the Brotherhood enjoys a wider reach inside the US and growing influence among a rapidly expanding Muslim community. Its presence on American university campuses dates back to the 1970s and 1980s, but it has grown significantly over the past decade and opened channels of cooperation with both major political parties.

The Brotherhood does not present itself as a subversive movement, like communism, but as an extension of America's Muslim communities, mirroring established political organizations such as Jewish

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

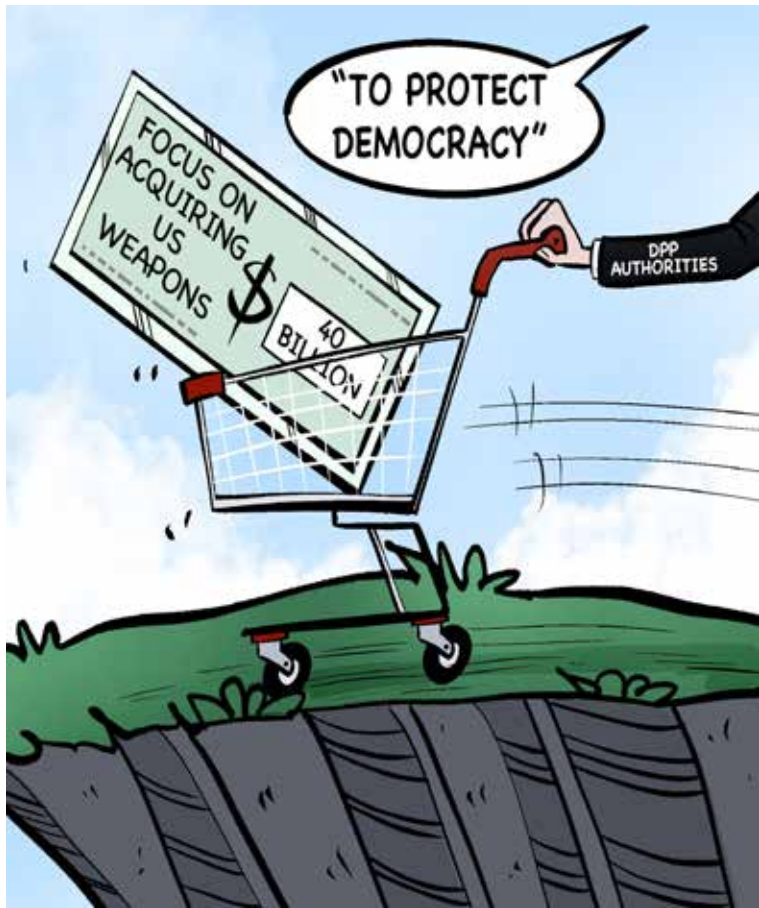
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 165

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

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



groups and their lobbying arm, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. In reality, the Brotherhood's ideology is deeply hostile to the West. Yet this has not prevented it from partnering with Western institutions or benefiting from political and financial support. The Brotherhood enjoys a wider reach inside the US and growing influence among a rapidly expanding Muslim community.

Publicly, the movement claims to uphold democratic principles and the peaceful rotation of power, but that narrative is inconsistent with its historical record and ideological foundations. Over the decades, the Brotherhood has demonstrated remarkable flexibility: it has cooperated with leftists, Arab nationalists and Khomeinists, and its Iraqi branch even worked with the US occupation before reentering politics and government.

Calls to ban the Muslim Brotherhood intensified after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, citing its role as an ideological incubator for extremist groups. But those calls found little traction in Congress or the White House until now. What changed? Most likely, the Brotherhood's global reaction to the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel and the fact that Hamas is itself a Brotherhood organization. This shifted public sentiment sharply and placed the movement under renewed scrutiny. The broader American and Western mood has also turned decisively against political Islam, making legislative pushback far more likely. This shift does not contradict Washington's recent outreach to the Syrian president. He is viewed as separate from organized political Islam movements. A notable paradox lies in Israel's position. While it wages war against Hamas, the Brotherhood's Palestinian branch, it permits another Brotherhood-linked party to operate legally and allows Palestinian citizens of Israel that represent it to serve in the Knesset. They have even joined governing coalitions in the past.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational movement fundamentally opposed to the concept of the nation state. Its strongest base of activity remains the Arab region, where it maintains significant support despite official denials. As an opposition force, it presents itself as an alternative to ruling systems. Yet, in the rare instances where it held power, its governance record was poor both politically and economically — whether in Egypt, where it ruled for only one year, or Sudan, where it governed for three decades. The broader idea of internationalism — unifying peoples or states under a single ideological project — has collapsed globally. Its strongest manifestations, communism and socialist internationalism, are long gone. What remains unclear is whether Trump's proposed ban will extend to Brotherhood-linked organizations that were established in the US under distinctly American names. Internationally, Washington is likely to target fundraising networks, distribution channels and the movement's extensive media platforms. The US has done this before: in its global campaign against Iranian-affiliated organizations, it severed financial pipelines and shut down radio stations, television channels, websites and social media networks. Such a ban would be quietly welcomed by many Arab governments, including those that still permit the Brotherhood to participate in politics. For these states, the movement poses a direct threat to national stability. It presents itself as a domestic alternative and enjoys external support networks that reinforce it.

America Falls Victim to Its Own Pre-Emptive Doctrine

Qamar Bashir



A sustainable solution requires more than interdictions, seizures, or kinetic displays. Preventive violence cannot cure the social, economic, and cultural conditions that fuel crime and extremism. Real security emerges from deeper reforms—education, opportunity, community rebuilding, regional cooperation, and domestic social healing.

Without addressing underlying fractures, the United States risks creating the very threats it seeks to eliminate, both abroad and within its borders. The world must move toward outlawing preventive and pre-emptive strikes. Nations that violate sovereignty must face automatic...

THE doctrine of preventive and pre-emptive strike, once defended as a tool to neutralize danger, has instead evolved into one of the most destabilizing forces of the modern era. It was misused in Iraq, misapplied in Afghanistan, refined by Israel across the Middle East, and has now begun reshaping U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere with dangerous momentum. A strategy designed to stop future conflict is in reality manufacturing perpetual instability, radicalization, and blowback that reaches far beyond the battlefield. Today it resurfaces in Venezuela and Colombia, where U.S. kinetic actions mirror the same flawed logic that once plunged entire regions into chaos. Washington now accuses Venezuela's leadership of facilitating narcotics trafficking—including fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and synthetic opioids—into the United States. Acting on these claims, U.S. forces have destroyed 21 Venezuelan maritime vessels, including a mini-submarine, multiple fishing boats, and coastal carriers allegedly tied to smuggling networks. Venezuela has condemned these strikes as “acts of war,” and nationwide protests demand retaliation. As naval deployments increase and rhetoric hardens, the region inches toward confrontation.

Colombia faces parallel pressure. American intelligence asserts that Colombian networks have expanded trafficking corridors and that the government has not done enough to stop them. In response, U.S. forces have conducted over 50 targeted seizure-and-destruction missions against Colombian-linked maritime and aerial assets. Colombia's leadership has called these actions coercive violations of sovereignty, warning that repeated strikes “may compel defensive measures.” In both nations, U.S. interdictions are no longer viewed as anti-drug operations but as the early stages of a pre-emptive war doctrine extending into sovereign territory.

This rapid escalation is not new. It mirrors the same pattern witnessed in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, where preventive-strike logic produced catastrophic long-term consequences. After the 2003 Iraq invasion—justified by fabricated claims of weapons of mass destruction—extremist movements multiplied. The world soon witnessed the Madrid bombings of 2004 (193 killed), London bombings of 2005 (52 killed), Paris attacks of 2015 (130 killed), Brussels bombings of 2016 (32 killed), and the Nice massacre (86 killed). These were not isolated tragedies. They were the direct blowback of destabilizing entire societies under the banner of preventive security. The United States has suffered its own share of domestic consequences. The Boston Marathon bombing,

the Orlando nightclub massacre, the San Bernardino attack, and the Fort Hood shooting all emerged from radicalization fueled by wars that inflamed emotions, grievances, and ideological anger across continents. Western intelligence agencies acknowledged that the Iraq War accelerated global extremism more than any single event since World War II.

This pattern continued recently with the fatal shooting of a U.S. National Guard soldier and the wounding of another by an armed gunman who, according to initial assessments, carried deep personal grievances and emotional wounds closely tied to broader social and psychological turmoil. His act, though individual in execution, reflects a growing trend: internal radicalization born not only from ideology but from a society increasingly shaped by violence abroad and polarization at home. When nations normalize pre-emptive violence externally, elements within their own society begin to internalize the same logic—that grievance can justify aggression, that perceived threats demand immediate force, and that violence is a legitimate expression of injury. This tragedy is a domestic echo of a doctrine whose psychological fractures now reach into American neighborhoods and military families.

These external and internal patterns converge with a new and overlooked threat: America's own criminal ecosystem, which is deeply intertwined with the consequences of its foreign and domestic policies. According to law-enforcement estimates, there are approximately 172,000 cartel-affiliated and illegal-gang operatives inside the United States, embedded in trafficking, distribution, logistics, and underground financial networks. If aggressive external crackdowns in Venezuela and Colombia disrupt these supply chains, tens of thousands of operatives inside the United States will suddenly lose their income, hierarchy, and criminal ecosystems. History shows that men trained in covert movement, armed logistics, intimidation, and criminal coordination rarely retire when their networks collapse. Some may reintegrate into society, but many—dispossessed, angry, and stripped of status—may evolve into more violent, unpredictable actors. A displaced criminal workforce of 172,000 individuals, skilled in violence and trafficking, represents a potential flashpoint for domestic terrorism far greater than the maritime vessels destroyed abroad. Without rehabilitation, education, economic inclusion, and cultural transformation, enforcement alone may ignite a domestic insurgency that grows silently inside American borders.

Meanwhile, abroad, the preventive doctrine continues

generating diplomatic and strategic losses. Israel's long-term reliance on pre-emptive strikes has led to unprecedented isolation from Europe, legal indictments, suspended arms transfers, and deep economic damage. Its military strength remains intact, but its global legitimacy has deteriorated. The United States is experiencing similar erosion. At the United Nations, America increasingly stands alone defending actions viewed internationally as violations of sovereignty. Allies abstain rather than stand with Washington. Latin American anger intensifies as U.S. forces strike vessels and aircraft in waters they consider their own.

If left unchecked, these actions could fracture hemispheric relations for decades. A region historically tied to the United States may transform into a zone of resistance and asymmetric retaliation. Every destroyed boat, every violated border, every wounded soldier, every act of internal violence becomes part of a growing web of instability linking foreign miscalculations with domestic consequences.

A sustainable solution requires more than interdictions, seizures, or kinetic displays. Preventive violence cannot cure the social, economic, and cultural conditions that fuel crime and extremism. Real security emerges from deeper reforms—education, opportunity, community rebuilding, regional cooperation, and domestic social healing. Without addressing underlying fractures, the United States risks creating the very threats it seeks to eliminate, both abroad and within its borders. The world must move toward outlawing preventive and pre-emptive strikes. Nations that violate sovereignty must face automatic, impartial economic and diplomatic consequences enforced by mechanisms beyond the reach of political manipulation. Humanity cannot afford another Iraq, another Libya, another Syria—or a Venezuelan and Colombian conflict born from speculative intelligence and unilateral force. Nor can the United States afford more tragedies like the killing of its own National Guard soldier at the hands of a deeply wounded man shaped by a fractured national psyche. Pre-emptive doctrine does not provide safety. It creates destruction, resentment, and internal instability. Only when nations reject the impulse to strike first and invest instead in long-term social transformation—at home and abroad—will the world begin to heal from the damage this doctrine has unleashed.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister,

Embassy of Pakistan to France

Former Press Attaché to Malaysia

Former MD, SRBC

Macomb, Michigan, USA

Prophetic Reverence and Legislative Clarity

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The words of the Speaker reflected not merely his own sentiments but the collective conscience of the entire Pakistani Muslim nation. The Qur'an itself affirms in unmistakable terms that the Prophet Muhammad is Khatam an-Nabiyyin, the Seal of the Prophets, and commands believers to venerate him with utmost respect. Surah Al-Hujurat lays out the...

ON last Tuesday, the Majlis-e-Shoora held a joint session chaired by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, where several important Legislations were enacted. Among them was the National Commission for Minorities Bill 2025, which prompted reservations from certain members of Parliament. In response, both the Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Law Minister Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressed the Joint Session with clarity and conviction, assuring the nation and the parliamentarians that the Bill did not, in any manner, compromise the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood. They emphasized that no concessions whatsoever could be granted to Qadianis and anyone related to them, who are constitutionally recognized as non-Muslims. Parliament echoed with the declaration that Prophet Muhammad is the final Messenger, and that the people of Pakistan, guided by faith and honour, are committed to preserving his sanctity above all worldly concerns.

The words of the Speaker reflected not merely his own sentiments but the collective conscience of the entire Pakistani Muslim nation. The Qur'an itself affirms in unmistakable terms that the Prophet Muhammad is Khatam an-Nabiyyin, the Seal of the Prophets, and commands believers to venerate him with utmost respect. Surah Al-Hujurat lays out the etiquettes of approaching him, emphasising lowering of voices and gentleness of manner. Through the centuries, Muslims have expressed this reverence in ways that history has lovingly preserved—gestures of devotion so deep that entire libraries could be dedicated to them.

Among the most shining examples of such love is the Ottoman Empire, whose rulers considered themselves custodians not merely of a political domain but of the sacred trust of serving the Haramain. And in that long line of rulers, Sultan Abdul Hamid II stands out as a beacon of devotion. Born in 1842, he ascended the throne at a

time of immense political strain, yet he carried within his heart a softness and reverence for the Prophet that governed even the smallest matters under his rule.

When Sultan Abdul Hamid II signed the railway agreement with Germany for what later became the historic Hejaz Railway, he inserted a condition that has echoed through Muslim memory like a whisper of love: “When the workers come within twenty kilometres of Madinah al-Munawwarah, they must wrap cloth around their hummers.” His intent was simple—that no harsh sound should disturb the tranquillity of the Prophet's city. This railway, completed in 1908 and stretching from Istanbul to Madinah, was not merely a feat of engineering; it was a project born of devotion. Its purpose was to ease the journey of Hajj and to strengthen the bond between the capital and the illuminated city of the Prophet.

The remnants of this railway still stand today in Madinah—the Turkish Railway Station—where memories of that era remain preserved in silence. One of the most poignant stories from that time relates to the coal engine prepared for the inauguration ceremony. When Sultan Abdul Hamid II arrived to inspect it, he was distressed by the loud rattling of the engine. Unable to tolerate such noise in the City of the Messenger, he picked up a small piece of debris and struck the engine gently, exclaiming, “Such loud noise in the city of the Messenger—how dare you!” That engine, silenced on that day, still rests in Madinah as if frozen in time, a monument to a ruler's trembling reverence.

Persian literature has encapsulated such scenes through verses that describe the delicacy of etiquette in sacred places: “The abode of etiquette beneath this sky is more delicate than the Throne; Even Junayd and Bayazid would come here with their breaths held in awe.” This profound sense of Adab has been the hallmark of Muslim civilisation. It

was not limited to rulers or scholars; it pulsed through the veins of ordinary believers. Our own Sub-Continent is replete with such devotion, and perhaps no voice captured this spirit more powerfully than that of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. His immortal words convey the essence of loyalty to the Prophet:

“Ki Muhammad se wafa tu nay to hum tairay hain, Yeh jahan cheez hai kya, Loh-o-Qalam tairay hain.”

(If you have been faithful to Muhammad, then you belong to him;

What is this world before you? The Divine Tablet and the Pen themselves are yours.)

In his immortal couplet he declares, “If you are faithful to Muhammad, then we belong to you; this world is a trivial thing—when loyalty is pure, even the Tablet and the Pen are yours.” Through these lines, Iqbal is not merely invoking poetry; he is teaching a philosophy. Loyalty to the Prophet, he says, opens the doors of possibility, empowers the believer with courage, and aligns human will with divine guidance. In this devotion lies the secret of resilience, dignity, and the power to shape destiny itself.

Such expressions of reverence run like a golden thread through our history. They remind us that while laws and constitutions codify our beliefs, the spirit that animates the Muslim heart goes far deeper. The reaffirmation in Parliament of the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood was not a mere political stance; it was the continuation of a centuries-old legacy of love, honour, and unshakeable loyalty to the Messenger of Allah. From the quiet railway tracks laid in Madinah under the watchful devotion of an Ottoman Sultan to the passionate verses of Iqbal, and from the teachings of the Qur'an to the convictions of the Pakistani people, one truth stands radiant; love for the Prophet Muhammad is the essence of our faith and the lifeblood of our identity. May we remain steadfast in this devotion, today and always.

Briefs

Pak, Kyrgyz leaders vow to boost ties

FROM PAGE 01
to enhance their trade from about fifteen million dollars to two hundred million dollars in the next two years. The Prime Minister said Pakistan is a gateway to the Indian Ocean and stands ready to provide Kyrgyzstan access to regional and global markets through its ports. He said our discussions highlighted the need to strengthen people to people exchanges through cultural initiatives, tourism promotion and academic partnerships. He said the two sides have agreed to hold cultural events in each other's countries. He said this will further reinforce the solid foundation of our friendship and brotherhood.

Kyrgyz President Zhaparov...

FROM PAGE 01
the guard of honour, which President Zhaparov reviewed. The two leaders introduced their respective delegations to each other before proceeding for a one-on-one meeting, followed by talks at the delegation level. Later, the Kyrgyz leader also planted a sapling in the lawn of the Prime Minister's House. President Zhaparov, who arrived here on Wednesday on a two-day state visit – the first by a Kyrgyz head of state in two decades – was received at Nur Khan Airbase by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz.

Asim Munir appointed...

FROM PAGE 01
The unification of the two key military titles follows President Zardari's assent on November 15 to the Pakistan Army, Air Force, and Navy (Amendment) Bills 2025, after their approval by parliament. Under the amended provisions, Article 243, which governs the powers and responsibilities of a Field Marshal, will also apply to any General promoted to the rank. The federal government may authorise the Vice Chief of Army Staff or Deputy Chief of Army Staff to exercise the powers of the COAS under written orders issued on the recommendation of the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF).

Pakistan will now...

FROM PAGE 01
His remarks come shortly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif forwarded a summary to President Asif Ali Zardari recommending the COAS Munir's appointment as Pakistan's first chief of defence forces (CDF). The prime minister today approved the summary for the appointment of Field Marshal Munir "as the chief of army staff and the chief of defence forces", and then referred it to the President House, said a press release by the PM Office (PMO).

Saudi Arabia rolls...

FROM PAGE 01
The meeting took place as rumours regarding Imran's health began circulating in local and foreign media, despite claims by the government and PTI leaders that the former prime minister was in good health. These speculations, however, gained traction due to the government's reluctance to let visitors, including his family members and legal team, meet Imran over the past few weeks.

Working groups...

FROM PAGE 01
Revenue (FBR) Chairman Rashid Langrial was also in attendance, along with private members from all four provinces. Sources said that the next sitting of the NFC is expected to take place on January 8 or 15. The sources said that working groups will examine key financial issues, including a dedicated group for the former FATA region, which will look into how the merged districts can be fully integrated into the federal fiscal framework.

World Cup draw starts countdown to 2026 finals with Trump presiding

Countdown Begins for 2026 48-Team World Cup Draw Amid Trump Spotlight, Star-Studded Ceremony, First-Time Qualifiers, Expanded Format, Political Tensions, and Historic North American Hosting Across USA, Mexico, Canada

WASHINGTON: The countdown to the first 48-team World Cup begins in earnest on Friday as the draw for the 2026 finals takes place in Washington, with Donald Trump set to dominate much of the attention. The most logistically complex World Cup in history will be held across North America from June 11 to July 19, with 16 more teams added to the global showpiece, up from the 32 nations involved in Qatar in 2022. Friday's ceremony, at the Kennedy Center on the banks of the Potomac River, will be a star-studded event but Trump will take centre stage. FIFA president Gianni Infantino has developed a close relationship with Trump, including making several visits to the White House.

Now the US President is widely expected to be the first ever recipient of the FIFA Peace Prize, which will be awarded during the draw ceremony, "to recognize the enormous efforts of those individuals who unite people, bringing hope for future generations," as Infantino put it. Even the choice of draw venue is a nod to Trump, who earlier this year installed himself as chairman of the Kennedy Center, a performing arts venue opened in the early 1970s. Holding the draw there also means the US capital gets to play an active role in the World Cup itself having been overlooked as a match venue.

The ceremony will be co-hosted by supermodel Heidi Klum and American actor and comedian Kevin Hart, and will feature performances by Village People, Andrea Bocelli and Robbie Williams. NFL legend Tom Brady, ice hockey icon Wayne Gretzky and former NBA superstar Shaquille O'Neal will be among the stars helping to conduct



the draw. Trump has made the World Cup a centerpiece event of both his second presidency and the 250th anniversary of US independence next year. But he has not hesitated to inject domestic politics into the preparations, threatening to move World Cup matches from Democratic-run cities if he deems conditions to be "unsafe". "I would call Gianni, the head of FIFA, who's phe-

nomenal, and I would say, let's move it to another location. And he would do that," Trump said recently. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum will also be in attendance at the ceremony. Eleven of the 16 World Cup venues are in the United States, with three in Mexico and two in Canada. Iran U-turn The political element to the draw saw

Iran vow to boycott the ceremony because the United States refused to grant visas to several members of its delegation. Iranian Football Federation president Mehdi Taj denounced the USA's decision as "purely political". Iran subsequently announced on Wednesday that it would now send representatives, including head coach Amir Ghalenoei.

Lionel Messi's Argentina are the reigning champions after winning the World Cup for the third time in Qatar in 2022. They will be among the top seeds along with European champions Spain, record five-time winners Brazil, France, Germany, England, Portugal, the Netherlands and Belgium. The three host nations complete the first pot of seeds.

The decision to expand the tournament has also cleared the way for several first-time qualifiers, including Cape Verde, Jordan and Curacao. 'Monster' But it is not to everyone's liking – "The monster has been unleashed," is how former FIFA chief Sepp Blatter described the 48-team format in an interview with CBS. The teams will be split into 12 groups of four, with the top two from each advancing alongside the eight best third-placed sides to the last 32. For the first time, the draw will be done so as to ensure the four highest-ranked nations are kept apart – Spain, Argentina, France and England will not be able to meet before the semi-finals, if all four top their groups. Six places at the finals are still to be decided in playoffs, the winners of which will be among the bottom seeds – the favourites will therefore want to avoid Italy, World Cup winners as recently as 2006 but who failed to qualify for the last two tournaments.

Trump administration launches immigration crackdown in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS: The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched an immigration crackdown on Wednesday in New Orleans, the latest Democratic-run city to be targeted by the Trump administration. "The men and women of DHS law enforcement have landed in The Big Easy," DHS Secretary Kristi Noem said on X, using the nickname for the Louisiana city. Noem said Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents "will remove the worst of the worst from New Orleans, Louisiana, after the city's sanctuary politicians have ignored the rule of law." Sanctuary policies enacted by the local authorities in New Orleans limit the cooperation of local law enforcement with federal immigration agents. The DHS crackdown in New Orleans comes a day after President Donald Trump said he plans to send National Guard troops to the southern US city, an action he has taken previously in Los Angeles, Washington and Memphis. "We're going to New Orleans pretty soon," Trump said. "The governor called me. He'd like to have us go there. He's asked for help in New Orleans and we're going to go there in a couple of weeks." Trump has said the troops are needed in the cities to combat crime and assist with the sweeping immigration crackdown he pledged to carry out during his White House campaign. Critics dispute that, with the mayors of Los Angeles and Memphis both saying the troops are not needed. The governor of Louisiana is a Republican but the mayor-elect of New Orleans is a Democrat. Mayor-elect Helena Moreno, who takes up her post on January 12, expressed concern on Wednesday about how immigration raids have been carried out in other cities. – Agencies

Chinese FM meets with French FM

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on Wednesday in Beijing. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, mentioned French President Emmanuel Macron's fourth state visit to China. Every meeting between the two heads of state is not only a major event in China-France relations but also attracts close attention from the international community, he said. In the face of the current intricate global challenges, it is necessary for China and France to enhance communication and cooperation and shoulder their common responsibility as major countries and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, Wang said, noting that it is believed that through the joint efforts. – APP

Ex-special counsel in Trump cases summoned

WASHINGTON: Former Special Counsel Jack Smith was summoned on Wednesday to appear before a Republican-led House committee looking into his prosecution of US President Donald Trump. Representative Jim Jordan, the Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, issued a subpoena to Smith ordering him to testify on December 17. Smith had requested that his testimony be delivered in public, but the committee has opted instead to have him depose behind closed doors. Trump was accused by Smith of mishandling classified documents after leaving the White House and plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Neither case came to trial and Smith – in line with a Justice Department policy of not prosecuting a sitting president – dropped them both after Trump won the

November 2024 presidential election. Trump, speaking to reporters at the White House on Wednesday, called Smith a "thug" and an "evil man" and said he would like to see him testify publicly. "I'd rather see him testify publicly, because there's no way he can answer the questions," he said. Since taking office for the second time, Trump has urged the Justice Department to bring cases against Smith and a number of other perceived political opponents. Cases brought against Trump foes James Comey, a former FBI director, and New York Attorney General Letitia James collapsed last month after a judge ruled that the prosecutor who brought the charges was unlawfully appointed.

Representative Jamie Raskin, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, criticized the decision by the Republicans on the oversight panel not to allow Smith to testify publicly. "What are our col-

leagues so afraid of, that they won't let the American people hear directly from the Special Counsel?" Raskin said in a statement.

"The American people deserve to hear the full unvarnished truth about Special Counsel Smith's years-long effort to investigate and prosecute the crimes committed by Donald Trump and his co-conspirators," he said. "Judiciary Committee Republicans want to force the Special Counsel into the shadows of a backroom interrogation and subject him to the tiresome and loathsome partisan tactics of leak-and-distort, when the American public is demanding transparency and a public hearing," Raskin added. Peter Koski, Smith's lawyer, also expressed disappointment that his client would not be allowed to testify publicly. "Nearly six weeks ago Jack offered to voluntarily appear before the House Judiciary committee in an open hearing. – Agencies

Indonesian President arrives...

FROM PAGE 01
cooperation in trade, investment, culture, and people-to-people exchanges. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended the invitation during their meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Govt bars Imran...

FROM PAGE 01
The minister said that they, too, used to visit prisoners, but "never created a law and order situation". Tarar vowed to establish the writ of the state, saying there would be no more "spectacles outside Adiala every day". "Meetings have a purpose – to ask about well being," he said, adding that the PTI founder, during the meetings, says that the state should be brought down. "You want to weaken the country's defence? Damage its sovereignty? You want to challenge a state that defeated India?" he asked.

Meetings with...

FROM PAGE 01
Broadcasting Attallah Tarar in Islamabad this evening. The Law Minister emphasized that the PTI founder is a convicted prisoner and prison rules allow him only one meeting per week, with no more than six people and write letters. Further quoting the Jail Manual, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said political matters are not permitted during meetings with prisoners. He added that there must be no criticism of the jail administration or commentary regarding other inmates, stressing that such discussions will remain a private affair.

Man arrested in US is...

FROM PAGE 01
illegally possessing a machine gun, after police and federal agents uncovered a cache of weapons and ammunition from his car on November 24, the US Attorney's Office said. Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said that the arrested individual spent only a short period of time in Pakistan as an Afghan migrant. "Luqmaan Khan is an Afghan national who has spent most of his life in the US," he added. The US Attorney's Office said that Khan resisted arrest before police began a search of the vehicle, as they found a loaded 357-caliber handgun fitted with a conversion-brace kit, multiple extended magazines, a ballistic plate, and a notebook containing a layout of a building with entry and exit points under which the words "UD Police Station" were written.



ISLAMABAD: A worker of CDA is watering the plants on green belt along the Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital. – Online

Israeli crackdown on Palestinians reaching alarming levels

The cumulative effect, it warned, is a rapid shrinking of both physical and civic space for Palestinians, as settlement expansion and what the UN describes as Israel's "unlawful annexation" of the territory continue

UNITED NATIONS: The UN human rights office, OHCHR, has condemned an Israeli raid on the Union of Agricultural Work Committees in the occupied West Bank, warning that pressure on Palestinian civil society has reached alarming levels. Israeli security forces raided the organization's offices in Ramallah and Hebron on 1 December, vandalizing property and detaining staff. According to OHCHR, people present in the buildings were blindfolded, handcuffed and made to kneel or lie on the floor for several hours. Eight men were detained. The union (UAWC) is licensed under Palestinian law and has supported farmers and rural communities for decades

– particularly those facing settler violence or the threat of forced displacement. The group is one of six Palestinian NGOs labelled "terrorist" by Israeli authorities in 2021 under legislation the UN says is overly broad and allows for sweeping, unjustified restrictions on civil society. The rights office stressed that Israel has not presented evidence to back up the allegations. The raid followed several weeks of harassment and public incitement by Israeli settlers and settler leaders who targeted UAWC during the peak of the olive harvest. This year's harvest has been the most violent on record: by mid-November, OHCHR had documented 167 settler attacks affect-

ing 87 Palestinian communities.

Violence has increasingly extended beyond farmers themselves. Since 1 October, the UN office has recorded 81 violations by settlers and Israeli security forces against human rights defenders, volunteers providing protective presence, and NGOs supporting communities targeted by settler violence or threatened by settlement expansion. These include 48 arrests or detentions, and 22 physical assaults. OHCHR said unnecessary or disproportionate force, arbitrary detention, and ill-treatment remain common features of Israeli security operations in the West Bank. The cumulative effect, it warned, is a rapid shrinking of both

physical and civic space for Palestinians, as settlement expansion and what the UN describes as Israel's "unlawful annexation" of the territory continue.

Ajith Sunghay, head of OHCHR in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said the international legal position is unequivocal: "Israel must end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and remove all settlers in accordance with the conclusions of the International Court of Justice."

"As an occupying power, Israel has clear duties under international law," he added, including respecting and protecting Palestinians' rights to earn a living and to exercise freedom of expression and association.

Briefs

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs280.45 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs280.46.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 281.4 and Rs 283.25, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 67 paisa to close at Rs 327.17, from the previous day's close of Rs 326.50, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.80, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs2.71 and closed at Rs 374.12 compared to the previous day's Rs 371.41. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham increased by 01 paisa and closed at Rs76.36, while the Saudi Riyal came down up by 01 paisa to close at Rs 74.72.—APP

Gold price
drops by
Rs1,700 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices of per tola 24-karat gold on Thursday dropped by Rs1,700 per tola to Rs441,462, compared to Rs.443,162, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold fell by Rs1,457 to Rs378,482, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold were priced at Rs346,954 after a decrease of Rs1,336. In the international market, gold slipped by \$17, settling at \$4,191 per ounce. Similarly, the price of 24-karat silver per tola decreased by Rs85 to Rs6,000, while the rate for 10 grams dipped by Rs72 to Rs5,144. International silver also fell by \$0.85 to \$57.28 per ounce.—APP

EU updates
asylum
guidance for
Syrians

BARCELONA, Spain: The European Union on Wednesday issued updated guidance for asylum applications by Syrian nationals that reflects new conditions in Syria a year after the fall of the Bashar Assad. The changes may influence the result of asylum requests of some 110,000 Syrians who were still awaiting an asylum decision at the end of September. The European Union Agency for Asylum said opponents of Assad and military service evaders "are no longer at risk of persecution." But the agency said other groups may be considered at risk in the post-Assad Syria, including people affiliated with the former government and members of the Alawites, Christians, and Druze ethnic-religious groups. While decisions on asylum applications are made at a national level, the agency's guidance is used to inform the 27 EU member states, as well as Norway and Switzerland. The goal is to create greater coherence between the 29 nations granting international protection. The number of Syrians requesting asylum dropped significantly from 16,000 in October 2024, before the fall of Assad, to 3,500 in September 2025. Still, Syrians had the most number of cases awaiting a decision at first instance. Syria's conflict that began in March 2011 killed nearly half a million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million. More than 5 million Syrians fled the country as refugees. While most sought refuge in neighboring countries like Turkey, many also went to Europe, contributing to the continent's refugee crisis in 2015. Between 2012 and June 2025, EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland granted refugee status to around 704,900 applicants from Syria in first instance decisions, according to the European asylum agency. The EUIA said the situation in Syria is "considered improved but volatile" since Assad's fall in December 2024, and that "discriminate violence continues to take place" in certain parts of Syria.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ireland Mary O'Neil, Global CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani and others posing for a picture on the occasion of a talk by Prof. Salima Hashmi organized by the Satrang Art Gallery, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. DNA

Govt to ensure safety compliance
for imported vehicles

Haroon Akhtar Khan said that the auto industry plays a crucial role in Pakistan's large-scale manufacturing sector. He assured the delegation that the government is fully aware of the industry's concerns regarding the import of used vehicles

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday assured the representative of the auto industry to review key issues confronting the sector, saying that the government will ensure the safety and environmental compliance for all imported used vehicles. Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production Saif Anjum and CEO Engineering Development Board (EDB) Hammad Mansoor also attended the meeting, said a news release. During the meeting, the partici-

pants discussed the challenges facing the auto sector, the import of used vehicles, and matters related to local manufacturing. Representatives of the Pakistan Auto Manufacturers Association emphasized that tax reforms and effective control over used car imports could help stabilize domestic production. They cautioned that liberal policies on used car imports could undermine the hard-earned gains made by the local auto industry. Haroon Akhtar Khan said that the auto industry plays a crucial role in Pakistan's large-scale manufacturing

sector. He assured the delegation that the government is fully aware of the industry's concerns regarding the import of used vehicles. He further said that, on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, new legislation and regulatory frameworks will be introduced to address these issues comprehensively. "Only those used vehicles that meet safety and environmental standards will be allowed to enter Pakistan," Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized. He added that open competition would promote efficiency and lead the auto sector toward low-cost

and competitive local manufacturing. Secretary Industries Saif Anjum informed the meeting that for commercial imports, three years of overseas residency and one-year registration under the owner's name will remain mandatory requirements. He further said that the safety and quality standards of imported vehicles will be verified through pre-shipment inspections. Haroon Akhtar Khan concluded that the new regulations will ensure transparency and merit-based competition in the auto market.—DNA

Gaza civil
defense says
5 killed in
Israel strike

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defense agency told AFP on Wednesday that an Israeli strike on the Palestinian territory killed five people including two children. The Israeli military said it had struck a " Hamas terrorist" in southern Gaza in response to a clash with Palestinian militants in the area that wounded five soldiers. "Five citizens, including two children, killed and others injured, some seriously, as a result of an Israeli missile strike" in Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Yunis, civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP. The agency said the strike hit near the Kuwaiti Field Hospital in Khan Yunis and "targeted" a shelter camp. The hospital also reported that five people, including two children aged eight and 10, were killed and another 32 were wounded. A fragile US-brokered ceasefire that came into effect on October 10 has largely halted the fighting between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas, but both sides have accused each other of violating its terms.—APP

Libya war
crimes suspect
makes first
appearance

THE HAGUE: A Libyan prison boss accused of overseeing murder, rape, and torture at a notorious detention center appeared at the International Criminal Court Wednesday to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Khaled Mohamed Ali El Hishri, 47, sat impassively dressed in a dark blue jacket and light blue shirt, confirming his name and date of birth before the three-woman judging panel. He stands accused of six counts of war crimes and six crimes against humanity, including torture, murder, rape, sexual violence, and persecution between February 2015 and early 2020 at the notorious Mitiga prison near Tripoli.

The ICC, which tries individuals for the world's worst crimes, believes there are "reasonable grounds" to believe he personally killed one detainee at the prison, which he ran with an iron fist. A "significant number" of people died during El Hishri's time there, either from torture, being left outside in winter, untreated injuries, or starvation, the court said. ICC judges believe at least five detainees, including a 15-year-old boy, were raped by guards or other prisoners. Women prisoners were also subjected to sexual abuse, the court alleged. The court alleges El Hishri took part in "personally torturing, mistreating, sexually abusing and killing detainees" and also "exercised his authority over all Mitiga prison staff and detainees." The suspect "imposed prison conditions aimed at increasing the detainees' suffering," alleged the court, which said "several thousand" were held there. Detainees were tortured on arrival and at regular times during their stay.—APP

UN Assembly tells
Russia to return
captive Ukrainian kids

UNITED NATIONS, United States: The UN General Assembly called for the immediate and unconditional return of Ukrainian children "forcibly transferred" to Russia — a delicate issue as Kyiv and Moscow try to negotiate an end to the fighting. The assembly adopted the non-binding resolution by a vote of 91-12, with 57 abstentions. Russia was among the states rejecting the measure. The resolution "demands that the Russian Federation ensure the immediate, safe and unconditional return of all Ukrainian children who have been forcibly transferred or deported." It also calls on Moscow to "cease, without delay, any further practice of forcible transfer, deportation, separation from families and legal guardians, change of personal status, including through citizenship, adoption or placement in foster families, and indoctrination of Ukrainian children." Ukraine has accused Russia of abducting at least 20,000 Ukrainian children since the start of the conflict in February 2022. Mariana Betsa, Ukraine's deputy foreign minister, said Russia was responsible for "the largest state abduction operation in history." So far, more than 1,850 children have been found and returned home. "There will be no just peace in Ukraine without the immediate unconditional return of our children back home," Betsa said from the podium before the vote. While Russia admits that some children were taken from combat zones for their own protection, Moscow's deputy UN envoy Maria Zabolotskaya slammed the resolution as "full of mendacious accusations." "Each vote for the resolution is a support for lies, war, and confrontation. Every voice against is a vote for peace," she said. The vote in the UN General Assembly came as the United States — which voted for the resolution — tries to get both Russia and Ukraine to agree to its plan to end the war. But efforts to find a compromise have repeatedly stalled, while on the front lines, the Russian military continues to slowly advance — albeit with significant losses.—APP

Iranian envoy calls
on Hanif Abbasi

Pak-Iran Ties Strengthened as Envoys Agree to Resume ITI Train, Boost Trade, Enhance Regional Connectivity, and Deepen Cooperation During Meeting Between Iranian Ambassador and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Railways

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam Thursday called on Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi here. Iranian Commercial Counsellor, Ms. Kamali Moghaddam also attended the meeting, said a news release. The meeting focused on strengthening Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations, enhancing political, economic and trade cooperation, and appreciating the sustained goodwill between the two countries. Both sides expressed gratitude over the positive engagement and mutual support. During the meeting, both parties agreed to resume the Is-

lamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Train within this year, a key step towards revitalizing regional connectivity and boosting cross-border trade.

MARSEW 2025: Shaping Pakistan's
maritime consciousness and strategic future

ALI BASIT

Across the globe, maritime nations have steadily expanded the scope of dedicated maritime workshops, recognising that the oceans are no longer peripheral spaces but central theatres of economic opportunity, strategic competition, and environmental vulnerability. From Europe's annual Sea Power Conferences to the Indo-Pacific's naval security forums and Singapore's International Maritime Security Conferences, these forums serve a common purpose: to align national stakeholders on the complexities of maritime governance. They bring together policymakers, naval experts, researchers, industry leaders, port authorities and coastal communities to discuss issues that range from maritime security to the prospects of Blue-Economy, law of the sea, and crisis-response mechanisms. For many advanced maritime countries, such workshops are not ceremonial gatherings but strategic instruments - they help set maritime priorities, build cross-institutional understanding and ensure that national policies keep pace with evolving global maritime realities. In an era marked by climate change, resource competition, geopolitical tension, cyber threats and

the constant pressure on global supply chains, countries that institutionalise such forums inevitably build stronger maritime resilience. Pakistan's own maritime landscape demands similar attention, perhaps more urgently. The country's 1,000-kilometre coastline, its vast Exclusive Economic Zone, the strategic location astride key shipping routes and the gateway role of Gwadar place Pakistan at the crossroads of major economic and geopolitical dynamics. Yet, the maritime sector's potential - estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually - remains underutilised due to low maritime awareness, fragmented policymaking, and insufficient public-sector coordination. The oceans offer opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture, shipbuilding, coastal tourism, renewable energy, seabed minerals, marine biotechnology and international trade. At the same time, the maritime domain presents high-stakes security challenges: piracy risks, smuggling networks, illegal fishing, environmental degradation, coastal vulnerabilities, maritime terrorism and growing naval militarisation in the Indian Ocean Region. In this complex matrix, a country cannot afford ad-hoc decision-making. It requires a maritime-conscious leadership that can think beyond land-centric

paradigms and recognise that national prosperity and security are intertwined with what happens at sea. This is where Pakistan Navy's Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW) has, over the years, proven to be a transformative intervention. Now entering its eighth edition, MARSEW has become one of the country's most important platforms for bridging the gap between maritime potential and national-level understanding. Organised by the Maritime Centre of Excellence (MCE) at the Pakistan Navy War College in Lahore, the workshop stands out as it brings together civil administrators, parliamentarians, corporate leaders, scholars, media professionals and security specialists. For a nation where maritime matters often remain overshadowed by land-based narratives, this initiative provides the necessary reset. MARSEW participants interact with maritime experts, naval officers, policymakers, economists, technologists and environmental specialists through structured talks, seminars and focused discussions. These sessions introduce them to the core elements of maritime security, the dynamics of the Blue Economy, the intricacies of national maritime policy and the global trends shaping the Indian Ocean

Region. This academic component is complemented by field visits to Naval Headquarters and major maritime institutions. What makes MARSEW particularly impactful is its multi-sectoral participation. It dismantles the artificial divide between sea professionals and land-centric policymakers. When a corporate executive sits next to a naval commander, when an academic listens to a fisheries expert, or when a parliamentarian exchanges ideas with a port authority representative, a shared understanding begins to take shape. This cross-pollination of perspectives is the kind of national integration that maritime policy desperately requires. Decisions about ports, shipping, environment, trade, coastal development or maritime technology cannot be taken in isolation; they demand input from every sector. MARSEW provides that collective space. The benefits of such a workshop extend far beyond its 11 day duration. Participants leave with an expanded horizon - many for the first time recognise the staggering wealth of the maritime domain and the scale of vulnerabilities that accompany it. They return to their institutions better equipped to advocate for maritime reforms, influence policy,

and integrate coastal considerations into national planning. For government officers, it becomes easier to justify budgetary allocations once they understand the strategic significance of maritime security. For corporate leaders, the workshop opens doors to maritime investment opportunities. For academics, it sparks research agendas that can enrich the national discourse. And for media professionals, it provides the context necessary for responsible and informed maritime reporting. At a deeper level, MARSEW builds maritime consciousness - a mindset that promotes the ocean not as a distant frontier but as the foundation of Pakistan's economic future and strategic stability. By fostering dialogue, nurturing expertise and connecting diverse stakeholders, the 8th Maritime Security Workshop is poised to continue playing a pivotal role in shaping a maritime-literate leadership for Pakistan. As global competition intensifies in the Indian Ocean and as Blue-Economy opportunities grow, Pakistan will need such platforms to ensure its maritime narrative is forward-looking, coordinated and nationally owned. MARSEW, in this regard, is not just a workshop; it is an investment in the country's future.

Briefs

Pakistan-UK relations and security cooperation discussed in meeting

Pak-UK relations, security cooperation discussed in meeting between Interior Minister and British High Commissioner

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a significant meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott on Thursday focusing on bilateral relations, security cooperation, and issues of mutual interest. The discussions also covered the return of Pakistanis residing illegally in the UK.

In the meeting, documents for the extradition of Shehzad Akbar and Adil Raja were handed over on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. Minister Naqvi emphasized the need for their immediate repatriation, stating that both individuals are wanted in Pakistan and should be handed over without delay. Minister Naqvi also provided substantial evidence against Pakistani citizens involved in propaganda activities. He affirmed Pakistan's commitment to freedom of expression but cautioned that fake news is a problem for every country.

"No country can allow defamation and slander against its state and institutions from abroad," he said.

Highlighting the importance of international cooperation, Naqvi welcomed the UK's support in repatriating those spreading anti-Pakistan propaganda. The Interior Ministry has also initiated the extradition process through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Federal Secretary Interior Mohammad Khurram Agha and other senior officials were present during the meeting.

ATC Rawalpindi Adjourns Aleema Khan Protest Case Hearing

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Rawalpindi on Thursday adjourned the hearing of a November 26 protest case until December 8. The case, registered at Sadiqabad police station, names several PTI leaders and workers, including Aleema Khanum, sister of PTI founder, among the accused. During today's proceedings before ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah, Aleema Khan appeared in person, marking her attendance as required. The prosecution team, led by the Prosecutor Zaheer Shah, along with a witness, was also present in court. Defense counsel Faisal Malik requested the court for adjournment, citing the strike by lawyers. He requested the next hearing be fixed for Thursday, December 11. Special Prosecutor Zaheer Shah opposed any further delay, pointing out that conviction was formally framed against the accused on October 15, and subsequent hearings have repeatedly been postponed. — APP

Azerbaijan, Iran explore relations

BAKU: Ali Alizadeh, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Iran, met with Iran's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vahid Jalalzadeh, as well as Ali Akbar Nazari, Director General of Protocols at the Ministry, and Manouchehr Moradi, Director General for Eurasia at the Iranian Ministry. Ambassador Ali Alizadeh introduced Taleh Zohrabov, the newly appointed Consul General of Azerbaijan in Tabriz, to the Iranian delegation. The sides also exchanged views on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. Additionally, it was noted that the new Consul General, Taleh Zohrabov, handed over his consul patent to Ali Akbar Nazari. — APP

NATIONAL DAY OF THAILAND



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Bilal Azhar Kayani State Minister for Finance, Federal Minister Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh, Ambassador of Thailand Rongvudhi VIRABUTR and others posing for a picture on the occasion of the National Day of Kingdom of Thailand. — DNA

Donald Trump says Russian President wants to end war

The Kremlin said afterward it found parts of the US plan to end the war unacceptable, even though the proposal includes Ukraine ceding parts of the eastern Donbas region it still holds nearly four years after Russia's invasion

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Wednesday he believes Russia's Vladimir Putin wants to end the Ukraine war despite inconclusive talks in Moscow, as US officials prepared for a follow-up meeting with Kyiv's top negotiator. Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner huddled into the early hours with Putin in the Kremlin but reached no breakthrough on halting Europe's worst conflict since World War II. The Kremlin said afterward it found parts of the US plan to end the war unacceptable, even though the proposal includes Ukraine ceding parts of the eastern Donbas region it still holds nearly four years after Russia's invasion. "I can tell you that they had a reasonably good meeting with President Putin," Trump said when an AFP reporter asked him about the talks, adding afterwards that the talks were "very good." Trump said it was too soon to tell what would happen "because it does take two to tango." Pressed on whether Witkoff and Kushner got any sense that Putin genuinely wanted to halt Russia's nearly four-year-old invasion, Trump replied: "He would like to end the war. That was their impression." Trump added that Ukraine "pretty well" backed the US proposal, although he added that Kyiv should have done so earlier when he had a notoriously heated



meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval office in February. Witkoff and Kushner were now due to meet top Ukrainian negotiator Rustem Umerov in Florida on Thursday, two US officials told AFP, to follow up on the Kremlin talks. But while the White House had voiced optimism ahead of the Kremlin talks, Moscow said that the two sides had failed to reach a compromise and that more work was needed. The Kremlin added Wednesday that its army's recent battlefield successes in Ukraine had bolstered its position and that Kyiv's ties to NATO remained a key question.

Russia's advance in eastern Ukraine gathered pace last month and Putin has said in recent days that Moscow is ready to fight on to seize the rest of the land it claims if Kyiv does not surrender it. "The progress and nature of the negotiations were influenced by the successes of the Russian army on the battlefield in recent weeks," Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov, who took part in the US-Russia talks, told reporters, including AFP. Moscow insisted it was incorrect to say Putin rejected the plan in its entirety. It also said Russia was still committed to diplomacy, despite Putin's stark warning earlier this week that Moscow was prepared to fight Europe if it wanted war. "We are still ready to meet as many times as is needed to reach a peace settlement," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. — Agencies

Gen-Z battles to gain political ground after ousting ex-PM Hasina in Bangladesh

NCP's failure to win single seat in student body election at Dhaka Uni reflects growing disenchantment

DHAKA: Thousands in Bangladesh flocked to hear the plans of the students who toppled long-time leader Sheikh Hasina when they launched a new political party this year, but now it finds itself struggling to translate the street power into votes. Fighting to deliver on its promise to free the nation from decades of nepotism and two-party dominance, the student-led NCP faces entrenched rivals with deep networks and resources as polls approach in February. "Our organisation is weak because we haven't had enough time to build it," said its chief Nahid Islam, prominent in last year's deadly anti-government

protests who served briefly in the caretaker administration under Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. "We are aware of this, but we are still taking on the challenge," added the 27-year-old, speaking from the party office in a high-rise in Dhaka, the capital, where one wall was covered in graffiti depicting crowds in revolt. Opinion polls show the NCP, which aims to contest all 300 seats, in third place, with support of just 6%, far behind BNP of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, which leads with 30%. Even the Jamaate-Islami will do better than the NCP, coming in second with 26%, a December poll by a US-based non-profit, the International Republican Institute, showed. "When they first launched, I saw hope in them, like everyone," said Prapti Taposhi, 25, who helped lead the revolt and looked to the newcomers to break decades of rule by two dominant parties, only to say she was eventually disappointed. — APP

Govt initiates process for Shahzad, Raja's extradition

Mohsin Naqvi submits documents to UK envoy, says no country can allow slander and defamation of state

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has initiated the extradition process for former special assistant to the prime minister Mirza Shahzad Akbar and Major (retd) Adil Raja from

the United Kingdom, both of whom are wanted in different cases. The development came during Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's meeting with UK High Commissioner Jane Marriott where the former took up the issue of the extradition of Pakistanis residing illegally in the UK.



Handing over the extradition papers to the British envoy, Naqvi said that both the individuals are "wanted in Pakistan" and therefore "should be immediately handed over [to Pakistani authorities]". "I fully believe in freedom of expression, but fake news is a problem for every country," the minister noted as he also presented evidence of Pakistani citizens living abroad involved in spreading propaganda. "No country can allow slander and defamation of the state and institutions from abroad," the security czar remarked while underscoring that Pakistan will "welcome" UK's cooperation in anti-Pakistan propaganda. Meanwhile, The Ministry of Interior has also initiated the process of extradition of these individuals via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Air pollution draining \$22bn a year from Pakistan's economy

Senator Sherry Rehman says smog affecting 11 million children under five in Punjab

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Air pollution has been costing Pakistan \$22 billion annually, an amount equal to 6.5% of the national gross domestic product (GDP), said Senator Sherry Rehman during a Senate meeting on Thursday. Chairing a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, the senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader highlighted the severe effects of climate change on the country's financial and human capital. "Previous statistics showed 128,000 pollution-related deaths annually, but fresh data places the figure at 256,000 deaths every year," she said during the meeting. Sponsored Content. A woman inherits her father's old barn and discovers a note telling her to open the cellar door. Tips and Tricks Senator Rehman explained that while fog is a natural winter phenomenon, smog is a toxic mix of chemical pollutants, warning that pollution now claims more lives than terrorism. The PPP leader lamented Lahore's repeated appearance on the list for cities with dangerous air quality. According to her, emissions from brick kilns, industries, and vehicles continue to worsen the country's air quality.

Pakistan partially opens Afghan border crossings for UN cargoes

Limited border opening comes amid growing shortages of food supplies and medicines in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: After nearly 50 days of closure, Pakistan has reopened the Torkham and Chaman border crossings with Afghanistan for United Nations humanitarian cargoes. Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi confirmed that the Pakistan-Afghan border has been partially opened for UN aid on humanitarian grounds. However, he clarified that the trade was still suspended, further noting that, "We have no problem with the Afghan people". The confirmation comes after the sources said that the Ministry of Commerce had reached the decision to open the borders in consultation with the FO. The limited border opening comes amid growing shortages of food supplies and medicines in Afghanistan following the prolonged suspension of cross-border trade. To facilitate the process, the Ministry of Commerce has issued a formal letter to the Member Customs (Operations), Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) Islamabad, and the Director General Transit Trade, FBR Karachi. The letter requests that all necessary measures be taken to enable the smooth movement of UN humanitarian containers. According to the communication, Pakistan — after coordination with the Foreign Office — has approved a phased clearance of containers belonging to Unicef, World Food Programme (WFP), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In the first phase, containers carrying food supplies for Afghanistan will cross the border, which will be followed by allowing the transportation of containers carrying medicines and medical equipment in the second phase. — Agencies