



# Islamabad POST

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**Armed forces are committed, ready to protect homeland**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Iranian envoy All praise for Quaid role**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Interior minister urges nation to follow Quaid**

Detailed News On Page-04



## Briefs

**Jordanian CJCS calls on COAS**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency Major General Yousef Ahmed A. Al Huneiti, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) of the Jordan Armed Forces, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), at the General Headquarters (GHQ) here on Thursday. During the meeting, the two senior military leaders held comprehensive discussions on matters of mutual interest, the prevailing regional security environment, and prospects for further strengthening bilateral defence and military cooperation. Both sides exchanged views on evolving security challenges and emphasized the need for closer coordination, experience sharing, and collaborative approaches to promote peace and stability in the region. The visiting Jordanian CJCS highly appreciated the professionalism, operational preparedness, and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces, and lauded their significant contributions towards regional and global peacekeeping efforts.

**UAE president visit significant**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will undertake official visit to Pakistan on Friday. The UAE President is undertaking this visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. This will be his first visit to Pakistan as the President of United Arab Emirates. He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Ministers and senior officials. During the visit, the UAE President will hold a meeting with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where the two leaders will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. The visit will provide an important opportunity to further strengthen the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

**Pak, ADB sign \$730m accords**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday signed financing agreements for two major initiatives involving a combined amount of \$730 million, aimed at strengthening Pakistan's power infrastructure and advancing reforms in the public sector. The agreements cover the Second Power Transmission Strengthening Project, with financing of \$330 million, and the Accelerating State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) Transformation Program, amounting to \$400 million, read a statement issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs. Ministry of Economic Affairs Secretary Muhammad Humair Karim expressed appreciation for ADB's role as a trusted development partner and its continued support to Pakistan in advancing critical infrastructure and governance reforms. He highlighted that the transmission project will enable reliable evacuation of 2,300 MW from upcoming hydropower projects.

**PM Shehbaz says**

## Govt commits to safeguarding minority rights

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tribute to the Christian community's historic and ongoing contributions to Pakistan's development, particularly in the fields of education, healthcare, defence and the justice system

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reaffirmed the government's firm commitment to safeguarding the constitutional rights of minorities, declaring that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens irrespective of faith. The prime minister was addressing a Christmas ceremony held here at the Prime Minister's Office. Speaking at the event, the prime minister highlighted the teachings of Jesus Christ (Hazrat Isa A.S.), describing him as a symbol of peace, compassion and service to humanity. He said the message of love, justice and tolerance preached by Jesus Christ was deeply relevant in the present age and aligned with the core principles of Islam and Pakistan's founding vision. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tribute to the Christian community's historic and ongoing contributions to Pakistan's development, particularly in the fields of education, healthcare, defence and the justice system. He specifically acknowledged Justice A.R. Cornelius, former Chief Justice of Pakistan, for his exemplary role in strengthening the country's judicial system; Air Commodore Cecil Chaudhry (Shaheed) for his valour and services in the defence of Pakistan; and Dr. Ruth Pfau for her extraordinary humanitarian work in healthcare, especially her lifelong fight against leprosy in the country. The prime minister also recalled the sacrifice of

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**President, PM renew call to follow Quaid's vision**

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The nation is celebrating the 149th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on Thursday with a renewed pledge to uphold his guiding principles of faith, unity, and discipline. Thursday is being observed as a public holiday across the country. The day began with gun salutes in the federal and provincial capitals, while special prayers were offered in mosques after Fajr for the departed soul of the Father of the Nation and for peace, prosperity, and development of the country. The national flag is being hoisted on public and private buildings nationwide. Pakistan Army cadets have assumed guard duties at Mazar-e-Quaid following a dignified change of guard ceremony held on the occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Day. The ceremony took place at the mausoleum of Jinnah, where a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Army presented a salute. Major General Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry was the chief guest at the event.

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**Fina al Hindustan**

## Forces kill 10 militants in separate operations

Militants linked to Fitna al Khawarij attempted to ambush the security convoy near a residential locality, they said, adding that security forces responded swiftly, thwarting the attack

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's security forces say they conducted an intelligence-based operation in the Kalat District of Balochistan on 24 December, targeting what they described as members of "Fitna al Hindustan," an alleged India-backed militant outfit. According to an official statement, troops engaged a suspected militant hide-out, leading to an intense exchange of fire in which eight alleged militants were killed. The military reported recovering weapons, ammunition, and explosives from the site. Authorities said those killed were linked to multiple attacks in the area. Follow-on "sanitization" operations are underway to locate any additional suspects in the vicinity, the statement added. Officials framed the action as part of the broader counterterrorism drive under the "Azm-e-Istehkam" initiative, approved by the Federal Apex Committee

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## President, PM laud security forces

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid rich tribute to the security forces for successfully carrying out an intelligence-based operation against Indian proxy militants of Fitna-al-Hindustan in Qalat district of Balochistan, terming the operation a strong message to enemies of peace and stability. In a statement issued by the Presidency, the president said the elimination of terrorists backed by India demonstrated the resolve of Pakistan's

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## From standoff to strategic depth: Pak growing regional influence

President Trump has frequently lauded Munir as a "highly respected general" and a "great fighter," credits him with helping to avert a broader nuclear escalation in the region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a striking geopolitical realignment at the close of 2025, recent reports suggest that the United States is once again placing its strategic weight behind Pakistan, a move that has granted Islamabad a significant vantage position in the South Asian region. This shift is deeply rooted in the personal rapport between U.S. President Donald Trump and Pakistan's military leadership, particularly Field Marshal Asim Munir. Following the intense May 2025 military clash with India, Munir was promoted to the historic five-star rank—the first in decades—and has since been hosted multiple times at the White House. President Trump has frequently lauded Munir as a "highly respected general" and a "great fighter," credits him with helping to avert a broader nuclear escalation in the region. This warming of U.S.-Pakistan ties stands in stark contrast to Washington's relations with New Delhi, which have hit an all-time low. Strained by heavy U.S. tariffs on Indian goods and disagreements over strategic autonomy, the once-solid

U.S.-India partnership is facing structural challenges. Pakistan now finds itself in a unique window of opportunity to capitalize on this diplomatic "bonhomie." To solidify this position, the Pakistani government must urgently move beyond security cooperation and aggressively encourage the U.S. government and private firms to invest in the country. So far, U.S. direct investment in Pakistan has remained nominal, largely overshadowed by bilateral aid and military cooperation. However, the current alignment under the Trump administration provides a rare moment of political stability that can be used to attract American capital into critical sectors like mining, IT, and energy. Field Marshal Munir's recent presentation of rare earth minerals to the White House exemplifies the potential for a resource-driven partnership. By securing increased U.S. investments, Pakistan can significantly improve global investor confidence, signaling that the country is not just a security partner but a viable economic frontier. For Pakistan, the path forward is clear: leverage this newfound strategic proximity to transform its economy through deep-rooted American commercial ties.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif cuts a cake at the Christmas ceremony at PM House, in Islamabad on 25 December 2025. – DNA

## PIA plans to resume UK flights from March

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Thursday announced expansion of UK flights with direct London operations set to resume from March next year, sources said. The national airline resumed UK operations in October after Britain lifted the five-year ban in July this year, allowing Pakistani airlines to apply to restart UK flights. The national airline has secured approval for four weekly flight slots at London's Heathrow Airport. These slots had previously been allocated to Turkish Airlines to keep them active while the national carrier's UK operations remained suspended.

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## Pope Leo XIV condemns 'open wounds' of wars

DNA

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV has condemned the "rubble and open wounds" left behind by wars, singling out the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza as he conducted his first Christmas homily. Fragile is the flesh of defenceless populations, tried by so many wars, ongoing or concluded, leaving behind rubble and open wounds," the pope said at the mass in St Peter's Basilica. "How [...] can we not think of the tents in Gaza, exposed for weeks to rain, wind and cold," he said. Meanwhile, Israel's parliament gave the initial go-ahead for a government-empowered inquiry into the surprise October 7, 2023 attack by

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## North Korea indicates progress in building nuclear submarine


The Vessel: Described as a "strategic nuclear attack submarine," the 8,700-ton vessel is roughly equivalent in size to the US Navy's Virginia-class attack submarines

DNA

PYONGYANG: In a significant Christmas Day display of military might, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a major shipyard to inspect the construction of an 8,700-ton-class nuclear-propelled submarine. The visit, reported by the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), underscores Pyongyang's accelerating efforts to modernize its naval forces with a "super-powerful offensive shield." The North Korean leader was accompanied by his daughter, Kim Ju Ae, reinforcing her status as a central figure in state affairs and a potential successor. Photos released by state media show the leader standing before a massive, burgundy-colored hull. Experts note that the ship appears to be in an advanced stage of construction. The Vessel: Described as a "strategic nuclear attack submarine," the 8,700-ton vessel is roughly equivalent in size to the U.S. Navy's Virginia-class attack submarines.


Current Stage: Analysts believe the welded hull indicates that core components, potentially including a small nuclear reactor, have already been installed. Strategic Intent: Kim described the submarine as an "epoch-making" development that will provide North Korea with an underwater second-strike capability, ensuring nuclear retaliation even if land-based silos are destroyed. Range and Altitude: The missile reportedly struck and destroyed mock targets at an altitude of 200 km (124 miles). Defense Modernization: This test is part of a broader strategy to upgrade the country's air defense network and protect strategic assets from modern aerial threats. Countering the "Offensive" US-South Korea Alliance. The surge in development comes as Kim Jong Un issued a stern warning to Seoul and Washington. He condemned South Korea's push to acquire its own nuclear-powered submarines—a program recently backed by

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## Ikhtiar for unity and democracy to secure Pakistan's prosperity

ISLAMABAD :Prime Minister's Coordinator Ikhtiar Wali Khan Thursday emphasized the need to follow Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's visionary principles on his birth anniversary, urging political unity and dialogue among all parties, including the opposition, to ensure Pakistan's progress and prosperity. While speaking with a local media channel, Ikhtiar Wali Khan stressed the importance of political maturity and unity, pointing out that the opposition's current behavior lacks the necessary dialogue and cooperation needed for the nation's progress. He emphasized that a collaborative approach is essential to strengthen the democratic fabric of the country. Wali Khan also paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, recalling his leadership and vision for a united, prosperous Pakistan. He urged all political parties to follow Jinnah's principles of faith, unity and discipline for the betterment of the nation. While responding to a question about Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's renewed offer of dialogue to the PTI, he criticized the party for rejecting the proposal and treating it lightly, saying their stance reflects immaturity and a refusal to engage constructively rather than pursue meaningful talks. He noted that despite repeated invitations from the government for dialogue on legitimate matters, the PTI has dismissed the overtures and instead focused on agitation, with some of its demands seen as unrealistic and contradictory to democratic norms. He said that in politics, following Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision means embracing democracy and dialogue as fundamental parts of political life for the nation's benefit.—APP

## Commissioner reviews healthcare services

MUZAFFARGARH: Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Division, Ishaq Ahmad Chaudhry on Thursday visited DHQ Hospital Muzaffargarh on Thursday to assess healthcare facilities and administrative arrangements. According to a spokesperson, during the visit, Medical Superintendent Dr. Naseer Ahmad briefed the Commissioner on patient load, availability of medicines and the functioning of different hospital departments. The Commissioner inspected emergency, medical and surgical wards and interacted with patients to evaluate the services provided. D. Naseer Ahmad assured him that essential medicines were available in sufficient quantities and that no shortages were being faced. Ishaq Ahmad Chaudhry expressed satisfaction over the availability of medicines and smooth functioning of wards, calling it a reflection of improved hospital management. He directed the administration to further enhance cleanliness, discipline and patient care, emphasizing that healthcare services should never be compromised. The Commissioner also stressed the importance of timely treatment, courteous staff behaviour and uninterrupted medical supplies to ensure quality healthcare for the public.—APP

# Naqvi visits Catholic Church, joins Christmas celebrations

The ceremony was attended by the Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Inspector General of Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner, and Additional Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, among other officials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday visited the Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Islamabad's F-8 Sector, where he was warmly received by Archbishop Joseph Arshad of Islamabad-Rawalpindi. The interior minister attended a special ceremony held in connection with Christmas celebrations. Children presented welcome flowers to the minister upon his arrival. Mohsin Naqvi, along with Archbishop Joseph Arshad and members of the Christian community, cut the Christmas cake to mark the occasion. Naqvi extended heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community and lit the "peace candle" together with church leaders and parish members. During the prayer service, children performed a welcome tableau, while



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi along with Archbishop Joseph Arshad and members of the Christian community, cutting the Christmas cake to mark the occasion. Inspectors General Of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz also present on occasion.

Christmas carols were also presented. Reverend Father Sylvester Joseph welcomed the minister on behalf of the Christian community and thanked him for joining the celebration. Addressing the ceremony, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Christmas is a festival of joy, love, and brotherhood. He reaffirmed that all communities living in Pakistan enjoy equal status, as envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Naqvi added that all Pakistanis have equal rights and stand united under the Quaid's guiding principles. He noted that fool-proof security arrangements had been ensured across the country for Christmas festivities. The ceremony was attended by the Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Inspector General of Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner, and Additional Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, among other officials.

## Media platforms buzz with homage to Quaid

ISLAMABAD: Media platforms across the country came alive Thursday with tributes to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as political leaders, educationists and young voices shared powerful messages honoring his role in shaping the nation and reaffirming the need to uphold his values of unity, peace, and progress. A report aired by PTV News captured the powerful tributes from politicians, senators, educationists, and youth on Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 149th birth anniversary. Political leaders and senators shared heartfelt comments, emphasizing Jinnah's vision for a united and prosperous Pakistan, and reaffirmed their commitment to his ideals of democracy, justice, and equality. Educationists from various universities across Pakistan also paid tribute, sharing impactful quotes that reflected

Quaid-e-Azam's enduring influence on education and nation-building. Their messages echoed across media platforms, reinforcing the importance of continuing his legacy for future generations, particularly among the youth. Young people expressed their admiration for Jinnah's vision of a united, inclusive and prosperous Pakistan. The youth reaffirmed their commitment to upholding his values of unity, faith and discipline, with many highlighting his enduring influence on their lives and the future of the nation. On Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birth anniversary, senior politicians from both PPP and PML-N took to media platforms to honor his legacy. PPP Senator Sherry Rehman praised Jinnah's unwavering commitment to democracy, unity and equal rights for all citizens, emphasizing that his vision

continues to guide the nation's path toward progress. She reaffirmed the party's dedication to upholding his values of justice, equality and freedom for minorities. Another Senior Politician Mushahid Hussain, in his tribute, highlighted Jinnah's leadership in the creation of Pakistan and his steadfast belief in a pluralistic society. He underscored the importance of preserving Quaid-e-Azam's ideals in modern-day Pakistan, calling for national unity and respect for democratic principles. Both senior politicians called on the youth to embrace Jinnah's vision of a strong, inclusive and prosperous Pakistan. Meanwhile, tributes also flooded social media platforms, with Facebook posts and TikTok videos sharing inspiring quotes and messages, further amplifying Quaid-e-Azam's legacy among young people.—DNA

## DC assures smooth Festive Weekend

Deputy Commissioner Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi Thursday expressed confidence in welcoming long-weekend tourists during the festive season, noting that, under Punjab CM's directives, facilitation centers, fireworks displays and economical rates for parking and hotels are fully prepared for visitors. While speaking exclusively with a local news channel, he said that by Thursday morning, around 5,000 tourist vehicles had smoothly entered Murree and more visitors are expected during the festive New Year weekend. Fireworks will be held and the Arts Council will host a special event to celebrate the festivities. "We are fully ready to welcome tourists to Murree with complete facilities, ensuring safety, comfort and a memorable festive experience. All arrangements, from security to accommodation and entertainment are in place to make the visit smooth and enjoyable", he reassured. He added that almost 13 facilitation centers are active, with the administration on high alert to ensure the safety and security of families. Mall Road and GPO areas are being closely monitored by police, while special tourist squads from Punjab are actively deployed in the field. Around 400 hotels and guest houses are registered with economical rates, and parking fees have been reviewed to accommodate visitors comfortably. He emphasized that in case of any emergency, arrangements are in place to ensure tourists are moved to safe locations. The official concluded by assuring that all preparations have been completed for a smooth, safe and enjoyable festive weekend in Murree, prioritizing both celebration and public safety.—APP

## Chairman PEC calls upon engineers to lead national uplift

The Pakistan Engineering Council is the statutory body responsible for regulating engineering education and practice in Pakistan, promoting professional standards, and advancing the engineering profession in the country

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engineer Wasim Nazeer, on Thursday paid rich tributes to the founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah and called upon Pakistan's engineering community to fulfill his vision of a technologically advanced and prosperous nation. In his message, the Chairman recalled the Quaid's prescient words delivered at the All Pakistan Educational Conference in Karachi on November 27, 1947: "There is an immediate and urgent need for training our people in scientific and technical education to build up our future economic life... we should see that our people undertake scientific commerce, trade and particularly, well-planned indus-

tries." The Chairman emphasized that engineering is omnipresent in modern society and serves as the backbone of national development. "Wherever you look, you will find Engineering," he stated, underscoring that quality engineers are indispensable to Pakistan's progress. He outlined that engineers must embody strength of character, adhere to universal ethics, demonstrate professional excellence, and commit to hard work in their pursuit of national development. Addressing the engineering community directly, the Chairman urged professionals to pursue quality in every aspect of their work. "To achieve excellence, we engineers will have to step out of our comfort zones.

Only then will we be able to reach new horizons," he said. The Chairman also stressed the importance of keeping pace with rapidly emerging technologies, warning that "time waits for no one" in an era of accelerating technological change. In his concluding remarks, the Chairman called for unity among engineers, urging them to support PEC's initiatives and work collaboratively toward building a new and prosperous Pakistan. The Pakistan Engineering Council is the statutory body responsible for regulating engineering education and practice in Pakistan, promoting professional standards, and advancing the engineering profession in the country.—APP

## Christmas celebrated in KP amid tight security

In other districts of KP, including tribal districts the event of Christmas was celebrated amid stringent security measures

PESHAWAR: The Christian community celebrated Christmas across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Thursday with zeal and following their religious rituals amid tight security. Christmas congregations were held in all the major churches of provincial metropolis, where Christian community members attended congregations and offered prayers. Major events were held in St. John's Cathedral, All Saints Church and St. John Vianney Church. Meanwhile, churches and houses of Christians were beautifully illuminated while formal Christmas celebration started on December 24 at midnight, where people congratulated each other. Prayers were held for peace, national development and prosperity. Security arrangements were made outside churches and police personnel were deployed to ensure safety of Christian worship places. Capital City Police Officer, Dr Mian Saeed also visited various churches of the city and reviewed security measures. Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly, Babar Salim Swati, also hosted a ceremony in the assembly on Christmas that, among others, was attended by MPAs, including minority representatives. He said that protecting the rights of religious minorities was among the government's priorities and responsibilities. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi congratulated Christians on the occasion of Christmas and said that the event conveys a message of love, peace, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among people. In other districts of KP, including tribal districts the event of Christmas was celebrated amid stringent security measures.—DNA

## Sindh CM cuts Christmas cake along with Christian religious leaders

The ceremony was attended by provincial ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Mukesh Chawla, Ali Hassan Zardari, Jam Khan Shoro, Qasim Naveed Qamar, Sham Sunder Advani, Raj Vir Singh, Virji Kohli, Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Naveed Anthony, members of the Sindh Assembly, former MPAs, and a large number of Christian religious leaders, bishops, pastors, Church representatives and other distinguished guests

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah hosted a Christmas celebration at the Chief Minister's House on Thursday to mark the birth anniversary of Hazrat Isa (A.S.), spreading a message of peace, harmony and interfaith unity. On the occasion, the chief minister cut a Christmas cake along with Christian religious leaders and extended warm Christmas greetings to the Christian community, said a news release. He also posed for a group photograph with the guests.

Special prayers were offered for peace, prosperity and development of Pakistan after the cake-cutting ceremony. Addressing the gathering, Syed Murad Ali Shah said that Christmas is one of the most important festivals of the Christian community and is celebrated across the world with great enthusiasm. He stated that the teachings of Hazrat Isa (A.S.) are based on peace, love, tolerance and brotherhood, values which are urgently needed in today's world. The chief

minister acknowledged the significant role of the Christian community in the development of Pakistan, particularly highlighting the contributions of missionary schools in promoting education across the country. He reaffirmed that minorities in Pakistan enjoy all fundamental rights and emphasized that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always raised its voice for the rights of all citizens without any discrimination. Murad Ali Shah further said that the land of Sindh

has a long tradition of respecting and protecting followers of all religions. "The world today needs peace. Let us all join hands to make this world a cradle of peace and resolve to make this universe more beautiful," he added. Archbishop Emeritus of Karachi, Cardinal Joseph Coutts, thanked the Sindh government and the chief minister for organising the Christmas celebration at the CM House and for standing in solidarity with the Christian community.

The ceremony was attended by provincial ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Mukesh Chawla, Ali Hassan Zardari, Jam Khan Shoro, Qasim Naveed Qamar, Sham Sunder Advani, Raj Vir Singh, Virji Kohli, Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Naveed Anthony, members of the Sindh Assembly, former MPAs, and a large number of Christian religious leaders, bishops, pastors, Church representatives and other distinguished guests.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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| DECEMBER                                 |
| Dec 01/Romania National Day              |
| Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day |
| Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day        |
| Dec 05/Thailand National Day             |
| Dec 06/Finland Independence Day          |
| Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day       |
| Dec 09/Tanzania National Day             |
| Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day             |
| Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day            |
| Dec12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day        |
| Dec 16/Bahrain National Day              |
| Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day       |
| Dec 18/Qatar National Day                |
| Dec 18/Niger National Day                |
| Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day      |
| Dec 23/Japan National Day                |



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| Emergency  |
| Rescue (Police).....15                             |
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| Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122 |
| Motorway Police...9266044                          |
| Motorway Police.9270601-20                         |
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| Rawalpindi.....9270601-20                          |



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| Railway Exchange9270831-5 |
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| MH.....561116               |
| Canth Hospital...9270907-11 |
| DHQ.....5556311-4           |
| RGH.....9290301-7           |
| Holy Family.....9290322-7   |
| PIMS.....9261170-79         |
| Polyclinic.....9218300-09   |
| Shifa International 4603666 |



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| CDA.....9208301-04         |
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| RDA.....5555864            |
| TMA.....5770886            |
| Cantonment Board 9270151-3 |

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| Islamabad Metropolitan   |
| Corporation.....9209224  |
| Potohar Town.....9209224 |
| Rawal Town.....5773343   |

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| Water Tank                 |
| Islamabad.....0321-5744480 |



ISLAMABAD: In-charge Central Secretariat Syed Sibtul Haider Bukhari, Central Minority Leader Rashid Chauhan, District President Raja Shakeel Abbasi, Sohail Rumi and Pastor Kaiser and others cutting the cake on the occasion of Christmas at Central Secretariat of PPP. DNA Photo

# 2025 applauded as Pak’s global standing year

They said it is a major development that, according to Foreign Policy, Pakistan was able to attain an unprecedented degree of trust and direct access with Washington that even some of America’s closest allies have found difficult to achieve, reflecting strengthened diplomatic engagement and high-level cooperation under the current U.S. administration

ISLAMABAD :PML-N Ministers and PPP Senators welcomed ‘The Winners and Losers of Trump’s New Foreign Policy’ as a diplomatic achievement for Pakistan, pointing to strengthened regional relations, enhanced military stature and the success of PM Shehbaz Sharif’s narrative in challenging India’s claims. While speaking exclusively to media channels, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif commended recent newspaper reports that identify Pakistan as a major beneficiary of the global shift in foreign policy. Minister emphasized that the country has emerged as a strategic force on the international stage, capitalizing on evolving dynamics and strengthening its diplomatic, military and economic position in the global arena. He noted that the policy has bolstered Pakistan’s diplomatic position, as well as its military and economic standing, especially amid

ongoing tensions with India. The global recognition of Pakistan’s role in the region, particularly in its efforts against Afghanistan and India, reflects the country’s increasing influence on the international stage, Asif added. The Defense Minister further emphasized that Pakistan’s successful strategies have exposed India’s misleading narratives globally, leading to diplomatic, military and economic victories. He also acknowledged U.S. President Donald Trump’s recognition of Pakistan’s strategic importance, especially in promoting regional peace and stability. Asif affirmed that Pakistan’s efforts in countering terrorism and addressing regional issues have solidified its position as a key player in global security. Defense Minister Khawaja Asif praised Field Marshal Asim Munir for his key role in strengthening Pakistan’s relations with the United States, Saudi

Arabia and other countries, while also acknowledging PM Shehbaz Sharif’s policies for driving the nation’s diplomatic, military and economic success. Minister of State for Finance and Railways, Bilal Azhar Kayani also praised ‘The Diplomat for naming 2025 as a pivotal year for Pakistan’, calling it a major diplomatic success. He highlighted the country’s strategic comeback, strengthened military confidence and improved global standing as key achievements reflecting Pakistan’s growing influence on the international stage. He said, according to The Diplomat, Pakistan re-emerged as a focal point of international attention in 2025 after several years, driven largely by decisive military leadership and a clear state narrative against extremism. He hailed Pakistan’s leadership role in combating terrorism, acknowledging Presi-

dent Trump’s cooperation and the global recognition of the country’s efforts in promoting regional stability and countering extremism. He stated that this year marks the culmination of Pakistan’s success, with clear evidence of the country’s achievements in diplomacy, security, and global recognition. Senator Bushra Anjum and PPP’s Sharjeel Memon also admired the progress, terming it a historic and diplomatic success for Pakistan, highlighting the country’s growing influence and achievements on the global stage. They said it is a major development that, according to Foreign Policy, Pakistan was able to attain an unprecedented degree of trust and direct access with Washington that even some of America’s closest allies have found difficult to achieve, reflecting strengthened diplomatic engagement and high-level cooperation under the current U.S. administration.—APP

## Police deploy 3,500 cops for foolproof security

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have deployed more than 3,500 officers and personnel across the federal capital to ensure foolproof security on the occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Day and Christmas, with special focus on churches, Christian localities and public places. A police spokesperson told APP on Thursday that armed police personnel have been deployed at churches, while additional force has been stationed at sensitive worship places to ensure the safety

of the Christian community during Christmas celebrations. The spokesperson said that DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq is personally supervising all security arrangements, while supervisory officers are maintaining constant liaison with church administrations to ensure coordinated and effective security measures. He added that Safe City Islamabad cameras are being used to continuously monitor Christmas and Quaid-e-Azam Day events across the city, enabling real-time surveillance and swift re-

sponse. According to the spokesperson, all patrolling units and special police contingents are conducting effective patrols around churches, Christian residential areas and other sensitive locations to prevent any untoward incident. Islamabad Police reiterated that the protection of citizens’ lives and property remains its top priority, and comprehensive security arrangements have been put in place to ensure that all religious and national events are observed peacefully.—APP

## PMYP praises christian contributions, echoes Quaid’s vision of inclusivity

ISLAMABAD: Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme (PMYP), extended warm and heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community across Pakistan on Christmas 2025, emphasizing the festival’s universal message of peace, love, and service to humanity. On this special occasion, he urged citizens to uphold harmony, compassion, and inclusivity, the values that have guided Pakistan since its inception. In his message while talking to APP, Rana Mashhood said Christmas represents hope, goodwill, and selfless service, principles that resonate deeply with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a just and inclusive society. Recalling Jinnah’s historic commitment to minorities, he quoted: “You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other

place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste, or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.” Spoken on 11 August 1947, these words remain a timeless reminder of equality, tolerance, and protection of all citizens’ rights, irrespective of faith. Chairman Rana Mashhood highlighted the invaluable contributions of the Christian community in education, healthcare, social welfare, national defense, arts, and public service. “Their dedication and patriotism have strengthened the nation and enriched Pakistan’s social fabric,” he said, noting that their achievements reflect the inclusive vision of Quaid-e-Azam. He further referenced Jinnah’s guidance for the youth, saying: “No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you.” Chairman Rana Mashhood connected this to today’s youth, calling on

young Pakistanis from all communities to work with dedication, service, and harmony for the nation’s progress. The Chairman reaffirmed that the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme is committed to empowering youth from every community, fostering equal opportunities, mutual respect, and national unity. “Pakistan’s diversity is its strength, and our collective future depends on justice, compassion, and harmony among all citizens,” he added. Concluding his message exclusively with APP, Chairman Rana Mashhood wished the Christian community a joyous and blessed Christmas, urging all Pakistanis to uphold the festival’s spirit of peace, love, and selfless service. He called on the nation to continue building a just, inclusive, and harmonious Pakistan, a country envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam for every citizen, where faith, dedication, and service unite to shape a brighter future. Pakistan Zindabad.—APP

## Quaid-e-Azam Day observed across Pakistan, abroad

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday commemorated the birth anniversary of its founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, paying tribute to his visionary leadership, sincerity, and selfless struggle that led to the creation of an independent homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent. On this occasion, prayers were offered for the departed soul of Quaid-e-Azam and for all those who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Pakistan. Speakers highlighted that Pakistan is currently facing significant challenges; however, with faith in Allah and the continued sacrifices of the armed forces, the nation will overcome these difficulties. Tributes and salutations were paid to the Shaheeds and Ghazis who are guarding the country day and night and ensuring the defense of the motherland. The unwavering commitment and sacrifices of Pakistan’s armed forces were acknowledged and appreciated. Extending his greetings, Khurshheed Ahmed Hashmi, Senior Vice President of the Pak-UK Trade Forum, stated that Quaid-e-Azam Day serves as a reminder of unity, faith, and discipline.—DNA

## Experts urge greater media’s role in promoting CPEC projects

ISLAMABAD: Senior media experts called on the governments of Pakistan and China to facilitate more frequent visits by Pakistani media to Chinese-led development projects, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Port, to better counter misinformation and negative narratives. The call was made during the 9th CPEC Media Forum in Islamabad, organized by the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) and China Economic Net, and hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. The forum was held under the theme “Strengthening Media Cooperation to Advance the Upgraded Version 2.0 of CPEC.” According to a Gwadar Pro’s report, Hamid Mir, a senior Pakistani journalist, emphasized that direct exposure to development projects is essential for journalists to produce accurate, balanced, and evidence-based reports. He noted that first-hand observation of progress and interactions with local communities allow the media to effectively counter misinformation surrounding Chinese investments in Pakistan. Experts stressed that increased engagement with local populations, particularly in Balochistan and Gwadar, would amplify community voices, enabling residents to express their concerns and expectations more openly. This, they said, would help both governments design more responsive policies and reforms. Senior journalists also pointed out that current efforts to counter misleading narratives about CPEC are limited. They emphasized the need to involve a wider range of media professionals, including digital journalists and social media influencers, to present a factual and comprehensive image of CPEC both nationally and internationally. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulлах Tarar proposed the creation of a dedicated fact-checking forum to address negative or misleading reporting on CPEC. The proposal was supported by Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and PCI Chairman Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed. The forum participants also highlighted the need to increase Pakistani content on Chinese media platforms, especially social media. They argued that showcasing Pakistan’s business environment, culture, and hospitality to Chinese audiences could encourage more investment, particularly from small and medium-sized Chinese enterprises. The forum concluded with a consensus that enhanced media cooperation, transparency, and people-to-people engagement are key to strengthening mutual understanding and supporting the next phase of CPEC development.—DNA

## UAF launches Sino-Pak joint academic programs

ISLAMABAD: Two joint three-year diploma programs were launched at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Community College to enhance Sino-Pak cooperation in modern agriculture, grain storage, and quality safety. The diplomas, one in Grain Storage and Transportation and Quality Safety, and the other in Modern Agricultural Technology (MAT), aim to improve agricultural education and strengthen bilateral ties. Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The programs are offered in partnership with leading Chinese vocational institutions, marking a new phase of cross-border academic exchange. UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali described the programs as market-driven, equipping students with skills for agricultural development. He noted that UAF’s Confucius Institute had played a key role in enhancing people-to-people ties through Chinese language training. Wang Jia, Assistant Dean at Jiangxi Vocational Technical College, called the initiative a step toward mutual learning. Zhang Jianhong, Vice President of Bailie Vocational College, said the MAT program would provide practical skills for sustainable agricultural development.—APP

## Psychiatrist sounds alarm over rising mental stress

ISLAMABAD: A leading psychiatrist Thursday warned of rising ‘Mental Stress’ among youth, urging families, schools and media outlets to raise awareness, provide support and promote a culture of mental well-being to safeguard the emotional and academic future of the younger generation. While speaking with a local media channel, Dr Uzma Ali, a psychiatrist, voiced serious concern over the rising mental stress among youth, warning that if left unaddressed, it could severely affect their emotional well-being, academic performance and overall future prospects. She emphasized that mental health challenges are escalating rapidly, making early detection and intervention crucial. Dr Uzma Ali explained that families and friends should remain vigilant for warning signs such as loneliness, lack of interest, laziness, persistent negativity, loss of pleasure in life and even suicide attempts. She stressed that recognizing these symptoms early can save lives and provide timely support to those struggling with psychological pressure.—APP



## Briefs

Mohsin  
extends  
heartfelt  
Christmas  
greetings

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday extended warm and heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community, expressing solidarity and shared joy on the festive occasion. Naqvi said that the government and the people of Pakistan fully shared the happiness with the Christian community during Christmas, a day that reminded everyone of the message of love, sacrifice, brotherhood and peace. Highlighting the universal message of Prophet Jesus (AS), the minister said that he preached tolerance, respect for humanity and compassion. "The teachings of Jesus (AS) were meant not for a single group but for all of humanity," he added. Reaffirming the rights of religious freedom, Naqvi said the Christian community in Pakistan enjoys complete liberty to celebrate their religious and cultural traditions with full zeal and dignity. He praised the Christian community's remarkable contributions to education, healthcare, defence, social services, and nation-building, describing them as unforgettable and a source of national pride. He added that the community has always upheld the rule of law and promoted national unity, setting exemplary standards of loyalty, sacrifice, and service during difficult times.—APP

Magsi for  
renewing  
collective  
pledge

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi Thursday urged the nation to renew its collective pledge to uphold Quaid-e-Azam's ideal, strengthen national unity, promote tolerance and work for a prosperous Pakistan. In a message, the federal minister paid rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birth anniversary, honoring the founding father of Pakistan for his visionary leadership, wisdom, and unwavering determination that transformed the dream of an independent homeland into reality. He said that Quaid-e-Azam's guiding principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline continued to serve as a moral compass for the nation in confronting contemporary challenges. Khalid Magsi emphasized that Jinnah's steadfast commitment to justice, constitutionalism, tolerance and the protection of equal rights laid the firm foundations of a democratic and inclusive Pakistan. He noted that Quaid-e-Azam's message of respect for diversity, rule of law and interfaith harmony remained as relevant today as it was at the time of independence. The minister urged the nation to renew its collective pledge to uphold Quaid-e-Azam's ideals, strengthen national unity, promote tolerance, and work with dedication and integrity for a peaceful, progressive, and prosperous Pakistan for future generations.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Member of Christians Community are receiving Holy Simeon after attend Christmas Mass rituals at Lady Fatima Church of Sector F-8 in Federal Capital. — DNA

## China, Pak sign package of MoUs to deepen industry education training

Pakistan is significantly enhancing its agricultural modernization efforts by deploying 1,000 specialists to China for specialized training, a key initiative under the diplomatic commitment of both nations' leaders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China and Pakistan on Tuesday signed a package of cooperation documents and launched joint programs to advance vocational education, with a focus on integrating industry needs with skills training, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. The agreements were announced at the "Seminar on International Cooperation and Exchange: Integration of Industry and Education in Vocational Education between China and Pakistan" held in Beijing. At the ceremony 21 items were signed and five cooperation platforms were unveiled, covering professional standards, shared teaching resources, faculty and curriculum development, and enterprise-linked training bases. Under the Professional Standards and International Teaching Resource Database track, partners agreed to develop standards and resources in disciplines such as Culinary Arts & Nutrition, Fashion and Costume Design, Food Inspection and Testing, Supply Chain Operation, Fine Chemical Technology, Modern Agriculture Production, and Information Security Technology Applications, with participation from Pakistani authorities including NAVTTC and provincial technical education and training bodies. A

second set of Vocational Education "Brand Going Global" agreements established workshops and colleges aligned with priority sectors. Examples include the Saishang Workshop in culinary training, a China-Pakistan Automotive Overseas Workshop for New Energy Vehicle Technology involving Hunan Automotive Engineering Vocational University, NAVTTC, and MG JW Automobile Pakistan Limited, and the Kaiwu Workshop in HVAC training with Heilongjiang College of Construction and corporate partners. A three-party MoU on short-term training and digitalized courses was also signed by PVTCL, ITMC, and UNI Services International. Speaking at the seminar, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi noted that cooperation has "moved beyond conceptual discussions" and entered "a new phase of practical advancement," adding that "vocational education has the ingredients to transform the dreams of young people into jobs, skills and employment." NAVTTC Executive Director Muhammad Amir Jan emphasized building a scalable workforce for CPEC/BRI projects and industrial zones, expanding cooperation from conventional trades into areas such as manufacturing, digital technologies, energy and modern services. Max Ma of ITMC

Technology Co., Ltd. said that by sharing knowledge, skills, and achievements, the company aims to help Pakistani youth benefit in meaningful ways—using education to transform their prospects and build better lives. He added that ITMC's steadfast commitment to "doing the right things, even when they are difficult" has kept the company firmly on course in supporting young people to pursue and realize their dreams. Pakistan is significantly enhancing its agricultural modernization efforts by deploying 1,000 specialists to China for specialized training, a key initiative under the diplomatic commitment of both nations' leaders, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. The multi-phase program, designed to cultivate expertise in advanced agricultural technologies, biotechnology and sustainable practices, has already seen around 700 professionals return to Pakistan with enhanced skills, while new groups continue to arrive for ongoing and upcoming training sessions. A key component of this initiative is the current training on seed production and processing technology. Jointly organized by Huazhong Agricultural University — a leading Chinese university in agricultural sciences — and Wuhan Qingfa-Hesheng Seed Co., Ltd., which has over two decades of collabora-

tion experience with Pakistan, the program runs from November 10 through next February. It adopts an integrated "theory plus practice" approach designed to enhance the professional competencies of 56 Pakistani participants. All the trainees hold at least a master's degree and represent diverse sectors including government, businesses, academia and civil society organizations from across Pakistan. Notably, 11 female participants are contributing to the growing role of women in agricultural innovation. The curriculum encompasses critical areas such as crop breeding science, seed production systems, variety selection and processing technologies. Through visits to production facilities, research laboratories and corporate farms, participants gain hands-on exposure to modern agricultural operations. Mr. Muhammad Anser, a seed industry representative from Gujranwala, Punjab, shared his experience midway through the program: "This training has provided us with remarkable exposure to China's technological advancements. The integration of molecular-assisted breeding, gene editing and industrial research demonstrates how innovation translates into tangible farming solutions."

## Chinese-made immunoglobulin approved for sale in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Guangdong Shuanglin Bio-pharmacy Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of PLBIO, has secured regulatory approval from Pakistan for its Intravenous Immunoglobulin (pH4), a key blood-derived therapeutic product widely used in clinical practice, its parent company announced in response to investor inquiries. According to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursday, the drug registration certificate was jointly issued by Pakistan's Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan. This approval enables expanded access in Pakistan to advanced biotherapeutic options, particularly for treating immune-related disorders. The company has entered into an Exclusive Licensing and Supply Agreement with local distributor 3A Diagnostics, facilitating the product's market entry.

It noted that while the product is now available locally, no plasmapheresis centers have been established in Pakistan. Intravenous Immunoglobulin (pH4) is a sterile, purified preparation derived from pooled human plasma, primarily containing IgG antibodies. It plays a vital role in replacing deficient antibodies in patients with immune disorders and in modulating abnormal immune responses in autoimmune conditions. The introduction of this WHO-standard product strengthens Pakistan's clinical capacity to manage conditions such as primary immunodeficiencies, autoimmune diseases, and severe infections. The partnership also supports the resilience of Pakistan's pharmaceutical supply chain and aligns with efforts to diversify sources of essential medicines, contributing to public health infrastructure and bilateral healthcare cooperation between China and Pakistan.—APP

## PU director honors Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD: Director of the Pakistan Studies Center at Punjab University, Dr. Amjad Magsi Thursday extended his wishes to the nation, praising the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and paying tribute to his selfless sacrifices and steadfast struggle against British rule for the creation of a separate homeland. While speaking on the occasion, he paid a glowing tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birth anniversary, honoring his extraordinary leadership, selfless sacrifices and pivotal role in the creation of Pakistan. He highlighted his vision of a just, inclusive and progressive homeland that continues to inspire generations. Dr. Amjad also reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to realizing Quaid-e-Azam's ideals, emphasizing the importance of unity, development and national strength. He also called on youth to uphold his principles and work collectively towards building a prosperous and peaceful Pakistan.—DNA

## PM Adviser salutes Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaulah Thursday greeted the minority community for Christmas and emphasized the government's dedication to protecting their rights under the revered Quaid-e-Azam's vision, while lauding his relentless fight for a separate homeland. Talking exclusively to a local media channel, he recalled the sacrifices and visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam on his birth anniversary, highlighting his relentless struggle for the creation of a separate homeland. He paid tribute to the Quaid's unwavering dedication and the principles that continue to inspire generations. He also reaffirmed the government's commitment to carrying forward Quaid-e-Azam's legacy by ensuring equal rights for every citizen, including minorities and emphasized the importance of upholding justice, harmony, and inclusive across the nation. Talking about political affairs, he criticized PTI for ignoring table talks and noted that even during their time in opposition, they failed to follow democratic norms. He emphasized that the party's approach undermined dialogue and accountability, highlighting their unwillingness to engage constructively in the political process. Addressing PTI's protests, he recalled that they were based on anarchy, spreading hate and instability, which is unacceptable in a democratic setup. He specifically mentioned the events of 25 May, 9 May, and 26 November, stating that the protests not only failed to achieve their objectives but also disrupted law and order, reinforcing that no one can be allowed to take the law into their own hands.

## ITP deploys over 200 officers to manage traffic

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have deployed more than 200 traffic officers across the federal capital to ensure smooth traffic flow during Christmas activities on December 25. An ITP spokesperson told APP on Thursday that traffic pickets have been set up at various locations to prevent congestion and facilitate commuters. He said special arrangements have been made on roads leading to parks and other recreational spots to keep traffic moving. The spokesperson urged young people to avoid hooliganism and one-wheeling, warning that strict action would be taken against violations. He added that ITP officers would remain present on major arteries throughout the day to assist road users. Citizens were advised to plan their travel accordingly and contact the traffic helpline 1915 or emergency helpline Pucar-15 for updates or assistance.—APP

## Salik reaffirms commitment to Quaid's vision

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain Thursday said that the leadership, vision and constitutional struggle of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah remained the cornerstone of Pakistan's national identity and democratic foundations. In a message on the birth anniversary of the Founder of the Nation, the minister said Quaid-e-Azam's unshakeable resolve, adherence to the rule of law, and belief in constitutionalism continue to provide enduring guidance for the country amid present-day challenges. He emphasized that the principles of Faith, Unity and Discipline were not symbolic slogans but a practical framework for ensuring national development, social harmony and political stability. "Only by internalizing these principles can Pakistan move towards a secure, prosperous and self-reliant future," he added. Chaudhry Salik Hussain said the present government is actively working to translate Quaid-e-Azam's vision into action by promoting transparent governance, institutional responsibility and people-centred policies. Calling upon the youth to play a decisive role, the minister urged them to adopt Quaid-e-Azam's values of integrity, discipline and hard work in their personal and professional lives, stating that these qualities are essential for national progress. He said the most meaningful tribute to Quaid-e-Azam lies in practical implementation of his ideals, rather than limiting remembrance to ceremonial events.—DNA

## SSP Operations reviews Christmas security at churches

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have put in place foolproof security arrangements for Christmas, with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Qazi Ali Raza personally monitoring field deployments and reviewing security measures at churches across the federal capital. An official told APP on Thursday that SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza visited various churches in different parts of the city, where he inspected security arrangements and met with church administrations to ensure smooth and peaceful celebrations. During the visits, the SSP Qazi reviewed deployment of police personnel, access control measures and overall preparedness, and directed officers to remain vigilant and proactive. He emphasized that Islamabad Police are ensuring protection for followers of all religions without discrimination. SSP Qazi said that the safety of citizens' lives and property remained the top priority of Islamabad Police, particularly during religious events and public gatherings. He urged church administrations and participants to cooperate with police during security checks to avoid any inconvenience.—APP

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## Media campaigns for Peace

NOOR-E-HIRA

**P**EACE journalism, first coined by Johan Galtung, involves an academic form of transformative and reflexive journalism of prioritizing constructive resolution, humanizing all parties involved, and seeing the real causes of conflicts, as opposed to the traditional paradigm of war journalism that tends to point to binary winners and losers. The aims of peace journalism are to build on knowledge, generate non-violent options and also preempt the stories of peacekeeping agents and as such, peace journalism is a source of dialogue building that focuses on the points of intersection and systemic upheavals which perpetrate conflict. This point of view applies specifically in areas where long-term adversarial activities have occurred like the South Asian zone where media reporting often fuels the clash because of biased or distortionary reporting.

The media industry of the South Asian environment (particularly Pakistan-India nexus) is inseparably connected with the historical enmity such as Kashmir crisis, cross border terrorism and nuclear arms race. In Pakistan as an example, media faces internal insurgencies like the Taliban trouble and Baloch nationalist militancy where in reporting, it will either reinforce fracturing or foster reconciliation. Peace-oriented media campaigns are the instruments that have proved to be very important amid such provocations and they operationalize the principles of peace journalism in concrete situations. This essay assesses such campaigns, with a focus on Aman ki Asha, and lessons in methodology can be derived on the results and flaws of such campaigns thus highlighting the ability of the media to play a peacebuilding role and shedding light on the long-term structural barriers.

Peace journalism has its foundation on a series of ontological and epistemological principles that re-assemble the conflict coverage process based on the themes of inclusivity, voice, and systemic criticism. Galtung has placed peace journalism within the framework of war journalism by promoting participation of all sides of the case and listening to voiceless and exposing behind the scenes cultural plans instead of demonizing an opponent. It focuses on active investigation of the non-violent solutions, including economic affiliation and cultural interchange, without being pompous with elite propaganda. This is as expressed in its practical sense the shift of reactive coverage of violence to the humanizing narratives where affected populations are humanized and the sense of empathy is felt.

Applied to modern media metrics these principles challenge the magnification of divisions which is characteristic of traditional reporting. Outlets also often give prominence to the views of elites or sensational happenings in the conflict environment hence fanning the flames of revenge. A counterpoint is included by peace journalism by leveraging the heterogeneous

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voices such as women, youth, and marginalized groups of people and questioning structural violence such as poverty or inequality that is contributing to overt conflicts. This goes to social space in the digital age where hating speech can be counteracted by promoting peace stories strategically. Media space in South Asia challenges these ideals in the context of state regulation and censorship. An example of this is the Pakistani journalists, which are limited by military influences that restrict the use of the peace-oriented framings. Training programs are effective, however: a post-workshop follow-up showed that there was an increment in balanced reporting and increase in peace quotient in articles that made attempts to foreground reconciliation rather than blame. This empirical evidence attests to the fact that, in reality, peace journalism is operational and capable of defusing media-based tensions.

There are myriads of phenomena in the regional media milieu that fuel conflicts and therefore keep peace journalism campaigns relevant. The Pakistani reports of the Taliban insurgency often fit the type of war journalism in the sense that they place the focus on military actions, their consequences and COIN operations and downplay the human suffering on civilian or diplomatic talks. In the same manner the Baloch rebellion is also discussed in terms of pure security, hiding grievances about resource exploitation and the abuse of human rights. Nationalism impact also creates a dichotomous us versus them discourse that leads to a worsening of ethnic divides and hindering constructive communication. In the subcontinent, the India-Pakistan relations are exaggerated by the jingoistic expression of reporting that gives rise to mobilization of hostility over border skirmishes or terrorism attacks. At the same time, social media also contributes to this, spreading hate-speeches and misinformation, to the point of enhancing offline violence- a phenomenon which can be seen in the development of online extremism in the region. Regulatory reactions by regional governments are supposed to check extremity but instead they tend to stifle free speech thus restraining the peace advocacy that would otherwise be possible through the media.

Peace journalism comes in to correct the framing of disputable matters. The Pakistani sources sometimes use the visual narrative of peace - pictures of compromising demonstrators against terrorism - that make actors human and that emphasize the communal stability. The responsible journalism campaign is carried out by national forums and workshops, where the media is promoted as the instrument of peace by educating on the peace plans of government. However, this is not the case since other issues are sensationalism and organizational corruption, which undermines trust among people as the latest literature in the field of governance suggests. (34) Generation Z digital activism (as was the case with Nepalese acts of protests or Bangladeshi acts of protests) shines light on the dual ability of social media as it creates a solidarity, but it can also promote superficiality with no positive change. It follows that digital activism is a trap as well as an opportunity to the peace-oriented media. Aman ki Asha, or Hope of Peace is a real world practice of peace journalism in action. The campaign was initiated in 2010 by the Times of India collaboration with the Jang Group and aimed to foster Indo-Punkistani reconciliation based on the people to people encounter and against a history of hostility. In line with Galtung tenets, the program shifted loss of focus over war to cultural commonality through holding festivals, seminars and exchanges in the arenas of health, economic, cultural and policies.

## Christmas, Islam, and the Lost Message of Peace

Qamar Bashir



Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh have uprooted communities and shattered lives. Border friction between Thailand and Cambodia periodically flares, affecting vulnerable border populations. And the Caribbean region is witnessing rising confrontation involving Venezuela and the United States – another reminder of how competition over resources and power can spiral toward conflict. Looming over all of this is the dangerous and often-overlooked nuclear risk in South Asia

**C**HRISTMAS is one of the most cherished moments in the global calendar, marking the birth of Jesus Christ – one of the greatest prophets in human history. According to Christian belief, he was born in Bethlehem, a humble town in the West Bank that today remains under Israeli occupation. From that land emerged a message that still echoes across centuries: love your neighbor, seek truth, forgive freely, and show mercy even in hardship. For Muslims, Jesus – Isa ibn Maryam (peace be upon him) – is not only respected but deeply revered. The Qur'an dedicates an entire chapter to his miraculous birth and to the purity and piety of his mother, Mary. Islam affirms that Mary conceived Jesus by the will of God, without a biological father, and that the infant Jesus spoke in her defense – a miracle highlighting divine power and mercy.

Islam teaches that God sent many prophets – Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad (peace be upon them all) – as guides for humanity. Belief in all of them is a core Islamic principle. The foundational faith includes belief in all prophets, revealed scriptures, angels, the Day of Judgment, and God's decree. This reflects Islam's spiritual inclusiveness: a Muslim cannot reject Jesus or Moses and still claim faith. The Qur'an presents Jesus as a noble prophet who healed the sick, defended the weak, and called people to righteousness.

Christians and Muslims share deep respect for his moral example. Islamic tradition also teaches that Jesus will return near the end of time as a sign of God's justice. That belief strengthens the spiritual connection between the two faiths rather than weakening it.

Across much of the Muslim world, Christmas is acknowledged with warmth and respect. In Malaysia, Indonesia, the Gulf states, and elsewhere, public spaces display Christmas decorations, and citizens of different faiths greet one another sincerely. That spirit of coexistence reflects the higher purpose of religion: to bring people closer to God and to one another.

Yet the world today stands painfully distant from the teachings of Jesus. The message of humility has been overshadowed by arrogance; compassion

has been replaced with dominance; and the defense of the weak has too often yielded to the pursuit of wealth, territory, and power.

From Europe to the Middle East to Africa, wars continue to scar humanity. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has dragged on with staggering human cost – soldiers and civilians alike suffering displacement, injury, and death while entire cities are destroyed and generations traumatized.

In Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded, and families live under unimaginable loss and fear. The civil war in Sudan has unleashed famine, displacement, and brutality on a massive scale. Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh have uprooted communities and shattered lives. Border friction between Thailand and Cambodia periodically flares, affecting vulnerable border populations. And the Caribbean region is witnessing rising confrontation involving Venezuela and the United States – another reminder of how competition over resources and power can spiral toward conflict.

Looming over all of this is the dangerous and often-overlooked nuclear risk in South Asia. India and Pakistan – both nuclear-armed neighbors – have fought multiple wars and experienced repeated crises. Any future conflict between them, if it were ever to escalate to nuclear exchange, could kill millions in minutes and devastate the region for generations. It is a sobering reminder that war today carries consequences far beyond the battlefield – consequences that threaten the survival of entire nations.

Behind many of these conflicts lie the same driving forces: greed, the hunger for dominance, the thirst for hegemony, disrespect for international law, and a chilling indifference to human suffering. Power becomes a prize rather than a responsibility. Neighbors become enemies rather than fellow human beings. War, sanctions, and blockades punish ordinary people – the poor, the elderly, and especially children – while the powerful speak in cold language about strategy and national interest. This reality stands in total contradiction to what Je-

sus taught. His message condemned arrogance. He challenged the tyranny of wealth over conscience. He uplifted the marginalized, called for humility, and insisted that the moral worth of a society is measured by how it treats the weakest among it. Christmas should therefore be more than a seasonal ritual. It should be a moment of moral awakening. A time when Christians and Muslims – who together make up over half of humanity – reflect on their shared spiritual foundation: belief in one God, devotion to truth, compassion, justice, humility, and service to others.

Today, the sacred books that once guided civilizations often sit unread on shelves, gathering dust while nations prepare for war instead of peace. Christmas is the time to wipe away that dust – literally and symbolically – and return to the message inside: love your neighbor, protect the innocent, feed the hungry, forgive the offender, and speak truth to power.

If even a fraction of that message were followed, wars would not be waged for land, oil, minerals, or geopolitical advantage. The enormous resources consumed by conflict could instead lift millions out of poverty, build schools and hospitals, and restore dignity to forgotten communities. True greatness lies not in the size of a nation's military, but in the depth of its compassion and the justice of its actions. This is the heart of the matter: Faith without justice is empty, worship without mercy is incomplete and peace without humility is impossible.

When humanity rediscovers this shared spiritual core – not as slogan, but as living practice – peace will no longer remain a distant ideal. It will become a real and achievable way of life. And perhaps then, Christmas will not simply mark the birth of a prophet. It will mark the rebirth of the values he taught – compassion over cruelty, humility over arrogance, and peace over war – lighting a path forward for all humanity.

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## Ethical Responsibilities of Journalists During Violent Conflict

Syed Bilal Ali Naqvi



Ethically, one of the priorities that journalists in conflict zones need to adopt is conflict sensitivity since they need to report stories in a way that does not keep feeding certain stereotypes that encourage violence. Peace journalism goes further to motivate journalists to give prominence to peace efforts, including the development of grassroots dialogues or non-violent resistance as opposed to merely highlighting the horror of the battle

**I**N an age where media reporting may either administer more violence or peacemaking, the moral obligations of reporters working in the situations of violent conflicts have never been greater. Where conventional war journalism would focus on violence, elites, and binary victory/defeat, peace journalism relies on the root causes of conflict, voices, and what solutions can solve such problems to promote positive peace, the conditions of justice and equity instead of the absence of open violence. It focuses on ethical principles, historical case studies and criticism to argue that implementing peace journalism would increase journalistic honesty and reduce levels of conflict escalation. Based on the world examples of the war between Israel and Gaza, as well as the Rwandan genocide, the analysis gives insight into the failures and successes related to media activities.

This is in general agreement with the ethical advocacy of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), where the primary job is to seek the truth, be independent and minimise harm, as well as, amplifying the propaganda of both warring sides.

Ethically, one of the priorities that journalists in conflict zones need to adopt is conflict sensitivity since they need to report stories in a way that does not keep feeding certain stereotypes that encourage violence. Peace journalism goes further to motivate journalists to give prominence to peace efforts, including the development of grassroots dialogues or non-violent resistance as opposed to merely highlighting the horror of the battle. Research indicates that positive peace reporting on such injustices as poverty or discrimination minimizes fear and anger and increases empathy and hope in readers, which makes the choice ethical. But these roles are also burdened by the real-life issues. Journalists must act under pressure with editors wanting sensational news, or in a context where access is controlled by belligerent organisations,

which imposes no ties on activity but demands that they respect local norms without taking a side.

The application of the principles of peace journalism in real-life conflicts can explain how the lack of adherence to the principles of peace journalism contributes to lapses in ethics and the implementation of these principles can de-escalate violence. This is a graphic example of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, where war journalism prioritized elite propaganda arguing that colonial legacies and economic imbalances are the real causes and proclaimed violence without questioning how it might be reconciled. In terms of ethics, such reporting was against the principle of minimisation of harm as it formed an active part of atrocities. According to the application of peace journalism by looking back, the interestedness peace efforts could have been reported or the rhetorical malicious motive revealed, which might have saved the life of people by creating the opposition that the society would have to peace.

Conversely, during the 2014-15 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, though a non-traditional armed conflict, which involved violent confrontation over quarantines, a number of media sources took peace-based strategies. Outlets like the BBC and local stations prioritised local-level responses (e.g. testimonies of survivors, educators on health) over hypothetical sensitivity and violence against health workers. Peace journalism in this case advocated positive peace ensuring that issues of concern like inequity of healthcare were under consideration. A modern example is the 2023 Israel-Gaza war, where the use of cursory press coverage presents one party as an attacker, and another as a victim (in fact, there is no history of violence on both sides). Some such as the Solutions Journalism Network has trained reporters to include stories about solutions to a situation, showing how a story focusing on possible alternatives rather than despair can be told morally.

During the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, there

were instances of such media that could have served as an example of peace journalism. The Guardian outlet included voices of Russian dissidents and Ukrainian citizens who are advocating dialogue in addition to debating geopolitical causes such as NATO expansion. Although it has merits, peace journalism has its own criticisms that bring out ethical arguments in the conflict reporting. The opponents claim that it causes a lack of objectivity because of taking an advocacy position, which may hamper the ethical imperative of holding power to account. Finally, implementation is hindered by the normative bias of peace journalism, which is propagandistic to an individual extent, as well as by commercial pressures of bang stories, or safety threats at war zones. Empirical studies have associated this argument with the fact that standard journalism is equally prejudiced towards violence and that peace journalism will only amplify ethics by ensuring transparency and inclusivity. The accuracy, impartiality, and reduction of harm mindset of peace journalism is a significant improvement of the ethical obligations of journalists in violent conflicts based on the context, voices, and solutions. Real world experiences in Rwanda and in Gaza show how a war orientated reporting can be used to spread violence, whereas a peace oriented approach to reporting leads to reconciliation and empathy. Despite the criticisms that suggest that the framework endangers objectivity, these are not as high as the risk that the framework tends to avoid escalation, as long as the journalists are ready to adhere to high standards. Media organisations have a case to play in the society, and therefore, should focus on training in peace journalism with the current proliferation of conflicts in the digital age with misinformation. Finally, the ethical journalism is not a passive view, but a force of positive action, which leads societies to justice and out of the end-less war.

– The writer is MS media Studies Riphah International University Islamabad



## Briefs

Government  
commits to  
safeguarding  
minority...

FROM PAGE 01

Haroon William (Shaheed), noting that Christian citizens have laid down their lives for the defence of the country and stand shoulder to shoulder with their Muslim brethren in protecting Pakistan's sovereignty. The prime minister amid referring to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said the founder of Pakistan had clearly guaranteed full religious freedom and equal legal rights to all citizens, including the freedom to worship in churches, temples, gurdwaras and mosques without fear. He emphasized that these principles were enshrined in the Constitution and remained central to the state's policies. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured the Christian community that the government would not tolerate any form of injustice, discrimination or violence against minorities. "Whether Christian, Hindu or Sikh, no one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands," he said, adding that the state would ensure protection of life, property and religious dignity for all Pakistanis.

President,  
PM renew  
call to...

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A series of events, including seminars, debates, and exhibitions, are being organised at both official and civil society levels to highlight various aspects of Jinnah's life, achievements, and leadership. President Asif Ali Zardari has called on the nation to renew its commitment to the democratic and inclusive ideals of Quaid-e-Azam, emphasising the continued relevance of the Founder of Pakistan's leadership. In a message, the president said his vision, leadership, and guiding principles continued to inspire the nation in addressing contemporary challenges. He noted that Quaid-e-Azam exemplified conviction, perseverance and hard work, which laid the foundation of Pakistan, adding that the principles of democracy, justice, and equality must continue to guide national institutions and decision-making.

Forces kill  
10 militants  
in separate...

FROM PAGE 01

on the National Action Plan, which aims to eliminate what Pakistan describes as foreign-sponsored terrorism. An attempt to ambush a security forces' convoy in North Waziristan's Mir Ali district was thwarted, security sources said on Thursday. According to security sources, Fitna al Khawarij militants attempted to attack a convoy on the main highway. Fitna al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tareekh-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). They said the incident occurred when the convoy was passing through a populated area. Militants linked to Fitna al Khawarij attempted to ambush the security convoy near a residential locality, they said, adding that security forces responded swiftly, thwarting the attack.

President,  
PM laud..

FROM PAGE 01

security institutions to safeguard the country and protect its people. He praised the exceptional bravery and professional capabilities of the security forces, stating that their sacrifices and vigilance were central to the defence of national security and public safety. President Zardari said such successful operations reflected the determination of the state to foil the designs of hostile elements seeking to undermine peace in Balochistan and elsewhere in the country. He reiterated the nation's full confidence in the armed forces and security agencies in their fight against terrorism. In a separate statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also commended the security forces for their successful operation against Fitna-al-Hindustan terrorists in Qalat district.

Amad Diallo and Mahrez strike at  
AFCON as Ivory Coast, Algeria win

*Diallo, Mahrez Shine as Ivory Coast, Algeria Win; Cameroon and Burkina Faso Also Triumph as AFCON Group Stage Concludes in Morocco with Dramatic Late Goals, Red Cards, and Title Hopes*

RABAT: Amad Diallo and Riyad Mahrez starred as defending champions Ivory Coast and former winners Algeria had contrasting victories on Wednesday when the first round of African Cup of Nations (AFCON) group matches concluded in Morocco. Manchester United winger Diallo struck early in the second half with a close-range shot to give the Ivorians a hard-earned 1-0 Group F victory over Mozambique in wet Marrakesh. Earlier, Algeria cruised to a 3-0 Group E win over 10-man Sudan in Rabat with another winger, former Manchester City star Mahrez, becoming the third player to bag a brace at the tournament. Elsewhere, an early Karl Etta Eyoung goal gave Cameroon a tense 1-0 win over Gabon in Agadir and Burkina Faso scored twice deep in added time to beat Equatorial Guinea 2-1 in Casablanca. Ivory Coast, who face Cameroon and Gabon in their remaining group matches, are aiming to become the first nation since Egypt in 2010 to successfully defend the premier African football title. Defeat prolonged the Mozambican pursuit of an

AFCON victory – they have drawn four matches and lost 12 since their 1986 debut. Winger Elias 'Domingues' Pelembe came off the Mozambique bench on 67 minutes at the age of 42, making him the second oldest player to compete at an AFCON after 44-year-old Egypt goalkeeper Essam El Hadary. Diallo ended the brave, well-organised resistance of the Mozambicans early in the second half, firing past Siluane from inside the box after a cross was headed into his path. Cameroon needed only six minutes to score the lone goal of a fiery central African showdown with Gabon as Etta Eyoung slammed the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Loyce Mbaba. Captain Mahrez scored in each half as 2019 champions Algeria eased to a 3-0 win over 10-man Sudan. Mahrez got the opener after just 82 seconds to the delight of the Algerian fans who made up the vast majority of the 16,115 crowd at the Moulay El Hassan Stadium. Now with Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia, Mahrez got his and his team's second goal just after the hour mark and Ibrahim Maza wrapped up the win late on as

Algeria started in the best possible fashion. Among the spectators in the Moroccan capital was France legend Zinedine Zidane, whose parents came from Algeria and whose son Luca was starting in goal for the Desert Foxes. His appearance on big screens in the ground drew huge cheers from Algerian supporters who will have been delighted to see their team produce a convincing performance. Algeria were eliminated in the first round without a win at each of the last two AFCON tournaments but wasted no time in breaking the deadlock against the group outsiders. The match was little over a minute old when Mohamed Amoura's ball across the penalty box was met by a back-heel from Hicham Boudaoui to tee up Mahrez. He took a touch before firing in. Zidane then did well to save at the feet of Sudan's Yaser Awad Boshara but Algeria were by far the better side. Sudan's chances of getting back into the game were then severely dented when Salaheldin Adil was sent off six minutes before the interval

for a second booking for chopping down Rayan Ait-Nouri. Rami Bensebaini had a goal disallowed for offside moments later but Mahrez made it 2-0 on 61 minutes as he connected with a lovely outside-of-the-boot assist from Amoura. Mahrez, appearing at his sixth AFCON, now has eight goals at the tournament. He came off to an ovation from the Algerian fans late on. Substitute Maza, of Bayer Leverkusen, finished from Baghdad Bounedjah's knockdown with five minutes left to score Algeria's 100th AFCON goal and make it 3-0. Sudan have now won just once in 17 Cup of Nations matches since lifting the trophy in 1970. Earlier in the same group, Burkina Faso came from behind to beat 10-man Equatorial Guinea 2-1 thanks to two goals deep in injury time. Basilio Ndong was sent off just after half-time for Equatorial Guinea but they looked set to win the game when substitute Marvin Anieboh headed in on 85 minutes. However, Georgi Minoungou equalised in the fifth added minute before Leverkusen defender Edmond Tapsoba grabbed a dramatic 98th-minute winner. – Agencies

Dubai Basketball edge Milan  
to secure EuroLeague victory

Dubai Basketball Dominate at Home Again, Beating Milan 99-92 in EuroLeague as Bacon Shines, Fans Roar at Coca-Cola Arena, and Unbeaten ABA League Clash with KRKA Looms

DUBAI: Dubai Basketball strengthened their home-court reputation with a 99-92 win over EA7 Emporio Armani Milan in Round 18 of the EuroLeague at Coca-Cola Arena on Tuesday, cheered on by more than 5,000 fans. The hosts made a fast start and immediately imposed themselves at both ends of the floor. Canadian center Mfondu Kabengele and Serbian big man Filip Petrušev controlled the paint early, creating close-range scoring opportunities and forcing Milan into defensive adjustments. With McKinley Wright IV and Dwayne Bacon adding pace and penetration, Dubai surged into a double-digit lead and dictated tempo of the opening quarter. Milan struggled to settle and spent much of the first period on the back foot, as Dubai's advantage stretched to 15 points. Although the visitors steadied themselves as the quarter progressed, the early deficit proved costly. Dubai head coach Jurica Golemac praised the impact of the home crowd after the game, saying: "Congratulations to the fans. We were



missing them for sure in the last home game, and they helped us a lot. In the first quarter, we played one of our best quarters this season. The next game is at home in three days, so there is no time to rest too much. We need to prepare for that game first. We are not thinking three games ahead – we prepare for every game and

try to win every game." Milan showed improved rhythm in the second quarter, but Dubai responded before the break. Bacon punished defensive lapses from beyond the arc, while Kabengele finished strongly inside to help the hosts take a seven-point lead into halftime. The final period was defined by composure

rather than flair. Milan threatened to draw level on several occasions, but missed free throws and execution errors halted their momentum. Bacon sealed the outcome from the free-throw line in the final two minutes, pushing Dubai back into a double-digit advantage and closing out the contest. – Agencies

UAE marks 2025 with  
global competitive-  
ness milestones

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates has secured leading positions across several major global competitiveness indices in 2025, underscoring a period of rapid institutional and economic growth that has placed the nation among the world's most influential economies. The country ranked among the global top five in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2025, scoring 96.09 out of 100 points. This achievement marks a two-place ascent from the previous year, with the UAE maintaining its position as the top-ranked nation in the region for the ninth consecutive year. In the Global Soft Power Index 2025, released in February in London, the UAE ranked 10th globally, while its Nation Brand value rose from \$1 trillion to \$1.223 trillion in 2025. These gains were further mirrored in the 2025 UNDP Human Development Index, where the UAE climbed 11 spots to rank 15th globally. It remains the only Arab country among the world's top 20 nations for human development. Additionally, the UAE ranked 9th in the IMD World Talent Rankings, an eight-place jump from 2024, driven by high scores in workforce readiness and international appeal. In the healthcare sector, the UAE ranked first globally in health outreach programmes, community participation in health policy, and wellbeing promotion, according to the Health Inclusivity Index, developed by Haleon in partnership with Economist Impact. The UAE is among the top five countries globally for person-centred healthcare and second for inclusive health system implementation, while ranking tenth globally in health literacy. Technological leadership was highlighted in the second edition of the "State of Digital Transformation Report", where the UAE secured the top global ranking in the telecommunications infrastructure index, the institutional framework for digital government, and the digital content index. It also topped the global "Government AI Readiness Index 2024" by Oxford Insights, ranked third in government service delivery, and placed fourth in GovTech Maturity Index according to the World Bank. The country came in 11th in both the IMD's Digital Competitiveness Index and the UN E-Government Development Index. Safety and business environment continue to serve as pillars for the country's international standing. The UAE was named the safest country globally in the mid-2025 Numbeo Safety Index, recording a score of 85.2. – Agencies

Pope  
Leo XIV  
condemns  
'open...

FROM PAGE 01

Hamas on southern Israel rather than the expected independent investigation demanded by families of the victims. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has resisted calls to establish a state commission to investigate Israel's failures in the run-up to its deadliest day and has taken no responsibility for the attack that sparked the two-year Gaza war. His ruling coalition voted on Wednesday to advance a bill which grants parliament members the authority to pick panel members for an inquiry and gives Netanyahu's cabinet the power to set its mandate. Critics say the move circumvents Israel's 1968 Commissions of Inquiry Law, under which the president of the Supreme Court appoints an independent panel to investigate major state failures such as those which preceded the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

North Korea  
indicates  
progress...

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the U.S. administration under President Donald Trump. Kim labeled the South Korean initiative an "offensive act severely violating the North's security and maritime sovereignty," stating that the presence of U.S. nuclear assets in the region—such as the recent arrival of the USS Greeneville in Busan—makes North Korea's naval nuclearization "indispensable and urgent." "The present world is by no means peaceful. We must make the enemy recognize without a doubt that they will face a merciless retaliatory attack if they choose a military option," Kim was quoted as saying. The continued presence of Kim's daughter at high-level military inspections has not gone unnoticed by international observers. Analysts suggest that her inclusion in these strategic visits is a deliberate move to signal the long-term continuity of the Kim dynasty's nuclear program and to solidify her position as the next in line.

PIA plans  
to resume  
UK flights...

FROM PAGE 01

They said the arrangement was made to ensure the slots were not forfeited during the suspension period imposed on the airline. With restrictions now easing, the carrier has formally informed Heathrow Airport in writing of its decision to restart London flights from March 2026. In an event, the consortium entered a 135 billion bid, topping the offer of a rival group led by Lucky Cement in an intense back-and-forth that was broadcast live on television. Meanwhile, Arif Habib Consortium announced that Fauji Fertiliser Company Limited has joined its consortium, which acquired a 75% majority stake in PIA. The consortium, in its statement issued on Thursday, said the partnership will contribute to the airline's financial support and corporate expertise. It added that Fauji Fertiliser will also be part of the management structure along with the Arif Habib Consortium.

Partial annulment of presidential  
vote results in Bosnia's Serb entity

SARAJEVO: Bosnia's electoral commission on Wednesday annulled results at 136 polling stations over "irregularities" from November's snap vote to choose a successor to the banned president of the Bosnian Serb statelet, Milorad Dodik. The head of the electoral commission said that this might have been enough to affect the outcome. In the November 23 election for the president of Republika Srpska, the Dodik-backed candidate Sinisa Aran won 50.4 percent of the vote, while his main rival opposition-backed Branko Blanas garnered 48.2 percent. With fewer than 10,000 votes separating the two from some 450,000 cast, the opposition accused the Republika Srpska ruling coalition of fraud. They argued that that might have been enough to swing the vote in their favour. But the Central Electoral Commission (CIK) rapporteur, Miso Krstovic said Wednesday that "numerous irregularities were found in these early elections". Annuling the results in some polling stations was necessary "to protect the integrity of the electoral process", he added. And Jovan Kalaba, president of CIK added: "By analyzing

these polling stations, we have established that [the irregularities] may have influenced the outcome." The CIK's decision is not final and the parties have two days to challenge it in court. But if it is cleared by the court, the CIK would have to call fresh elections in the polling stations concerned. Dodik, who still leads the SNSD party, denounced the decision. "CIK is undermining confidence in the electoral system in Bosnia. They have decided to mock and humiliate voters," Dodik told reporters on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Blanas's SDS party welcomed the decision, saying it protected the "electoral will of the citizens". November's vote was marked by a turnout of less than 36 percent. It was held after Dodik, who had led Republika Srpska for nearly two decades, was ejected from office in August. That followed his conviction by a local court for ignoring rulings by Christian Schmidt, the top international envoy who oversees the peace deal which ended Bosnia's inter-ethnic war in the 1990s. Dodik, 66, was banned from public office for six years. – APP

Proud dad Zinedine Zidane watches  
Algeria beat Sudan 3-0

*Zidane Watches Son as Mahrez Double Powers Algeria Past Sudan; Burkina Faso Stun Equatorial Guinea with Dramatic Stoppage-Time Comeback as AFCON Group E Action Unfolds in Morocco*

RABAT, Morocco: France great Zinedine Zidane watched his goalkeeper son's safe hands as Algeria started its Africa Cup of Nations campaign with a 3-0 win over 10-man Sudan on Wednesday. Riyad Mahrez scored twice and the 20-year-old Ibrahim Maza scored his first international goal for Algeria, one of the tournament favorites, to move top of Group E. "The most important thing was to start with a win," Mahrez said. "The last two AFCONs, we didn't start good. Today, we really wanted to make it happen and we did." Zidane, who was at the sweet-smelling Moulay El Hassan Stadium in Rabat to see his son Luca Zidane playing in the Algeria goal, was feted by the crowd every time he was shown on the big screens. Luca Zidane opted to represent his grandfather's country after getting the Fennec Foxes' invitation and he's been given his chance to shine because of an injury to Alexandre Oukidja, who might have been expected to start otherwise. Algeria wasted little time Wednesday with Mahrez sweeping in the opener in the second minute after unselfish play from Hicham Boudaoui to set him up. Zidane was called into action shortly after

ward to deny Yaser Awad on a break. Sudan had to play all its qualification games away from home because of the nearly 1,000-day old civil war ravaging the country. Though the Algerians looked confident and

played with intensity, the big chances fell at the other end, with Zidane saving again from Awad before Abdel Raouf fired over. Salah Adil was sent off just as the rain began to fall shortly before the break with his



second yellow card for a foul on Rayan Ait-Nouri, who would have been through otherwise. But the Algerian fans, who were in a majority, needed to be patient. Mohammed Amoura produced a brilliant cross with the outside of his boot for Mahrez to score in the 61st, and Baghdad Bounedjah headed the ball into Maza's path for the substitute to complete the scoring in the 85th. **Drama in Casablanca:** Edmond Tapsoba completed a remarkable turnaround as Burkina Faso scored two goals in stoppage time to beat 10-man Equatorial Guinea 2-1 in the early Group E game. Tapsoba's team had pushed hard for the opening goal after Basilio Ndong was sent off early in the second half for a bad challenge on Bertrand Traoré's ankle. Marvin Anieboh then stunned the Stallions when he launched himself at Carlos Akapo's cross to score with a looping header in the 85th minute. Georgi Minoungou equalized in the fifth minute of stoppage time and Tapsoba headed the winner three minutes after that. Later Wednesday in Group F, defending champion Ivory Coast began its title defense against Mozambique in Marrakech and five-time champion Cameroon opened against Gabon in the coastal city of Agadir. – APP



## Briefs

**2 dead in Israeli strike near Syria border**

BEIRUT: Lebanon said an Israeli strike near the border with Syria killed two people on Thursday, as a deadline nears for Lebanon's army to disarm militant group Hezbollah in the country's south. Despite a November 2024 ceasefire that was supposed to end more than a year of hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah, Israel has kept up strikes on Lebanon and has also maintained troops in five southern areas it deems strategic. "An Israeli enemy strike today on a vehicle in the town of Hawsh Al-Sayyed Ali in the Hermel district killed two people," the health ministry said, with the state-run National News Agency saying the raid targeted a van. The NNA also reported that a man wounded in an Israeli strike last week near Beirut had died of his injuries.

It identified him as a member of Lebanon's General Security agency and said "he happened to be passing at the time of the strike as he returned from service" in Beirut. The health ministry had said that strike targeted a vehicle on the Shouf district's Jadra-Siblin road, around 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of the capital, killing one person and wounding five others, while an AFP photographer had seen a damaged goods truck. On Tuesday, Lebanon's army said a soldier was among those killed in an Israeli strike a day earlier and denied the Israeli military's accusation that he was a Hezbollah operative. Under heavy US pressure and fears of expanded Israeli strikes, Lebanon has committed to disarming Hezbollah, starting with the south. The army plans to complete the group's disarmament south of the Litani River — about 30 kilometers (19 miles) from the border with Israel — by year's end. Lebanese army chief Rodolphe Haykal told a military meeting on Tuesday "the army is in the process of finishing the first phase of its plan." More than 340 people have been killed by Israeli fire in Lebanon since the ceasefire, according to an AFP tally of Lebanese health ministry reports.—APP

**Egypt rules out new energy burdens on citizens**

RIYADH: Egypt's government said it will impose no new burdens on citizens in the energy sector, including petroleum and natural gas, as it moves toward the final year of its economic reform program with the International Monetary Fund. Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said the targets agreed with the IMF through the end of the program "do not relate to anything that affects the Egyptian citizen," seeking to counter speculation about additional austerity measures. Speaking at the weekly press conference following a cabinet meeting in the New Administrative Capital, Madbouly said the IMF has completed the fifth and sixth reviews of Egypt's reform program. A Facebook post on the official Egyptian Cabinet Presidency page stated: "The Prime Minister explained that the IMF program will end within a year from now, noting that what has been done during the current stage is to follow up on the targets of the fifth and sixth reviews, in addition to agreeing on the targets of the two remaining reviews in the program, the seventh and eighth, which required more effort on the part of the Egyptian government to reach an understanding with the fund on the targets of these two reviews." Madbouly said IMF assessments praised Egypt's stabilization efforts, citing improved balance-of-payments indicators and a narrowing current-account deficit despite external shocks. He pointed to stronger non-oil exports and fiscal performance, including a primary surplus of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product in fiscal year 2024-25, alongside higher tax revenues and monetary policies aimed at easing inflation. Such evaluations matter for capital flows, Madbouly said, as foreign investors closely track IMF reporting when making investment decisions. He also cited a Moody's report, saying the rating agency pointed to a sharp decline in inflation to 12.5 percent year on year.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Muhammad Humair Karim, and Country Director of the Asian Development Bank, Emma Fan, display the signed documents between Pakistan and ADB.

# Turkiye detains 115 alleged Daesh members

Syria says detained senior Daesh jihadist in Damascus

ISTANBUL: Some 115 alleged members of the Daesh group suspected of planning attacks during the end of year holidays have been arrested in Türkiye, Istanbul's prosecutor general said Thursday. "Following intelligence indicating that the Daesh terrorist organization was planning attacks during Christmas and New Year celebrations," the prosecutor's office ordered the detention of 137 people, 115 of whom have been arrested, the Istanbul prosecutor general's office said in a statement.

Turkiye shares a 900-kilometer (559-mile) border with Syria, where militants groups are still active and where Daesh was accused of an attack in mid-December that killed two US soldiers and one civilian. Meanwhile, Syrian authorities have arrested a senior Daesh group official in the Damascus region in a joint operation with a US-led international coalition, a security official said on Wednesday. Taha Al-Zoubi, also known as Abu Omar Tabiya, an Daesh leader in Damascus, was

detained with several of his men, General Ahmad Al-Dalati was reported as saying by state news agency SANA. The arrest came less than two weeks after a December 13 attack killed two US soldiers and a US civilian that Washington said was carried out by a lone Daesh gunman in central Syria's Palmyra. "Our specialized units, in cooperation with the General Intelligence Directorate and International Coalition forces, carried out a precise security operation

targeting" an Daesh hideout, Dalati said. On December 20, a Syria monitor said that five Daesh members were killed in US strikes in retaliation for the December 13 attack. It was the first such incident since the overthrow of longtime ruler Bashar Assad in December last year, and Syrian authorities said the perpetrator was a security forces member who was due to be fired for his "extremist Islamist ideas.—Agencies

## Russia says made 'proposal' to France over jailed researcher

MOSCOW: Moscow has made an offer to Paris regarding jailed French researcher Laurent Vinatier, who is facing espionage charges that could see him sentenced to 20 years in a Russian prison, the Kremlin said on Thursday. The surprise public overture comes as both Russia and France have expressed interest in possible talks between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron. Vinatier, who works for a Swiss conflict mediation NGO and was jailed in June 2024, is serving a three-year sentence for failing to register as a "foreign agent" but faces fresh allegations of spying. "There were appropriate contacts between our side and the French. Indeed, a proposal was made to the French regarding Vinatier," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, including AFP. Peskov did not provide details. "The ball is now in France's court," he added. Vinatier's family have rejected the accusations against him, saying he is a victim of tensions between Moscow and Paris over the war in Ukraine. Western countries have long accused Russia of arresting their citizens on baseless charges, seeking to use them as bargaining chips to secure the release of alleged Russian spies and cyber criminals jailed in Europe and the United States. Putin said last week he would look into Vinatier's case after a French journalist asked him about it during an end-of-year televised press conference. "I don't know anything about this case. This is the first I've heard of it," Putin said. "But I promise you I'll definitely find out what it is. And if there's even the slightest chance of resolving this matter favorably, if Russian law allows it, we'll make every effort," Putin said. Asked by AFP about the Kremlin statement, the French foreign ministry declined to comment. The Kremlin said at weekend that Putin was "ready" to engage in dialogue with Macron. This came after the French leader extended an olive branch to Moscow, opening the chances the two men would soon speak amid a flurry of diplomacy over the Ukraine war. Macron has urged Russia to free Vinatier, saying he is being unfairly detained and that the "propaganda" against him "does not match reality." He is one of several Westerners to have been arrested after Putin launched an all-out offensive on Ukraine in February 2022.—DNA

## Algeria votes to declare French colonization crime

ALGIERS: Legislators in Algeria voted to declare France's colonization of the North African country a crime, approving a law that calls for restitution of property taken by France during its 130-year rule, among other demands seeking to redress historical wrongs France slammed the law as a "hostile act" threatening bilateral efforts to heal wounds of the past. The two countries retain close cultural and economic ties but have troubled diplomatic relations. In a solemn ceremony steeped in symbolism, 340 of 407 members of Algeria's National Assembly voted late Wednesday to approve the law. The move came just a few weeks after African countries made a collective resolution for recognition and reparations for colonial-era crimes. The law covers the period from the landing of King Charles X's army on the beaches of Sidi Ferruch west of Algiers in 1830 to July 5, 1962, the date of Algeria's official independence. The text provides for the restitution of Algerian archives and property moved to France during the colonial period, and the transmission to Algiers of detailed maps of French nuclear tests conducted in Algeria from 1960 to 1966. It also calls for the repatriation of the remains of some Algerian resistance fighters taken to France. The law stipulates prison sentences for any action by an Algerian celebrating French colonialism, for attacks on symbols of the Algerian resistance, and "remarks with colonial connotations." France is unlikely to heed the demands in the law. The law is "a manifestly hostile initiative," the French Foreign Ministry spokesperson's office said in a statement to The Associated Press. It noted efforts under French President Emmanuel Macron to address colonial-era grievances, and added: "We continue to work toward the renewal of dialogue," notably about security and migration issues. Macron, in 2017, described elements of France's history in Algeria as a crime against humanity, but stopped short of an official apology. Meanwhile, the resurgent far right in France celebrates colonialists. The economic cost of colonialism in Africa is believed to be staggering. Algeria suffered some of the most brutal forms of French colonial rule. Nearly a million European settlers held greater political, economic and social privileges, even though Algeria was legally part of France and its men were conscripted in World War II. Hundreds of thousands died in Algeria's revolution, during which French forces tortured detainees, disappeared suspects and devastated villages as part of a counterinsurgency strategy to maintain their grip on power. Huge Algerian flags adorned the lower house of parliament as speaker Mohamed Bouhali delivered his opening address Wednesday. "Today, December 24, 2025, is a historic day, to be written in letters of gold in the national narrative," he began, before being interrupted by lawmakers intoning an excerpt from the Algerian national anthem: "O France, the hour of reckoning has arrived ... we have sworn to revive Algeria, bear witness! Bear witness!"—APP

## Jordan's exports to Syria jump 341% in first 10 months

RIYADH: Jordan's national exports to Syria rose to 203 million Jordanian dinars (\$286 million) in the first 10 months of 2025, marking a 341.3 percent year-on-year increase, new figures show. According to foreign trade data issued by the Department of Statistics, Jordan's imports from Syria reached around 75 million dinars over the same period, up 47.1 percent annually, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Total trade between the two countries stood at 278 million dinars in the first 10 months of the year, compared with 97 million dinars in the same period of 2024. The growth reflects closer bilateral ties, as Jordan has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Syria's recovery and reintegration, a relationship seen as important for reconstruction efforts as well as regional stability and economic cooperation. In May, the two sides also agreed to draft a comprehensive road map to guide future cooperation, with a focus on investment, joint ventures and reconstruction initiatives. "Trade relations between Jordan and Syria recorded notable growth over the last ten months of this year, driven by the resumption of commercial activity and a marked increase in bilateral trade flows," the Petra report stated. It added: "Jordanian exports to Syria are primarily concentrated in construction-related industries and building materials, including cement, steel, marble, tiles, paints, and pipes, in addition to electrical equipment, as well as food, agricultural, and chemical products." Jordan and Syria are also expected to strengthen cooperation and exchange expertise in the banking and financial sectors, following meetings between the two countries' central bank governors earlier this month.—APP

# The threat of Yemen's fragmentation is far reaching

Ultimately, we urge the separatists to choose reason over recklessness. Partitioning Yemen will not bring peace — it will sow the seeds of future wars, embolden extremist actors, and pose a threat not only to Yemen's internal cohesion but to regional and international stability. As Western and American policymakers know all too well: what happens in Yemen never stays in Yemen

RIYADH: As Yemen's political landscape continues to shift at a dizzying pace, it is worth pausing to reflect on the official Saudi position — and the commentary of some of our leading Saudi columnists — regarding the recent unilateral moves by the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in the governorates of Hadramout and Al-Mahrah. These actions, taken without the consent of the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) or coordination with the Arab Coalition, represent a dangerous gamble with the future of a fragile nation — one that Saudi Arabia, like its Arab neighbors, wishes only peace, stability, and prosperity. There is no ambiguity in the Kingdom's stance: it has worked tirelessly to preserve calm in Hadramout and Al-Mahrah, steering both regions away from military escalation and toward peaceful solutions. In a bid to contain the situation, Saudi Arabia, in coordination with its brothers and partners in the United Arab Emirates and the PLC, dispatched a joint team to negotiate with the STC. The goal was clear — facilitate the withdrawal of STC forces and hand over military sites to the National Shield Forces. Yet despite Riyadh's call for de-escalation and its appeal to

the STC to prioritize national interest and social cohesion, the Council has persisted in its confrontational posture, seemingly indifferent to the grave consequences of its actions. Observers in Riyadh will note that the Kingdom remains steadfast in its support for the PLC and Yemen's internationally recognized government. Its commitment to Yemen's stability is not rhetorical — it is political, economic, and developmental. Saudi Arabia's vision is to shepherd Yemen from the shadows of conflict into an era of peace, prosperity, and regional integration. This is not merely a function of geography or shared borders; it is a reflection of the Kingdom's religious, political, and economic responsibilities in the Arab and Islamic world. From this vantage point, the newspaper firmly believes that the STC's unilateral actions in Hadramout constitute a blatant violation of Yemen's transitional framework. They undermine the legitimacy of the recognized government, threaten the fragile peace, and jeopardize the political process. Worse still, they echo the very tactics employed by the Houthi militias — an

alarming parallel that should not be ignored. It is therefore essential to reiterate the Kingdom's position: the STC must withdraw its forces from Hadramout and Al-Mahrah, restoring the status quo ante. This is not a punitive demand, but a necessary step to safeguard national security and prevent further military flare-ups. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has consistently affirmed that the southern issue is a just cause — one that must be addressed in any future political settlement. It is enshrined in the outcomes of Yemen's National Dialogue and must be resolved inclusively, reflecting the aspirations of all southern Yemenis — not reduced to the ambitions of all southern individual, including the likes of Aidarous Al-Zubaidi or other STC figures. Ultimately, we urge the separatists to choose reason over recklessness. Partitioning Yemen will not bring peace — it will sow the seeds of future wars, embolden extremist actors, and pose a threat not only to Yemen's internal cohesion but to regional and international stability. As Western and American policymakers know all too well: what happens in Yemen never stays in Yemen.—Agencies

## Coast Guard rescue 52 migrants off Greece, boy missing

ATHENS: Greek coast guard were searching Thursday for a missing child off the island of Farmakonisi after rescuing 52 migrants in two separate incidents in the Aegean Sea, local media reported. They found 13 migrants who had arrived on the small, uninhabited island, but one boy was reported missing from the group, said the ANA news agency. Another 39 migrants were found on board an inflatable boat off the southern island of Crete, according to the same source. They were taken to the village of Kaloi Limenes in Crete. No details about their nationality were provided.

Two coast guard vessels and an airforce helicopter were deployed for the operation off Farmakonisi, opposite the Turkish coast.

Many migrants try to reach the Greek islands from Turkey or Libya as a way of entering the European Union. But both crossings are perilous. Earlier this month, 17 people were found dead in a migrant boat drifting off Crete. Another 15 people were reported missing. The vessel had set off from the Libyan port of Tobruk and most of those who died were from Sudan or Egypt. The UN refugee agency said more than 16,770 asylum seekers in the EU have arrived on Crete since the start of the year — more than any other island in the Aegean Sea.

## Jordanian forces destroy arms and drug trafficking workshops

LONDON: The Jordanian military conducted a crackdown on several drug gangs involved in smuggling weapons and narcotics along the northern border with Syria. The military announced on Wednesday that it targeted several factories and workshops used by gangs involved in arms and drug trafficking, which they used as bases for launching unlawful operations toward the heart of Jordanian territory. Armed Forces destroyed the sites after receiving intelligence in coordination with regional partners, according to the Petra news agency. Syrian state media broadcaster Al-Ikhbariya reported on Telegram that the Jordanian army targeted "drug smuggling networks and storage farms in the southern and eastern countryside" of Sweida, in southern Syria. The Jordanian Army is prepared to confront anyone threatening the security of the homeland and its citizens, addressing any threats with force as needed, The Petra added.—APP

## Turkiye begins black box analysis of jet crash

ISTANBUL: The technical analysis of the recovered black boxes from a jet crash that killed eight people, including western Libya's military chief, began as the investigation proceeded in cooperation with Libyan authorities, the Turkish Ministry of Defense said Thursday. The private jet with Gen. Muhammad Ali Ahmad Al-Haddad, four other military officials and three crew members crashed on Tuesday after taking off from Türkiye's capital, Ankara, killing everyone on board. Libyan officials said the cause of the crash was a technical malfunction on the plane. The high-level Libyan delegation was on its way back to Tripoli after holding defense talks in Ankara aimed at boosting military cooperation between the two countries. The wreckage was scattered across an area covering 3 square kilometers (more than a square mile), complicating recovery efforts, according to the Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya. A 22-person delegation, including five family members, arrived from Libya early on Wednesday to assist in the investigation.—APP



## Briefs

DPM Dar  
reaffirms  
commitment  
to equality

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday said the coinciding occasions of the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the celebration of Christmas reflected Pakistan's inclusive vision and strong moral foundations, rooted in equality, pluralism and respect for fundamental rights.

The DPM/FM paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, describing him as not only the architect of Pakistan's independence but also a statesman of unwavering principles and exceptional clarity of vision, a statement from the DPM's Office news said. He said the Quaid had envisioned Pakistan as a democratic state based on equality, pluralism and respect for the rights of all citizens, without distinction of religion, race or ethnicity.

Recalling Quaid-e-Azam's historic address of August 11, 1947, the DPM/FM noted that the founder of the nation had categorically affirmed that the state would make no distinction between its citizens. He said Pakistan's commitment to protecting minority rights, equality and religious freedom remained a cornerstone of the Constitution and the country's national ethos.

Direct  
national polls  
in Somalia

NEWS DESK

MOGADISHU: Residents of Somalia's capital Mogadishu voted on Thursday in municipal elections meant to pave the way for the East African country's first direct national polls in more than half a century.

With the exception of votes in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and the breakaway region of Somaliland, Somalia last held direct elections in 1969, months before military general, Mohamed Siad Barre, took power in a coup.

After years of civil war that followed Barre's fall in 1991, indirect elections were introduced in 2004. The idea was to promote consensus among rival clans in the face of an Islamist insurgency, although some Somalis say politicians prefer indirect elections because they create opportunities for corruption. Under the system, clan representatives elect lawmakers, who then choose the president. The president, in turn, has been responsible for appointing Mogadishu's mayor.

The vote in Mogadishu, a city of some 3 million people where security conditions have improved in recent years despite continuing attacks by Al-Qaeda-linked al Shabab militants, is seen as a test run for direct elections at the national level.

Japan to test  
mine rare-  
earth mud  
from deep  
seabed

DNA

TOKYO: Japan will conduct test mining of rare-earth-rich mud from the deep seabed off Minamitori Island, some 1,900 kilometers (1,180 miles) southeast of Tokyo, from January 11 to February 14, the head of the government-backed project said on Tuesday. The operation will mark the world's first attempt to continuously lift rare-earth mud from a depth of around 6,000 meters on to a vessel. Tokyo, like its Western allies, is seeking to secure stable supplies of critical minerals as China, the dominant supplier of rare earths, tightens export controls. "One of our missions is to build a supply chain for domestically produced rare earths to ensure stable supply of minerals essential to industry."

## Unified Strength

Field Marshal Asim Munir  
celebrates Christmas at Church

The Field Marshal highlighted the Quaid's enduring vision of equality, freedom, and religious tolerance, stating that the strength of the nation is rooted in its diversity and the shared constitutional values that bind all citizens together regardless of religion, ethnicity, or creed



DNA

RAWALPINDI: In a powerful demonstration of national unity and interfaith harmony, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) & Chief of

Defence Forces (CDF), joined the Christian community today at Christ Church, Rawalpindi, to celebrate Christmas. The visit by the Field Marshal, who now leads the unified command of the Pakistan Armed Forces, was marked by warm interactions and a reaffirmation of the inclusive

vision of Pakistan's founding father. Addressing the congregation, Field Marshal Asim Munir paid a glowing tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birth anniversary. He emphasized that the protection of minority rights is not merely a legal obligation but a "cor-

nerstone of Pakistan's ideology."

The Field Marshal highlighted the Quaid's enduring vision of equality, freedom, and religious tolerance, stating that the strength of the nation is rooted in its diversity and the shared constitutional values that bind all citizens together regardless of religion, ethnicity, or creed. During his interaction with the community, the COAS & CDF lauded the "enduring and proud contributions" of Pakistani Christians toward national development. He specifically acknowledged the distinguished service of Christian officers and soldiers within the Pakistan Armed Forces, noting their bravery and dedication across generations in defending the motherland.

The Field Marshal reiterated the Armed Forces' unwavering commitment to upholding the dignity and equal rights of all citizens as enshrined in the Constitution, Fostering interfaith harmony and mutual respect to defeat divisive forces. Ensuring the security of all communities across the country. "Pakistan's strength lies in its diversity and equal opportunities. We stand united as a resolute nation to safeguard our shared future," the Field Marshal remarked.

Christian community leaders expressed their profound gratitude for the visit, noting that the presence of the Field Marshal on this joyous occasion strengthens the bonds of national unity. They acknowledged the pivotal role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in ensuring religious harmony and protecting the sovereignty of the state. The ceremony concluded with special prayers for the peace, harmony, and prosperity of Pakistan.

Zelensky  
moves  
towards  
demilitarised  
zones

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky has given details of an updated peace plan offering Russia the potential withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the east and the creation of a demilitarised zone in their place. Detailing the 20-point plan agreed by US and Ukrainian envoys in Florida at the weekend, Zelensky said the Russians would respond on Wednesday once the Americans had spoken to them. Describing the plan as "the main framework for ending the war", he said it proposed security guarantees from the US, Nato and Europeans for a co-ordinated military response if Russia invaded Ukraine again. On the key question of Ukraine's eastern Donbas, Zelensky said a "free economic zone" was a potential option. He told journalists that as Ukraine was against withdrawal, US negotiators were looking to establish a demilitarised zone or a free economic zone. Any area that Ukrainian troops pulled out of would have to be policed by Ukraine, he stressed. "There are two options," Zelensky said, "either the war continues, or something will have to be decided regarding all potential economic zones."

Four guilty  
after girl, 16,  
raped and  
exploited

DNA

LONDON: Four men have been found guilty after a teenage girl was raped and sexually exploited. Arqash Zaffar, Shiraz Nassir, Mohammed Nadim and Shaban Arif were convicted for their part in assaulting the 16-year-old girl during a "horrific ordeal", said West Midlands police.

Zaffar and Nassir were found guilty of rape, Nadim of sexual assault and Arif of facilitating travel for sexual exploitation. Police said the girl was assaulted several times by the group after being picked up in Birmingham, before being taken to Denton, Greater Manchester, and Walsall where she was raped by the pair and other unknown men. Zaffar and Nadim targeted the girl while she was waiting for the bus on Alum Rock Road in Birmingham, with Zaffar asking for her number.

14 countries condemn  
new settlements in  
occupied West Bank

DNA

TULKARM: Fourteen countries including Britain, Canada, France and others have condemned the Israeli security cabinet's approval of 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, prompting strong criticism from Tel Aviv. Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced that authorities had greenlit the settlements, saying the move was aimed at preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state. "On the ground, we are blocking the establishment of a Palestinian terror state," said Smotrich, a vocal proponent of settlement expansion and a settler himself. Subsequently, fourteen countries, including Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Canada, issued a statement late on Wednesday urging Israel to reverse its decision. "We call on Israel to reverse this decision, as well as the expansion of settlements," said a joint statement released by Britain, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. Such unilateral actions, they said, "violate international law", and risk undermining a fragile ceasefire in Gaza in force since October 10. They also reaffirmed their "unwavering commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution ... where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side-by-side in peace and security".

"We recall that such unilateral actions, as part of a wider intensification of the settlement policies in the West Bank, not only violate international law but also risk fuelling instability," the statement said. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar rejected the statement by foreign countries in an X post late on Wednesday, saying the decision aimed to help address security threats faced by Israel.

"Foreign governments will not restrict the right of Jews to live in the Land of Israel, and any such call is morally wrong and discriminatory against Jews," Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said. "The cabinet decision to establish 11 new settlements and to formalise eight additional settlements is intended, among other things, to help address the security threats Israel is facing." Since the start of Israel's assault in Gaza in October 2023 following Hamas's attack on Israel, calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state have multiplied, with several countries moving to formally recognise such a state. Among those countries were some of those that condemned the settlement expansion drive.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Excluding east Jerusalem, which was occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967, more than 500,000 Israelis live in the West Bank, along with about three million Palestinian residents. Earlier this month, the United Nations said the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, all of which are illegal under international law, had reached its highest level since at least 2017.

Iranian Ambassador  
extends felicitations  
on Quaid-e-Azam DayThe Ambassador reaffirmed Iran's  
respect for Quaid-e-Azam's legacy  
and commitment to strengthening  
bilateral ties between Iran and Pak

ISLAMABAD: Iran Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam has extended his felicitations to the Government and the Nation of Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birth anniversary. In his message on Thursday, the Ambassador highlighted Quaid-e-Azam's visionary leadership, commitment to the Islamic Ummah and struggle for justice and dignity. He noted that Quaid-e-Azam's ideals of unity, faith and discipline remained guiding pillars of Pakistan's national journey. The Ambassador reaffirmed Iran's respect for Quaid-e-Azam's legacy and commitment to strengthening bilateral ties between Iran and Pakistan. He prayed for Pakistan's progress and stability, guided by Quaid-e-Azam's noble vision and principles. - DNA

Shahzad Akbar says injured in  
assault near Cambridge home

PTI says incident reflects growing concerns about safety of political dissidents living in exile in UK

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Barrister Shahzad Akbar, a former adviser to ex-prime minister Imran Khan, was seriously injured in a violent assault near his home in Cambridge, according to a statement from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the



former aide. In a statement, Akbar told Geo News that he was attacked by a white assailant wearing a mask, gloves, and protective clothing, suggesting premeditation.

"The attacker has left me with a broken nose and a fracture to my jaw. I was woken up to a door bell at around 8am. I opened the door and a white man started punching me for several minutes. I resisted and he left. My family woke up and came downstairs to see me. The attacker returned after a minute and assaulted me again. This time he made a film and took pictures too". The former PM's aide said he fell unconscious and was taken to the nearby hospital for treatment. "I have registered a complaint against the assailant," he said. The PTI has condemned the assault, saying it highlights growing concerns about the safety of political dissidents living in exile in the UK. Akbar, who fled Pakistan after the ouster of the PTI government in 2022, has become a critic of the government and has faced legal actions and accusations at home. "This horrifying incident is not the first attack on Akbar since he was forced to flee Pakistan due to threats to his life," said the PTI in its statement. This attack comes more than two years after Akbar survived an acid attack at his Hertfordshire home in 2023, an incident he claimed was politically motivated.

PM hopeful Tarique  
Rahman arrives  
in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Aspiring prime minister and political heavyweight Tarique Rahman was welcomed back to Bangladesh on Thursday by huge crowds of supporters after his 17 years in self-imposed exile. Rahman, the son of former prime minister Khaleida Zia and heir apparent of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), shook hands with party leaders after touching down at the Dhaka airport. Accompanied by his wife and daughter, he waved to supporters before ducking into a convoy under tight security, video posted by his party showed. Since early Thursday, BNP-backers have been gathering in the capital, plastering the streets with banners and festoons bearing images of Rahman. Patriotic songs blared from loudspeakers while cut-outs depicted Rahman riding a stallion. Rahman left Bangladesh for London in 2008 after what he has described as political persecution. As acting chairman of the BNP, Rahman will lead the party through the February 12 general election, the first polls since ex-premier Sheikh Hasina's exit following a student-led uprising last year. The BNP is widely seen as an election frontrunner, with Rahman expected to be put forward as prime minister if his party wins a majority. Rahman's ailing mother, 80-year-old former leader Zia, is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dhaka. Despite years of ill health and imprisonment, Zia vowed in November to campaign in the upcoming elections. But she was hospitalised soon after making that pledge, and has been in intensive care ever since. Rahman's return comes after recent unrest over the killing of popular student leader Sharif Osman Hadi, a staunch India-critic who took part in last year's mass uprising. - Agencies

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

OPD

PATIENT ROOM

EMERGENCY CARE UNIT

ICU

DIALYSIS UNIT

X-RAY ROOM

LAB

PHARMACY

RADIOLOGY

ENDOSCOPY

ECG

ULTRASOUND

MRI

CT SCAN

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