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PM Shehbaz Sharif hails overseas Pakistan role

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Punjab govt to ensure healthcare

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At OIC moot Pakistan rejects Israel's recognition of 'Somaliland'

Deputy prime minister rejects any proposal or plan aimed at forced displacement of Palestinians

CENTRELINE REPORT

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has warned that Israel's recent actions of recognising the so-called "Somaliland" could have serious and far-reaching consequences for regional peace and stability. Addressing the 22nd Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held on Saturday at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, Dar said that Pakistan will not allow any steps that could harm Somalia's development and stability.

The session was held in response to Tel Aviv becoming the first country to officially recognise the self-declared Republic of Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state. "We identify this development as a direct assault on Somalia's internationally recognised borders, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law," the deputy prime minister said. He said that the principle of state sovereignty and territorial integrity constitutes a peremptory norm of international law from which no deviation or derogation is permitted.

Speaking on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Dar stressed the urgent need for sustained efforts to bring an end to the war and to ensure the uninterrupted delivery

DPM, Maldives FM reaffirm commitment to strengthen ties

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Sunday met with Dr. Abdulla Khaleel, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Maldives, on sidelines of the 22nd OIC Extraordinary Council of Foreign Ministers meeting here. The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the friendly and cooperative relations between Pakistan and the Maldives and underscored their shared commitment to further strengthen bilateral ties. — APP

of humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population.

Rejecting any scheme to displace the Palestinians from their land, he said that any form of forced displacement is a clear violation of international law. He reiterated Pakistan's firm support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, stating that Islamabad stands resolutely with the Palestinians in their just struggle.

The deputy prime minister also spoke on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), saying that the conflict remains the primary source of conflict in South Asia and a nuclear flash point.

"There is an urgent need for renewed and concerted efforts under the UN auspices to secure a just, lasting, and peaceful resolution of the dispute, in

accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people." Addressing the opening session, OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha said the meeting was taking place at an extremely delicate and sensitive time. He said that Israel's recognition of the so-called "Somaliland" region constitutes a dangerous precedent, a flagrant violation of international law, and a direct threat to regional security and stability in the Horn of Africa. In its strongly worded resolution, the OIC affirmed its full and unwavering support for the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somalia and expressed strong solidarity with the Somali government and people.

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PM thanks overseas Pakistanis

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed gratitude to overseas Pakistanis for sending record remittances amounting to 3.6 billion dollars in December 2025, compared to the previous year. In a statement today, he said a 16.5 percent increase in remittances over the same period last year reflects the strong confidence of overseas Pakistanis in the government's policies. Shehbaz Sharif said by rejecting propaganda and continuing to send remittances for the country's construction and development, overseas Pakistanis have set a high example of their love for the motherland. Declaring overseas Pakistanis as the nation's valuable asset,

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New chancery of Pakistan consulate inaugurated

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar inaugurated the new chancery building of Consulate General of Pakistan in Jeddah. During the inauguration ceremony, the Pakistani flag was raised on the premises of new chancery building followed by tree plantation in the Chancery lawn, ribbon cutting, unveiling the plaque and offering prayers for the Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

In his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister lauded the efforts of Consulate General of Pakistan, Jeddah and the support provided by the authorities of Saudi Arabia for making the project, a reality.

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LAHORE: Mrs. Samina Amjad Randhawa, Amjad Karim Randhawa, parents of late Arfa Karim Randhawa, and Tabinda Islam, CEO Arfa Karim Foundation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Lahore, 11 January 2026. — DNA

PTI's resilient rally in Karachi amid obstacles

Leaders vow unwavering struggle for Imran Khan's release

CM Afridi slams 'NFC snub' to tribal districts

BUREAU REPORT

HYDERABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi said on Saturday that merged tribal districts are being denied their constitutional share of the federal budget, claiming that the central government that has "stolen" his party's mandate is also violating the Constitution. Speaking at a "Meet the Press" programme at the Hyderabad Press Club, CM Afridi criticised the current distribution of the National Finance Commission (NFC) award. He claimed the NFC, meant for four provinces, is really spread across "3.5 or 3.75 provinces" because the former merged

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Deputy prime minister rejects any proposal or plan aimed at forced displacement of Palestinians

Briefs

Sri Lanka stun Pakistan in T 20 match

SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: Hosts Sri Lanka defeated Pakistan in the 3rd T20 by 14 runs. Pakistan could only score 146 in the allotted overs. Earlier, Dasun Shanaka and Kusal Mendis struck brisk innings as Sri Lanka posted 160 in 12 overs against Pakistan in the rain-hit third and final T20I at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Pakistan had won the toss and opted to bowl first in the match, reduced to 12 overs per side after rain delayed the game by around two hours. After being asked to bat first, Sri Lanka lost opener Pathum Nissanka for a duck in the very first over to Naseem Shah. Kamil Mishara played aggressively, striking 20 runs off eight balls, including three fours and a six, before falling to M. Wasim Jr, leaving the hosts at 22-2 in 1.5 overs.

Nepal's royal family demands restoration of monarchy

NEWS DESK

KATHMANDU: Supporters of Nepal's deposed royal family rallied in the capital on Sunday demanding the restoration of the monarchy ahead of March elections. It was the first rally by supporters of ousted King Gyanendra since a wave of violent demonstrations by disgruntled youth in September installed an interim government that set fresh parliamentary elections in March. "We love our king. Bring back the king," the rally participants chanted around the statue of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who started the Shah dynasty in the 18th century. The last Shah king — Gyanendra — was forced to step down and the monarchy was abolished in 2008, making Nepal a republic.

President Pezeshkian appeals for national unity

The President emphasized his administration's focus on solving the nation's problems and alleviating public concerns

DNA

TEHRAN: In a direct address to the Iranian people, President Masoud Pezeshkian outlined his government's priorities, calling for national solidarity while sharply criticizing foreign powers accused of destabilizing the country. The President emphasized his administration's focus on solving the nation's problems and alleviating public concerns. "We are trying to solve problems and alleviate people's concerns," he stated, promising to make every effort to bring tangible improvements to citizens' lives.

A central theme of the speech was a strong warning against foreign interference. President Pezeshkian asserted that his government "will not allow any foreigners to sow seeds of discord among the nation." He explicitly called on Iranians from all walks of life to join hands with the government to counter what he described as "foreign-backed riots." Drawing a clear line between legitimate public grievance and violence, the President urged citizens to separate themselves from

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General in charge of Maduro's guard sacked

The sacked general is believed to have close links with CIA and leaked Maduro's hideout information

FOREIGN DESK

CRACAS: The general in command of Venezuela's presidential honour guard, Javier Marcano Tabata, has been sacked days after Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro was seized by US forces in a raid in Caracas and taken to New York to stand trial on narco-terrorism charges. The presidential honour guard is the military force which provides the bodyguards tasked with protecting the head of state. While the Venezuelan government has not yet provided a detailed breakdown of casualties, members of the guard are thought to be among the dozens of people killed in the US operation to seize Maduro. The order to replace Gen Marcano Tabata was issued by the new interim president, Delcy Rodriguez. Rodriguez was sworn in by the National Assembly, which is dominated by government loyalists, on Monday. She served as Maduro's vice-president and is considered to be a close ally of the jailed leader. US President Donald Trump said in the news conference

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CM Afridi's doubled standard politics exposed: Ebad

PESHAWAR: Opposition leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Dr Ebadullah Khan on Sunday claimed that the double standard politics of the Chief Minister Sohail Afridi had been fully exposed in his flopped Karachi visit. He claimed that the duplicity in the politics of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been exposed before the masses of Sindh province.

He said the people of Tirah in Khyber district have been left alone. In a statement, Dr. Ibadullah Khan said that the Chief Minister's double standards in politics were beyond comprehension. He said that while leaving the people of Tirah Khyber in hardship and without support, the Chief Minister was touring Karachi which was political point scoring. CM Afridi has neither concern for the resolution of people problems nor for good governance in the province and extravagant spending and the release of Prisoner No. 804 have become his only agenda. —APP

Motorways closed at several places due to dense fog

LAHORE: Fog obscured the roads in Lahore and various other cities of the country, due to which the motorways were closed for traffic at several places. Due to reduced visibility, vehicles are prohibited from entering the M2 Motorway from Lahore to Kot Momin, M3 from Faizpur to Darkhana, while M4 from Pindi Bhatian to Multan has been closed for traffic. Similarly, vehicles are not allowed to enter M5 from Multan to Rohri and M11 from Lahore to Sambrial. There are also fog camps on the national highway in Lahore, Manga Mandi, Pattoki, Okara, Sahiwal, Ahmedpur Sharqia. In addition, traffic flow is also affected due to heavy fog in Mian Channu, Khanewal, Multan, Basti Maluk, Lodhran, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Sadiqabad. A spokesperson for the Motorway Police requested citizens to avoid unnecessary travel, saying that travel during the day is safer in view of the bad weather conditions. motorways closed at several places.—APP

Railways reform drive freight growth, boost passenger services

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Railways has launched wide-ranging reforms aimed at transforming Pakistan Railways into a profitable and financially sustainable organization, with a strong emphasis on revitalizing freight operations and improving passenger services. An official in the Ministry told APP on Sunday that freight operations were being prioritized as a major revenue driver. As part of these reforms, new freight wagons have been inducted and dedicated freight corridors are under development to enhance efficiency.—APP



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday visited Jamia Ashrafia to express condolence over the sad demise of Jamia Ashrafia Mohtamim Maulana Hafiz Fazal ur Raheem Ashrafi.

Law Minister's intervention restores Chorlaki water supply

PESHAWAR: A drinking water supply scheme in Chorlaki has been restored following the timely intervention of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam on Sunday.

The Indus River-based water supply project had remained non-functional for some time due to technical faults, causing difficulties for the local residents.

Upon receiving the public complaints, the provincial law minister immediately contacted the executive engineer and the concerned contractor and

directed them to take urgent remedial measures. As a result, damaged pipelines were repaired, the solar power system was restored and the required machinery was made operational, enabling the resumption of water supply.

The law minister directed the authorities concerned to ensure proper protection, regular monitoring and maintenance of the water supply scheme. He warned that any negligence or sabotage would be dealt with strictly under the law. He also directed the deployed staff to perform their duties with hon-

esty, dedication and responsibility.

Meanwhile, asphalt work on the Bazid Khel Road is progressing rapidly with funds provided by the Law Minister Aftab Alam and MNA Shehyar Afridi, with the support of local chairman Aamir Khan and party workers. The project is expected to improve transport facilities and contribute to the social and economic development of the area.

Local residents welcomed the initiatives and expressed the hope that such public welfare measures would continue in the future.—APP

Unfortunately, PTI not adhering to assurances: Sharjeel

KARACHI: Senior Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that the Government of Sindh warmly welcomed the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) on his visit to Sindh and provided him with complete security. The office of Chief Minister is a constitutional position and full respect is accorded to constitutional offices. Sharjeel, in a statement, said that the PTI administration remained in continuous contact with the Government of Sindh. Unfortunately, the assurances given by PTI are not being implemented. He said that it was clearly stated on the very first day that permission had been granted to hold a public gathering, despite that, leveling allegations against the Government of Sindh is inappropriate. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that no one stopped PTI from holding a rally at the designated ground. The manner in which rallies and processions are being taken out on roads is causing severe traffic disruption and creating difficulties for ordinary citizens.—APP

Buledi lauded women eco empowerment endowment fund

QUETTA: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for women development, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, has termed the establishment of the Women Economic Empowerment Endowment Fund as a revolutionary and historic initiative aimed at positively transforming the economic and social status of women in the province. In a statement issued here, she said that economic independence is the strongest guarantee of women's social dignity and protection. Through the Women Economic Empowerment Fund, equal opportunities will be provided to skilled, educated yet unemployed women, as well as those belonging to underprivileged segments of society, enabling them to stand on their own feet. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi added that the objective of this policy is to move women away from traditional economic dependency and empower them as successful entrepreneurs and business managers. This, she said, will not only help women support their families but also enable them to play an active role in strengthening the provincial economy. She further emphasized that a strict code of conduct has been devised to ensure transparency and merit in the distribution of funds. The Balochistan government's top priority, she added, is women living in remote and rural areas who are unable to utilize their potential due to a severe lack of resources. Special provisions have also been included in the fund for the rehabilitation and support of widowed, destitute, and differently-abled women. The advisor explained that financial assistance from the fund will be provided for starting small-scale businesses, promoting traditional handicrafts, and offering technical training aligned with modern-day requirements. This initiative aims to ensure that the daughters of Balochistan do not face financial constraints in their journey toward progress and self-reliance. Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi added that under the leadership of the Chief Minister of Balochistan, the provincial government remains fully committed to removing all social and economic barriers hindering women's development and empowerment.—DNA

Smart planning for floodwaters stressed

At the same time, he said, diverting floodwater to depleted aquifers through managed recharge systems can help restore falling groundwater tables, particularly in water-stressed regions of Punjab and Sindh where over-extraction has become chronic

LAHORE: Floodwaters can be productively steered into arid areas, abandoned lakes and depleted aquifers through smart planning. Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Saif ur Rehman stated this, while addressing a seminar on "How to turn floodwaters into blessing" here on Sunday.

"Instead of allowing excess water to rush unchecked through rivers and urban

drains, controlled diversions can transform floods into an opportunity for water security and ecological restoration. To make this possible, Pakistan needs integrated flood and water management, mapping of historical lakes and natural depressions, and investment in diversion channels and recharge basins. Community participation and provincial coordination are essential," he suggested.

He added that by treating floodwater as a resource rather than a threat, Pakistan can reduce disastrous losses while securing its long-term water future, he added.

He said, such an approach also brings environmental and economic benefits. Recharged wetlands enhance biodiversity, support fisheries and livestock grazing, and improve local livelihoods. Groundwater replenishment lowers

pumping costs for farmers and strengthens resilience against droughts. The Coordinator mentioned that this strategy is far more cost-effective and sustainable than repeatedly rebuilding damaged infrastructure after every flood. Reviving natural wetlands and old lake beds provides space for floodwaters to spread and slow down, reducing pressure on embankments and downstream settlements.—APP

Second training session for Hajj for pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony organized the second phase of the training session for Hajj 2026 pilgrims at the Haji Camp, Islamabad. According to the ministry's spokesperson, the primary objective of this program was to provide comprehensive awareness regarding the various stages of the pilgrimage, necessary precautionary measures, and the obligatory acts (Faraiz and Wajibat) of Hajj and Umrah.

During the session, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Umar Butt, briefed the participants on administrative matters, departure procedures, and accommodation in Makkah and Madinah.

Master Trainer Tanveer Asghar provided technical training on the methods of performing Hajj and Umrah, highlighting the religious obligations.

The event was attended by Director of Haji Complex Islamabad, Qazi Sami-ul-Rehman, Deputy Director Hakim Khan Khattak, and other senior officials. Pilgrims were advised to improve their physical fitness by walking 2 to 3 kilometers daily.—APP

Punjab CM orders swift completion of healthcare projects

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the relevant authorities to ensure the swift completion and operationalisation of key healthcare projects across the province, setting strict deadlines for their inauguration.

On Sunday, the chief minister ordered that the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research and the Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, Lahore, be made operational within the current month. She also fixed timelines for the early completion of the Nawaz Sharif Institutes of Cardiology in Jinnah and Sargodha, along with other ongoing hospital projects.

According to officials, construction work on the basement and ground floor of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research has been completed. Essential facilities, including patient waiting areas, a mosque, and residential accommodations for doctors, have also been finalised. Pakistan's first Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and the Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, Lahore, are scheduled to become operational later this month. The recruitment process for doctors and professional staff has commenced, with interviews underway for 219 positions. The chief minister also approved the re-advertisement of the post of head of

Phase-1 of NSICT&R to be inaugurated soon: minister

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the first phase of the Cancer Care Clinic of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research (NSICT&R) is expected to be inaugurated soon. He expressed these views during his visit to the under-construction institute on Sunday. Former Chief Secretary Punjab and Chairman Board of Governors of NSICT&R, Captain (retd) Zahid Saeed, accompanied the minister. They reviewed the ongoing construction work and were briefed on the project's master plan. The health minister stated that the Punjab government was constructing a 915-bed state-of-the-art Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research in Lahore at an estimated cost of Rs 72 billion. He added that work on the project is underway round the clock to ensure timely completion.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Palestine Palestine Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Sudan National Day

Jan 04 / Myanmar Independence Day

Jan 06 / Iraq Armed Forces Day

Jan 12 / Tanzania Armed Forces Day

Jan 14 / Uzbekistan Armed Forces Day

Jan 15 / Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Mali Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Laos Armed Forces Day

Jan 25 / Thailand Armed Forces Day

Jan 26 / Australia National Day

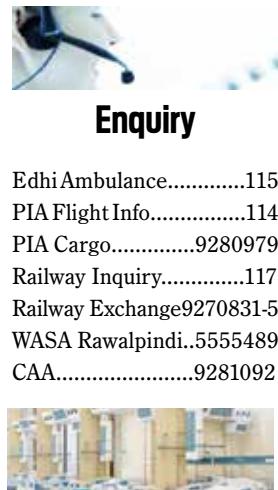
Jan 26 / India Republic Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....561111
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Security personnel and rescue workers searching for survivors amid the debris of a damaged house after a gas cylinder explosion in a Christian colony at sector G-7, in the Federal Capital.

CDA chief orders to launch fire safety survey in Federal Capital

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has directed a survey of fire safety and emergency response measures in all residential and commercial properties in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. In this regard, notices are being issued to all owners of private and public residential and commercial properties, and the inspection process of all private and public residential and commercial buildings has also been initiated. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that emergency exits must be ensured in every residential and commercial building in case of fire or short circuits. In this context, owners of private buildings should create emergency exit plans through consultants, while emergency exit plans for public buildings should be developed in consultation with the CDA.—DNA

Ayaz expresses grief over gas cylinder blast

ISLAMABAD : Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Sunday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic gas cylinder explosion in Sector G-7, Islamabad, which claimed several precious human lives. In a statement, the Speaker said that he was deeply saddened to learn about the loss of lives caused by the gas cylinder blast during a wedding ceremony. He extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, saying that the entire nation stands with the affected families in this hour of grief. Ayaz Sadiq termed the increasing incidents of gas cylinder explosions as highly alarming and stressed the urgent need for strict measures against the unsafe use of gas cylinders.—APP

FGEHA urged to deliver justice to G-15/3 affectees

Muhammad Azam Fazal alleged that FGEHA and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) have been subjecting them to continuous harassment through repeated notices, mental torture, and coercive tactics, leaving the family under immense psychological pressure

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The affectees of Sector G-15/3 have urged the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) to ensure justice to owners of legally owned commercial properties. Speaking to the media, Muhammad Azam Fazal, owner of Fazal Engineering, stated that their registered, occupied, and commercial property located on Main GT Road was awarded without prior notice, based

solely on a Google aerial survey conducted in 2009, of which the landowners were completely unaware. He said that neither the property owners were informed nor did any departmental staff visit the site before the award was announced. Muhammad Azam Fazal clarified that the property is jointly owned by himself and his late brother Muhammad Ikrar Fazal, and that they have been conducting business at this location since 2001. He further explained that prior to this, they were affected by the Rawalpindi-Layyah Ex-

pressway (Jinnah Road) project, where they received negligible compensation. Subsequently, they legally purchased this commercial land and resumed their business. Fazal Engineering has been operating since 1962, is a tax-paying entity, and a registered member of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Chamber of Commerce. Despite this, he said that their property has never been allotted a BUP number, and they were made to run from office to office for years. Authorities repeatedly assured them that their property lay outside the G-15/3 boundary, only to later issue notices, causing severe mental distress. Muhammad Azam Fazal alleged that FGEHA and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) have been subjecting them to continuous harassment through repeated notices, mental torture, and coercive tactics, leaving the family under immense psychological pressure. He emphasized that the property is fully legal, supported by valid registry, mutation, and ownership documents. The housing authority was established after they had already

been operating their business at the site. According to him, the total covered commercial area measures approximately 15,000 to 18,000 square feet, which must be properly assessed for compensation. Appealing to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir Ahmed, Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Federal Minister for Housing Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Muhammad Azam Fazal demanded immediate intervention to ensure justice in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

State of the Art Hospital being constructed at Sherpao Colony

RAWALPINDI : The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has announced plans to construct a state-of-the-art hospital in its own housing scheme, Sherpao Colony, aimed at providing modern and quality healthcare facilities to the general public.

In this regard, a special meeting was held in this regard in the RDA Conference Room on Sunday under the chairmanship of the Director General RDA, Kinza Murtaza. The meeting was convened to brainstorm and deliberate on various aspects of the proposed hospital project, including planning, infrastructure, and service delivery. The meeting was attended by Dr. Jamal Nasir Ex-Minister, Dr. Sharjeel Sarfraz Ahmed Sheikh

Medical Superintendent Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Dr. Shazia Zeb Assistant Medical Superintendent, Holy Family Hospital, Dr. Khalid Randhawa Ex-MS Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, Dr. Muhammad Sohail Ex-MS Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, Muhammad Anwar Baran Additional DC RDA, Aabgenay Khan Director Estate Management RDA, along with other officers of RDA. During the session, the proposed RDA Hospital project was discussed in detail, covering its scope, proposed medical facilities, operational model, and potential benefits for the general public of Rawalpindi. The DG RDA, Kinza Murtaza, stated that hospital would be developed in line with modern healthcare stand-

ards and would significantly help reduce the burden on existing public hospitals. She emphasized that the project reflects RDA's commitment to public welfare and sustainable urban development. She further directed the Director Estate Management to prepare a comprehensive project summary that will be sent to the Secretary, Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Department for approval and further necessary processing. The proposed hospital is envisioned as a multi-specialty healthcare facility equipped with modern diagnostic, emergency, and treatment services, ensuring accessible and affordable medical care for the general public of the Rawalpindi.—APP

JazzWorld to drive AI-led growth, digital expansion

In parallel, cybersecurity has been elevated as a core governance priority, with Chief Information Security Officer Qasim Shafique now reporting directly to the CEO—reinforcing security-by-design across JazzWorld operations and underscoring its commitment to trust, resilience, and digital safety

ISLAMABAD: Jazz has introduced 'JazzWorld', a renewed corporate identity marking its transformation into a multi-business group, uniting operations across connectivity, digital, financial, lifestyle, health, data centre, AI and platform services under a single vision. JazzWorld sets a clear direction for the company's expanding portfolio of digital and financial services. While Jazz continues to operate under its existing brand identity, legal and regulatory framework as Pakistan's most trusted telecom brand, the JazzWorld identity defines how these services integrate to serve more than 100 million Pakistanis. Under JazzWorld, the company is connecting and scaling platforms across fintech, entertainment, youth engagement, cloud, software development, healthtech, fashion commerce, and insuretech—including JazzCash, Mobilink Bank, Tamasha, ROX, Simosa (ultra app), Garaj, Teknosys, ApnaClinic,

ZARR, and FlikFree. JazzWorld is simultaneously strengthening capabilities in AI, data centres, and cybersecurity, establishing an integrated digital ecosystem designed to advance its purpose of Better Life for All by connecting people, services, and opportunities at a national scale. As part of the identity launch, JazzWorld announced Aamer Ejaz as the company's Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer (CAIO)—a role created to deepen investment in AI-enabled solutions across the enterprise. The CAIO will accelerate practical and responsible AI development tailored to Pakistan's context, enhancing user experience, strengthening business intelligence, and driving product innovation across platforms. In parallel, cybersecurity has been elevated as a core governance priority, with Chief Information Security Officer Qasim Shafique now reporting directly to the CEO—reinforcing security-by-design across JazzWorld operations and underscoring its commitment to trust, resilience, and digital safety

Classmate accused held of rape, blackmailing university student

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Shams Colony Police Station team has arrested a university student who allegedly lured his classmate into a relationship on the pretext of marriage, repeatedly raped her, filmed her secretly and blackmailed her in Islamabad. A police spokesperson told media on Sunday that the incident came to light after the victim, a student of Arid Agriculture University, submitted a written complaint at Shams Colony Police Station, upon which FIR No. 50/1/4/2026-SC was registered under sections 376 (rape), 420, 468 and 471 PPC. According to the FIR, the accused, Mohammad Faizan, first convinced the victim of marriage and then took her to a flat at Samana Star Mall, Gulberg Greens, where he had allegedly installed hidden cameras. He raped her and recorded objectionable videos without her consent. The spokesperson said the victim stated that the accused repeatedly blackmailed her, threatening to leak her photos and videos on social media if she refused to meet him. She alleged that he raped her multiple times at the flat and also inside his car in sector H-13, Islamabad. The FIR further notes that the victim repeatedly pleaded with the accused to delete the videos due to fear of social stigma, but he continued to exploit and intimidate her. Acting on the complaint, Shams Colony Police launched an immediate operation and arrested the accused Mohammad Faizan within a short time. Police also recovered the vehicle, laptop and mobile phone used in the crime. The spokesperson added that further investigation is underway, digital evidence is being analyzed, and police are checking whether other victims or accomplices are involved. Islamabad Police reaffirmed its stance that such crimes will face zero tolerance and that strict legal action will be taken under the law. It is pertinent to mention that an Arid University student allegedly raped his classmate and later started blackmailing her to continue the relationship. A case has been registered at the Shams Colony Police Station in Islamabad based on a complaint from the female student of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi. The student alleged that a classmate, identified as Muhammad Faizan, son of Zubair Ali, sexually assaulted her and recorded the act with hidden cameras. According to the complaint, the accused allegedly lured the victim to his flat in Islamabad and committed the assault. She further alleged that the accused then began blackmailing her, threatening to share the recordings on social media if she did not comply with his demands.—APP

SECP's reforms enhance business transparency

ISLAMABAD: The digital and administrative reforms introduced by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) have led to a significant increase in company registrations while improving transparency and ease of doing business across the country, the commission said here. In a statement issued here Sunday, the SECP said that 35,087 new companies were registered during fiscal year 2024-25, compared to 27,542 companies registered in the previous year. During the current fiscal year, from July to December 2025, a total of 21,542 companies were registered. It said, the reforms had simplified the process of starting a business, reduced compliance-related costs and strengthened investor confidence. As a result, company registrations increased by 51 percent compared to 2020. According to the statement, 99.9 percent of company registrations were completed entirely through the online system, reflecting the success of the digitalization drive. The core focus of the reforms, the SECP said, is the complete digitalization of the company registration process through its eZFile system. The SECP said that the eZFile system is integrated with various institutions, including the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) and provincial departments. Following integration with the government's One Window system, the registration certificate is issued automatically, eliminating the need for visits to multiple offices and resulting in significant savings in time and cost. The Commission said that its reform initiatives had also received international recognition. It noted that Pakistan was ranked sixth among 50 countries on the business start-up indicator in the World Bank's Business Readiness 2024 report, while an IFC survey ranked the SECP first among 65 federal regulatory authorities for government-to-business digital services and IT preparedness. The statement further said that to strengthen transparency and corporate governance, companies had been required to ensure financial reporting and detailed disclosures in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.—APP

Briefs

Two gang members put behind bars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested two members of an inter-provincial gang involved in more than 60 incidents of street crime, robbery and motorcycle theft, after both suspects were injured when their accomplices opened fire on a police team in the Industrial Area. A police spokesperson told APP on Sunday that the arrested suspects – Fahad Khan and Asadullah Khan – were wanted by both Islamabad Police and KP Police in multiple cases of robbery, snatching and vehicle theft. The Industrial Area Police team was taking the suspects for the recovery of stolen items when the incident occurred. According to the spokesperson, four armed accomplices riding two motorcycles intercepted the police team and opened fire straight in an attempt to free their arrested associates. He said the police officials remained unharmed due to wearing bulletproof jackets and proper safety gear. However, the spokesperson added that the gunfire from their own accomplices struck the already-arrested suspects, Fahad Khan and Asadullah Khan, injuring both. They were immediately shifted to a hospital for medical treatment. Police recovered a snatched motorcycle, weapons used in the crimes, and ammunition from the suspects. During preliminary interrogation, the arrested men confessed to over 60 robberies and motorcycle thefts in various areas of Islamabad. The spokesperson said that a search operation has been launched to track down the fleeing attackers and bring the entire gang to justice. He reiterated that ICT Police remains committed to eliminating organised crime and ensuring citizens' safety.—APP

Gas leakage incidents shockingly increased in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Rescue 1122 has warned that incidents caused by gas leakage are increasing in Rawalpindi during the winter season, mainly due to the extensive use of gas heaters and cooking stoves inside homes. According to Rescue 1122, most gas-related accidents occur because of minor negligence, which later turns into serious and sometimes fatal incidents. The emergency service urged citizens to remain alert and follow basic safety measures to avoid such tragedies. Officials advised that if the smell of gas is detected, people should not switch on or off any electrical appliances and must not light a match or fire. Doors and windows should be opened immediately to allow fresh air to circulate, and all family members should be moved to a safe place outside the house. Rescue 1122 said timely precaution is the key to saving lives, adding that careless use of gas appliances can be extremely dangerous. In case of any emergency, citizens should immediately call the Rescue 1122 helpline so that a prompt response can be ensured. Media Coordinator of Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi Muhammad Usman Gujar added.—APP

NAB Chairman pledges support for business community

ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmoor appreciated the Chairman NAB's initiatives to promote transparent and fair accountability. He said that the Chairman's visit to ICCI would motivate the business community, enhance confidence, and encourage entrepreneurs to play a proactive role in the economic prosperity of Islamabad and the country as a whole

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lieutenant General (Retd) Nazir Ahmed has emphasized that the business community is the real engine of the country's economy and assured that resolution of issues faced by traders and industrialists remains a high priority for the Bureau. He stated that NAB is fully committed to fostering a purely business-friendly environment that enables enterprises to grow and contribute effectively to national economic development. He expressed these views while talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmoor, who along with Chairman ICCI Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, and former Vice President Saif ur Rehman, paid a courtesy call on him at NAB Headquarters. The Chairman NAB said that the Bureau is actively engaged in public awareness campaigns and close interaction with relevant institutions to promote a culture of accountability, transparency, and integrity across society. He underlined that NAB is pursuing a broader and forward-looking approach, placing equal emphasis on prevention, awareness, and the cultivation of strong ethical values,



alongside enforcement. Accepting the invitation of ICCI President, the Chairman NAB also pledged to visit the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the earliest to interact with the business community through a dedicated seminar, aimed at building mutual trust and understanding. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President

Sardar Tahir Mehmoor appreciated the Chairman NAB's initiatives to promote transparent and fair accountability. He said that the Chairman's visit to ICCI would motivate the business community, enhance confidence, and encourage entrepreneurs to play a proactive role in the economic prosperity of Islamabad and the country as a whole.

Chairman ICCI Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq and Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub also lauded the Chairman NAB for his commitment, professionalism, and dedication to strengthening accountability while supporting genuine business activity, terming it vital for sustainable economic growth and national progress.

Rawalpindi leads provincial crackdown on illegal hunting

RAWALPINDI: The Wildlife Department of Punjab province has released a comprehensive enforcement report for the year 2025, highlighting a provincial effort to stop illegal hunting and protect regional biodiversity. According to the official data, the Rawalpindi region emerged as the leading district with the highest number of violations in the province. In the North Zone, Rawalpindi reported 1,126 wildlife offence cases. The department's strategy in the region focused heavily on administrative action, successfully compounding 1,055 cases. The action resulted in the recovery of over Rs 23.7 million in realized compensation, the largest financial penalty collected during the year. The legal system remained active in Rawalpindi, with 45 cases decided by the courts and 14 FIRs were registered against the violators. As a whole provincial landscape, a total of 4,550 wildlife offence cases were registered throughout the year. However, Bahawalpur from the South stood with the province's highest 172 FIRs and along with Rs 4.8 million fines imposed by the courts. The collective efforts resulted in a total of Rs 7.58 million court-imposed fines across the province, while the total compensation realized through departmental action amounted to over Rs 93.5 million. Other considerable regions included Sargodha, which handled 616 cases, and the Salt Range, where 420 offences were reported. By the close of the year, the department had registered 723 FIRs and successfully compounded 3,757 cases throughout the province.—APP

Balochistan govt expands youth enterprise programme to Gwadar

Pakistan's federal government separately announced a larger electric vehicle rollout plan earlier in 2025 that includes distribution of Chinese made e bikes and other electric vehicles to youth nationwide, including in Balochistan, to promote green transport and jobs

DNA

GWADAR: The Balochistan government approved the extension of its Enterprise Development Programme to the districts of Gwadar, Kech and Awaran, and unveiled plans for an electric vehicle subsidy scheme and a health insurance programme for provincial government employees, provincial officials said. The expanded enterprise programme aims to support youth-led businesses and income-generating activities in underdeveloped and remote areas as part of efforts to promote inclusive growth. The initiative offers interest-free loans to small and medium enterprises and start-ups. According to official documents available with Gwadar Pro, the programme is included under the Balochistan Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2025-26 with a total outlay of Rs 16 billion, of which about Rs 3.5 billion is earmarked for this fiscal year. The cabinet also approved a subsidised electric bike scheme intended to ease transportation costs for students, working women and government employees. Under the plan, eligible buyers will receive up to a 30% government subsidy, and the remainder can be financed through bank instalments. Pakistan's federal government separately announced a larger electric vehicle rollout plan earlier in 2025 that includes distribution of Chinese made e bikes and other electric vehicles to youth nationwide, including in Balochistan, to promote green transport and jobs.

IG visits PIMS, assures support for gas blast victims

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi visited the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) to inquire after the injured of the G-7/2 gas blast, in which the bride, groom and six other family members lost their lives while several others were injured. A police spokesperson told on Sunday that senior police officers accompanied the IGP Rizvi during the visit. The IGP directed hospital officials to ensure the best possible medical treatment for all injured persons and assured the affected families of full support from Islamabad Police. According to rescue officials, a strong gas leakage caused an explosion inside a double-storey house where wedding preparations were underway. The blast brought the roof down, trap-

ping multiple family members and neighbours under the debris. Rescue teams pulled out over nineteen people during the operation. The spokesperson said police, district administration, Rescue 1122, CDA Fire teams and local volunteers worked together throughout the day. The entire area was cordoned off, heavy machinery was deployed to remove debris, and K-9 units were used to ensure no one remained trapped.

IGP Rizvi expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives and conveyed heartfelt condolences to the grieving families. He said Islamabad Police will continue to support the victims and that an inquiry is underway to determine the exact cause of the incident and prevent similar incidents in the future.—APP

Sudanese engineers get training under COMSTECH-NUTECH joint program

ISLAMABAD: The Certificate Distribution Ceremony in connection with specialized technical training programs for Sudanese engineers will be held on January 13 (Tuesday) at the National University of Technology (NUTECH). The ceremony will be attended by Prof Dr Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH, as the chief dignitary, along with Lt. Gen. Moazzam Ejaz, HI(M), Retd., Rector NUTECH, and Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Pakistan. Senior officials, academicians, and representatives of partner institutions are also expected to attend. Under this initiative, around 20 engineers from Sudan participated in a specialized CAD/CAM/CNC Operations and Machine Building Course hosted at NUTECH. Sponsored and coordinated by COMSTECH, the program aimed to strengthen technical skills,

enhance engineering competencies, and promote South-South cooperation among OIC member states through industry-relevant, hands-on training and knowledge exchange. The training provided extensive practical exposure to modern manufacturing technologies, including computer-aided design (CAD), computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), CNC machine operations, and machine building techniques. Participants received hands-on experience with advanced industrial equipment such as CNC wood routers, drilling and tapping machines, welding equipment, aluminium cutting machines, tool grinders, and shaper machines, under the guidance of NUTECH's faculty and technical experts. In addition to academic and technical training, the Prime Institute of Health Sciences collaborated in the program by facilitating the stay, welfare, and related support arrangements for the Sudanese engineers in Islamabad. —DNA

Pakistan set to exit from IMF program by June next year: Rana Mashhood

ISLAMABAD: Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), announced that Pakistan will exit the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme by June next year. Addressing a diaspora gathering in London on Saturday, he said Pakistan is steadily moving towards economic self-reliance and would no longer require IMF support by mid-2026. He added that the country's recent economic direction had restored confidence among investors and overseas Pakistanis.

Referring to past economic challenges, Mashhood said that IMF-linked policies imposed after 2018 had slowed growth, but the current government had placed the economy back on the path of recovery. The Chairman PMYP highlighted the sharp rise in workers' remittances as a sign of renewed confidence, noting that overseas Pakistanis sent billions of dollars home in 2025, providing a significant boost to the country's economy, according to the State Bank of Pakistan. The London statement echoes his earlier remarks in August 2025, when he had said Pakistan is "on the path to progress and would soon exit the IMF programme," stressing that fiscal discipline and structural reforms were beginning to deliver tangible results. Mashhood said sustained focus on exports, productivity and youth-led entrepreneurship would help build foreign exchange reserves and finally end Pakistan's long-standing dependence on IMF bailout programmes.—APP

UAE delegation visits FIA HQ

ISLAMABAD: An eight-member delegation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), led by Ahmed Bin Lahij Al Falasi, Director General of Customs and Port Security, visited the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters in Islamabad on Saturday. FIA officials told that the visiting delegation was given a detailed briefing on the FIA's mandate, organizational structure and its key operational wings. During the session, Director General FIA Riffat Mukhtar Raja highlighted the Agency's ongoing initiatives to curb human trafficking, migrant smuggling and immigration-related crimes. He also informed the delegation about the functioning of the Risk Analysis Unit and the establishment of Pre-Departure Facilitation Centres across all FIA zones to assist outbound international passengers.—APP

Pak China Technical and Vocational Institute enrolls 416 students

ISLAMABAD: The Pak China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI) in Gwadar has enrolled 416 students for its 2026 batch, the institute said, marking a rise in admissions at the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) linked training centre. Classes are scheduled to begin on January 15, the institute data showed. Of the new admissions, 206 students are enrolled in three-month certificate courses covering office automation, Python programming, mobile application development, e-commerce, web development, graphic design and artificial intelligence. 123 students will pursue one-year diploma programmes in English, Chinese and artificial intelligence, while 87 students are enrolled in three-year diploma courses in e-commerce, tourism management, maritime port management, mathematics and software technology. Since its inception, 258 students have graduated from PCTVI in various disciplines, the data showed. PCTVI said it has expanded its offerings to meet labour market needs, with programmes in maritime and port management, software technology, tourism management, e-commerce, mechatronics, Chinese and English language, artificial intelligence, construction engineering and overhead crane operation.—APP

SC advances staff career progression with balanced reforms

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has completed a year-long review of career progression for its administrative staff, aiming to remove disparities and improve service structures. According to an official statement on Saturday, the Court reviewed long-pending cases of upgradation and brought most staff positions at par with corresponding federal government cadres to ensure fairness, motivation and institutional harmony. In total, 218 officers and officials across multiple categories were upgraded to the next pay scale in recognition of their dedication and professional commitment. The beneficiaries include Lower and Upper Division Clerks, Assistants, Editors of Paper Books, Data Entry Operators, Telephone Operators, Court Associates and Assistant Registrars.—APP

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Drug Abuse: A Deepening Threat to Society

DR. MUHAMMAD RIZWAN BHATTI

INDEED, drug misuse has grown to be a deeply ingrained societal catastrophe that is steadily undermining Pakistan's socioeconomic structure and posing one of the biggest challenges of our time. Nearly 6.7 million Pakistanis abuse controlled drugs, with cannabis continuing to be the most commonly used substance and heroin addiction impacting hundreds of thousands of people across the country's demographic spectrum, according to the most recent official estimates and United Nations statistics. Consequently, cannabis, opioids cocaine, and an expanding variety of synthetic narcotics not only endanger personal health but also threaten public safety and national stability.

Moreover, June 26 is designated as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), serving as a vital moment to unite all facets of society against the scourge of drugs. Significantly, the theme for 2026 emphasizes the need for community-led prevention, strengthening treatment programs and eliminating stigma and prejudice, thereby reiterating that long-term solutions demand both empathy and collective action. As such, this day continues to be an important platform for awareness-raising, advocacy and sustained community engagement.

Furthermore, substance abuse, clinically recognized as addiction, refers to the obsessive and frequently uncontrolled use of "narcotics," substances that alter mood or relieve pain but eventually cause severe physical and psychological harm. While hard drugs such as heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy and ICE have especially devastating consequences, even so-called "soft drugs" like marijuana, sedatives and certain prescription medications can gradually lead to serious health complications. Alarmingly, Pakistan's youth, who make up a sizable 64% portion of the population, remain particularly vulnerable; a complex mix of peer pressure, family discord, academic stress, unemployment and social uncertainty often pushes young people toward these destructive coping strategies. Geographically speaking, due to its strategic location within the Golden Crescent, Pakistan, alongside Afghanistan and Iran, bears a unique burden as both a transit and consumption zone for opiates, particularly heroin and opium cultivated in Afghanistan. Historically, the Golden Crescent has surpassed the Southeast Asian Golden Triangle (Burma, Thailand, and Laos) in global narcotics production, and, as a result, a significant share of Afghan opiates destined for international markets continues to pass through Pakistan's land and maritime routes. Against this backdrop, Pakistan's law-enforcement framework has visibly expanded its operational reach to confront this multifaceted challenge. Notably, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, has promoted multi-modal and mul-

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ti-sectoral strategies to curb crime and dismantle drug networks at the grassroots level. Under his leadership, sustained intelligence-based operations and targeted raids have been conducted across Faisalabad and adjoining districts, leading to the detention of thousands of individuals involved in criminal activity, including professional drug peddlers, habitual offenders and addicts occupying public spaces. In one recent operation alone, over 2,800 individuals were apprehended from marketplaces, transit hubs and educational institutions, with hundreds subsequently booked for criminal involvement.

In addition, RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera has devised an activity-based intervention module aimed at fostering confidence, resilience and decision-making skills among students, enabling them to withstand peer pressure and refrain from indulging in negative behaviours such as drug and substance abuse. Simultaneously, he has actively engaged community stakeholders including business leaders, educators and civil society actors to develop cooperative crime-prevention frameworks that strengthen information sharing, enhance neighbourhood safety and reinforce the principle that public security is a shared responsibility. Enhancing internal accountability within the police force and enforcing a zero-tolerance policy toward elements that undermine peace and order have also remained central to his operational directives.

While speaking to parents, students and community members, RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, cautioned that drug misuse among Pakistani young is no more a minor issue but rather a reflection of more serious social flaws. He pointed out that drugs become an easy way out when young brains are overburdened by academic pressure, peer pressure takes the role of mentorship and families avoid having important talks. Sohail Sukhera contends that placing the blame solely on people misses the mark and that homes, educational institutions and the government must all take collaborative responsibility for the situation. He warned that substance misuse will continue to erode the social and moral underpinnings of the next generation in the absence of early intervention, honest communication and support networks that rebuild resilience and purpose.

Legally, the Control of Narcotic Substances Act (CNSA) of 1997 provides the foundation for prosecuting drug traffickers, prescribing life imprisonment or even the death penalty for trafficking substantial quantities of prohibited narcotics. Nevertheless, long prison sentences alone are insufficient to curb demand; rather, comprehensive prevention strategies, expanded rehabilitation services and the de-stigmatization of treatment seekers are urgently required.

Beyond health consequences, the drug trade carries profound social and economic repercussions. Illicit drugs erode community trust, fuel crime, foster corruption and divert vast sums of money into informal economies, thereby undermining legitimate growth. At the same time, addiction places immense pressure on families and healthcare systems, particularly in areas where social support structures and medical infrastructure remain weak or non-existent. Recognizing addiction as a medical and social issue rather than merely a criminal offense, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has established model treatment and rehabilitation facilities across Pakistan. However, the sheer magnitude of the problem necessitates hundreds more such institutions, especially in regions grappling with youth unemployment and social dislocation. Only through comprehensive, accessible and sustained treatment pathways can individuals break the cycle of dependency and reintegrate into society as productive citizens.

Israel-US Fixation on Regime Change in Iran

Qamar Bashir



This shift reflects a deeper reality: the United States has failed to contain China economically and has been unable to decisively defeat Russia militarily through proxy war in Ukraine. As economic and diplomatic leverage erodes, kinetic power becomes the last remaining tool. The danger is that military reach replaces strategic wisdom. Europe, meanwhile, stands weaker than at any time since World War II. Decades of dependency on U.S. security guarantees have hollowed out independent defense capacity.

If Washington chooses to act unilaterally—whether in the Arctic, Greenland, or beyond—Europe has little capacity to resist or even influence outcomes

DURING the height of the Israel-Iran confrontation, Benjamin Netanyahu once again returned to his most familiar refrain: that peace in the Middle East—and by extension global stability—requires "regime change" in Iran. It was not a new idea, nor even a new sentence. It was the same narrative he had relentlessly promoted against Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Bashar al-Assad, and Palestinian leaders such as Ismail Haniyeh. In every case, the promise was identical: remove the leader, and peace will follow. In every case, the result was the opposite—state collapse, prolonged civil war, regional destabilization, mass displacement, and the rise of extremism. Iraq did not become peaceful after Saddam Hussein; it descended into sectarian violence that killed hundreds of thousands. Libya did not stabilize after Gaddafi; it fractured into rival militias and became a transit hub for arms and human trafficking. Syria's attempted regime change ignited one of the worst humanitarian disasters of the 21st century. Gaza, after repeated leadership assassinations, remains trapped in endless cycles of war. Yet Netanyahu now repeats the same formula for Iran—this time targeting not merely political leadership but the entire ideological structure of the Islamic Republic, including its supreme leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

At one critical moment, even Netanyahu himself acknowledged that Israel's military apparatus had Iran's leadership "locked in." According to public statements later echoed in Western media, Israeli intelligence and strike capabilities were ready, awaiting only political clearance. That final authorization, however, never came. Donald Trump, despite his otherwise confrontational posture toward Iran, reportedly withheld the green light. Whether due to fear of uncontrollable escalation, economic consequences, or intelligence assessments predicting catastrophic regional blowback, the decision spared Iran's leadership—and possibly the region—from immediate catastrophe. Today, however, the situation appears far more dangerous. Protests inside Iran—some organic, some amplified—are now being framed internationally as the prelude to regime collapse.

Western intelligence narratives increasingly mirror those seen before Iraq in 2003 or Libya in 2011. The Central Intelligence Agency has historically played such roles before, and Iran itself is no stranger to this pattern.

The first modern regime change in Iran occurred in 1953, when the CIA and Britain's MI6 overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he nationalized Iran's oil industry, expelling Anglo-American corporate control. The result was the installation of the Shah, whose authoritarian rule—backed by Western security services—lasted until 1979. When the Shah later attempted to reclaim economic sovereignty and assert independence, he too became expendable. The Islamic Revolution that followed did not emerge in a vacuum; it was the direct outcome of decades of foreign manipulation. Since 1979, hostility between Iran and Israel has remained constant, driven by ideology, regional rivalry, and competing security doctrines. But the current moment feels different. It is not merely about Iran. It is about a global order unraveling.

The second term of President Trump has accelerated this breakdown dramatically. In just over a year, Washington has openly undermined the United Nations, weakened NATO, and normalized threats of territorial acquisition—from Greenland to Venezuela. The seizure of assets, the weaponization of sanctions, and the use of military force outside UN authorization have become routine rather than exceptional.

Recent U.S. naval seizures in the Caribbean—targeting vessels carrying oil allegedly destined for China, some flying Russian or Chinese flags—represent a dangerous escalation. This is not law enforcement; it is strategic provocation. By intercepting energy supplies linked to China and Russia, Washington is signaling willingness to internationalize conflict zones and draw both powers into kinetic confrontation.

This shift reflects a deeper reality: the United States has failed to contain China economically and has been unable to decisively defeat Russia militarily through proxy war in Ukraine. As economic and diplomatic leverage erodes, kinetic power becomes the last

remaining tool. The danger is that military reach replaces strategic wisdom. Europe, meanwhile, stands weaker than at any time since World War II. Decades of dependency on U.S. security guarantees have hollowed out independent defense capacity. If Washington chooses to act unilaterally—whether in the Arctic, Greenland, or beyond—Europe has little capacity to resist or even influence outcomes. The old alliance-based order is being replaced by raw power politics. What we are witnessing is not isolated crises but a systemic transformation. Venezuela, Gaza, Iran, Somalia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Greenland—these are not disconnected flashpoints. They are symptoms of a collapsing rules-based system. International law, once imperfect but functional, is being abandoned openly. The very institutions designed to prevent global war are being sidelined by the powers that created them. This trajectory is unsustainable. A world governed by regime change, sanctions warfare, naval seizures, and unilateral military action is not a stable world. It is a prelude to catastrophe. A third world war—if it comes—will not resemble the first two. It will be faster, more technologically devastating, and far less controllable. History has already delivered its verdict on regime change as a strategy. It does not produce peace. It produces chaos, radicalization, and endless war. Iran will not be the exception. Nor will the Middle East be pacified by repeating the same failed experiment under a different banner. There remains only one rational path forward: diplomacy, restraint, and the revival of international institutions—not as tools of dominance, but as platforms for collective survival. The alternative is a world governed by force alone, where no nation, however powerful, remains immune from the consequences. Let us hope sanity prevails—before repetition becomes annihilation.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

From Saddam to Maduro

VENUEZUELA'S two "former" leaders, the late Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro, somehow resemble figures from the Middle East—Saddam Hussein, Ayatollah Khomeini and Muammar Qaddafi. They were famous for bombastic speeches, populist slogans and zero achievements. Who can forget Chavez's words from the UN podium about US President George W. Bush: "The devil came here yesterday and it smells of sulfur still today." Like the others, he waged quixotic battles, yet in reality spent his years in power besieged—only to end in defeat. After the eloquent Chavez came Maduro, a simple man, a former bus driver and trade unionist. He followed in his predecessor's footsteps, making mockery of the US his favorite topic. But he failed to grasp the character of the new Caesar in the White House. He assumed Donald Trump would never get him. Instead of negotiations, he barricaded himself in his quarters and transformed the presidential palace into a heavily armed fortress. What followed was inevitable, echoing the fate of Saddam in 2003. The Iraqi leader watched in disbelief as American columns advanced along the Tigris through the heart of Baghdad. Saddam fled in haste to Tikrit, hid in a pit on a friend's farm and was soon betrayed by one of his own, handed over to the Americans and led away under guard.

The Venezuelan president, likewise, was taken in his pajamas to New York. Trump was blunt: Maduro's fate is a lesson for other leaders, warning the presidents of Cuba, Colombia and Mexico against allowing drug trafficking. Latin Americans are like us Arabs, with many of them burdened by narcissistic populist leaders. I visited Caracas in 2007. It appeared

then to be a beautiful, clean capital, at least in the Altamira neighborhood where we stayed and the El Avila area we visited on the city's edge. The slums encircled the city. Our guide moaned that they were migrants, arriving in the millions in search of a better life in this supposedly wealthy country. Living conditions deteriorated under the revolutionary government's policies and armed men became a common sight in the city. They were not police but hired civilians guarding certain buildings; some were at the entrance to our hotel's parking garage. At the time, the exchange rate stood at 2 bolivars to the US dollar. Under Chavez and later Maduro, the economy was wrecked. The currency collapsed to as much as 500 bolivars to the dollar and poverty forced more than 5 million Venezuelans to emigrate.

Why would an oil-rich country like Venezuela throw itself into continental conflicts, with its president clinging to revolutionary posturing long after the age of revolutions ended with the Cold War? The scene was strikingly reminiscent of Libya, a country rich in resources yet poor in reality. Maduro, now in detention, was long haunted by Chavez. He ruled for more than a decade trying to imitate him. Yet while Maduro is a simple man, Chavez was driven by a deep and radical ideology. The scene was strikingly reminiscent of Libya, a country rich in resources yet poor in reality. He legitimized revolutionary rhetoric in an oil-rich country, expelled American companies and nationalized major investments. An eloquent orator, Chavez knew how to turn ideas into populist spectacle. He styled himself as an intellectual—he was surrounded by poets and writers and he counted the

novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez among his friends. He cast himself in the lineage of Venezuela's historic symbol, Simon Bolivar. Even as president, Chavez hosted a weekly television program, once speaking nonstop for eight hours.

Of course, there was a vast gap between his rhetoric and the facts on the ground, as poverty, unemployment and arrests increased. Chavez died at 58 in a clinic in Cuba, ill with cancer, though some believe he was poisoned. He was succeeded by Maduro, an uneducated figure with wooden language, who continued to imitate Chavez politically but without Chavez's rhetorical talents.

Trump, we know now, is a leader unlike those who preceded him in the White House. He was briefed bluntly: Venezuela, long a friend of the US, had been a thorn in its side for more than two decades. It had aligned itself with America's adversaries, Iran, Russia and China, and had emerged as a major hub for drug financing.

His predecessors, he was told, had relied on economic sanctions and political isolation. Trump chose a different path. He moved to shorten the timeline and resolve the issue in a single stroke. He did not seek regime change; instead, he targeted Maduro and agreed to work with his deputy. Defiant leaders would do well to learn from what happened in Caracas—be careful, Trump is in search of victories.

— Abdulrahman Al-Rashed is a Saudi journalist and intellectual. He is the former general manager of Al-Arabiya news channel and former editor-in-chief of Asharq Al-Awsat, where this article was originally published. X: @aalrashed

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed

The Venezuelan president, likewise, was taken in his pajamas to New York. Trump was blunt: Maduro's fate is a lesson for other leaders, warning the presidents of Cuba, Colombia and Mexico against allowing drug trafficking. Latin Americans are like us Arabs, with many of them burdened by narcissistic populist leaders. I visited Caracas in 2007. It appeared then to be a beautiful, clean capital, at least in the Altamira neighborhood where we stayed and the El Avila area we visited on the city's edge

Briefs

Pakistan rejects Israel's recognition...

FROM PAGE 01

The organisation reiterated its absolute rejection of any actions or measures that could undermine Somalia's unity, territorial integrity, or sovereignty over its entire territory. The OIC stressed that Israel's action constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the fundamental principle of respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity. It warned that the move poses a direct threat to peace and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region, with potentially dangerous implications for regional and international peace. Reaffirming its long-standing position, the OIC emphasised that the so-called "Somaliland" is an integral and inseparable part of the Federal Republic of Somalia and does not possess any independent international legal status.

General in charge of Maduro's guard sacked

FROM PAGE 01

Can Maduro's trusted lieutenant now work for Trump? The sacking of Gen Marcano Tábara is one of the first changes to senior officials in her inner circle. As well as being in charge of the presidential guard, Gen Marcano Tábara also led Venezuela's military counterintelligence unit DGCIM. The DGCIM has played a key role in the repression of people critical of the Maduro government, according to the United Nations. A UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission found that the counter-intelligence unit had committed myriad human rights violations since 2013. It documented scores of cases in which those detained were subjected to "torture, sexual violence and/or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment" in the DGCIM headquarters and a network of covert detention centres across the country. However, his sacking does not appear to be related to the repression carried out by the DGCIM under his helm as the man she has appointed to succeed him headed an intelligence service which faces similar accusations. Gustavo González López was in charge of Venezuela's national intelligence service, Sebin for many years.

PTI's resilient rally in...

FROM PAGE 01

Here are glimpses of the passionate crowds gathering at the venue and along the route. PTI leaders, including CM Sohail Afridi, reaffirmed their commitment to continue the peaceful struggle until Imran Khan is freed. They expressed readiness for talks with the government – but only if all cases against Imran Khan and other PTI figures are dropped. The party described the turnout as a "historic display of public power", sending a strong message against what they called "fascist" tactics, violence, arrests, and obstructions by authorities. PTI highlighted that despite permissions being granted for Bagh-i-Jinnah (adjacent to Mazar-i-Quaid), last-minute changes and alleged interference led to the gathering shifting focus to the mausoleum gates. Supporters braved heavy security and blockades, with party workers reopening paths through collective efforts.

PM thanks overseas Pakistanis

FROM PAGE 01

the Prime Minister said he, along with the entire nation, takes pride in them. He further said initiatives for the welfare and well-being of overseas Pakistanis remain among the government's top priorities.

Govt and private sector strategize for economic stability, says Atif

FPCCI Chief also pointed out immense opportunities in value-added manufacturing, services exports, IT, and agro-based industries



DNA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), today hosted a high-level "Consultative Session with Stakeholders on Export Performance" at Federation House, Karachi, aimed at formulating strategies to boost Pakistan's exports and strengthen the national economy. The session was chaired by the Federal Secretary for Commerce, Mr. Jawad Paul, and attended by key government officials including Mr. Saif Anjum, Secretary Industries & Production, senior TDAP officials, and stakeholder trade bodies.

In his welcome address, Mr. Atif Ikram

Sheikh, President FPCCI, emphasized that export enhancement lies at the very heart of Pakistan's economic stability and growth. He appreciated the Ministry of Commerce's leadership in engaging with the private sector to address on-the-ground realities. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh elaborated that FPCCI firmly believes that sustainable export growth can only be achieved through close coordination between policymakers and the business community. He highlighted that while Pakistan's exporters are resilient and innovative, they currently face multiple challenges, including the high cost of doing business, energy constraints, access to finance, market diversification, and compliance with international standards.

FPCCI Chief also pointed out immense

opportunities in value-added manufacturing, services exports, IT, and agro-based industries. He expressed confidence that the session would lead to strategies that strengthen foreign exchange reserves, create employment, and place Pakistan on a sustainable growth trajectory.

Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, informed that the consultative session featured comprehensive representation from major private sector stakeholders, including Textiles: Representatives from APTMA, APTPMA, PRGMEA, and TMA; Fruits and Vegetables: Representatives of the Pakistan Fruits & Vegetables Association (PFVA); * Travel and Tourism: Pakistan Association of Tour Operators (PATO) and Travel Agents Association of Pakistan

(TAAP); and Transport and Logistics: Representatives of the Pakistan International Freight Forwarders Association (PIFFA).

The session concluded with remarks by the Chair, Mr. Jawad Paul, following detailed sector-wise discussions and recommendations – who agreed with the issues like the lack of regionally-comparative cost of energy and need for facilitative taxation measures to the exporters.

Mr. Saif Anjum, Secretary Industries & Production, highlighted that a vast export processing zone is being established and operationalized on the lands of Pakistan Steel Mills for expansion and facilitation of export-oriented industries – and, trade and industry should fully capitalize on the opportunities.

CM Afridi slams 'NFC snub' to tribal...

FROM PAGE 01

districts are not financially integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's share. CM Afridi highlighted the denial of NFC shares to merged districts, stressing that KP supplies cheap electricity and oil, and claims a liability of Rs4,758 [billion] against the federal in these heads. He disclosed that while the province's share in the NFC exceeds Rs1,300bn, promised funds for the merged districts remain unpaid. The chief minister claimed that Rs100bn was promised initially, a figure that now stands at Rs300bn based on 3pc of the divisible pool. CM Afridi noted that only Rs132bn was released while liabilities stood at Rs568bn. He regretted that the federal government had promised funds for TDPs but didn't disburse them, compelling the KP government to use Rs7.5bn from its own kitty.

President Pezeshkian appeals...

FROM PAGE 01

the path of rioters and "armed terrorists." He made a moral appeal for peace, stating, "No fellow citizen should create chaos, no human being should kill another person." On the domestic front, President Pezeshkian confirmed that his government is actively "fighting the roots of corruption in the country," positioning this effort as a key component of solving the nation's issues and restoring public trust. His foreign policy criticism was pointed, particularly targeting the United States. "The US president should be ashamed of what he is doing in Venezuela, Gaza, elsewhere," he declared, aligning Iran's stance with global criticisms of American foreign policy. Concluding with a call for collective action, President Pezeshkian asked "all Iranian people to join hands to solve problems of the nation," framing national unity as the essential shield against both internal discord and external pressure. The address appears to be a concerted effort by the new administration to consolidate domestic support, address economic and social grievances, and firmly reject external influence amid ongoing regional and international tensions.

Iran says any US...

FROM PAGE 01

sources say Israel is on high alert for the possibility of US intervention amid protests in Iran. The country has faced demonstrations since December 28, 2025, on the issue of soaring inflation, with authorities accusing the US and Israel of fomenting unrest. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene in recent days and warned Iran's rulers against using force against demonstrators. On Saturday, Trump said the US stands "ready to help". The sources, who were present for Israeli security consultations over the weekend, did not elaborate on what Israel's high-alert footing meant in practice. Israel and Iran fought a 12-day war in June, in which the US joined Israel in launching airstrikes. In a phone call on Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the possibility of US intervention in Iran, according to an Israeli source who was present for the conversation.

New chancery of Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

He emphasized that the government is committed to facilitating overseas Pakistanis through provision of effective consular services. He expressed satisfaction on the completion of the project and authorized the transfer of operations and Consular services to the new chancery building at the earliest. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq, Saudi dignitaries, Consul General of Pakistan in Jeddah Syed Mustafa Rabbani, prominent Pakistani citizens and officials of the Pakistan Consulate, Jeddah.

Sabalenka into third straight Brisbane final ahead of Australian Open

BRISBANE: Aryna Sabalenka beat Karolina Muchova in straight sets to reach her third Brisbane International final in a row on Saturday, a week ahead of the Australian Open. Sabalenka looked in great touch against the tricky Czech, who had won their last three meetings and went into the match as one of the few players with a winning record over the world number one. But Sabalenka showed her class and power as she broke Muchova once in each set to take the semifinal 6-3, 6-4 in 89 minutes and will face Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk in the final.

"I struggled against her a couple of times (in the past),"

Sabalenka, the defending

champion, said of Muchova. "I'm happy that today I was focused from the beginning and I was able to show such great tennis and put her under so much pressure and get the win in straight sets. "That's just super great." The 27-year-old Belarussian said she could feel her level getting better with every match in Brisbane, where she is yet to drop a set. She said that with seven of the world's top 10 having entered, it was ideal preparation for the Australian Open, which begins in Melbourne on January 18. Sabalenka is aiming to win a third Australian Open in four years. "I definitely feel that compared to the first match here, I'm playing better and better," she said. "That's really important heading to Melbourne, to build that level, and to play some great matches against great opponents.

"So I'm super happy with the performance so far and cannot wait to play my final match here," Kostyuk, who entered the week ranked 26th in the world, swept past world number six Jessica Pegula 6-0, 6-3 in just 55 minutes in a stunning display of power and aggression. Kostyuk's demolition of the American made it three wins over top 10 players in succession. She beat world number three Amanda Anisimova in the third round and ninth-ranked Mirra Andreeva in quarterfinals. – Agencies

AFCON hosts Morocco into last four with win over Cameroon

BAKU: Hosts Morocco booked their place in the semi-finals of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) with a dominant display against Cameroon in Rabat, BBC reported. A goal in each half, scored by Brahim Diaz and Ismael Saibari, was enough to see off their opponents, who rarely threatened. Diaz tucked home from close range in the 26th minute after Ayoub El Kaabi's flick on from a corner, using his thigh to nudge the ball into the net for his fifth goal of the tournament. Saibari's goal also came from a set piece, firing home a low left-footed drive after picking up a loose ball from a free-kick. Having now matched their historic run to the semi-finals in Qatar, Regragui's side are two wins away from claiming the country's first continental crown since 1976. Morocco are now unbeaten in 25 matches - a run stretching back to their last-16 exit at the 2023 edition of the finals - and are into the last four at an AFCON for the first time since 2004, when they went on to lose against Tunisia in the final. The Atlas Lions will have a huge home advantage again when they return to this stadium on Wednesday to play the winners of Saturday's quarter-final between Algeria and Nigeria. – Agencies

Pak women's cricket team intensifies training in Karachi

KARACHI: The Pakistan Women's Cricket Team is undergoing intensive training at the National Stadium, Karachi, under the guidance of mentor Wahab Riaz. The focus of the camp is on enhancing the players' batting, bowling, and fielding skills. In addition to on-field practice, the players are improving their fitness and stamina through gym sessions, jogging, and swimming. Wahab Riaz, together with his coaching team, conducts daily four- to five-hour sessions to fine-tune the players' technical skills. These efforts aim to strengthen the team's performance and prepare them for upcoming international competitions. – Agencies

'We don't want to be Americans': Greenland's political parties

NUUK: We don't want to be Americans," Greenland's political parties said after US President Donald Trump again suggested using force to seize the mineral-rich Danish autonomous territory. The statement late Friday came after Trump repeated that Washington was "going to do something on Greenland, whether they like it or not". "We don't want to be Americans, we don't want to be Danish, we want to be Greenlanders," the leaders of five parties in Greenland's parliament said. "The future of Greenland must be decided by Greenlanders." Denmark and other European allies have voiced shock at Trump's threats to take control of Greenland, where the United States already has a military base. Trump says controlling the strategic island is crucial for US national security given the rising military activity of Russia and China in the Arctic. "We're not going to have Russia or China occupy Greenland. That's what they're going to do if we don't. So we're going to be doing something with Greenland, either the nice way or the more difficult way," the US president said Friday. Both Russia and China have increased military activity in the region in recent years, but neither has laid any claim to the vast icy island. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that an invasion of Greenland would end "everything", meaning the transatlantic NATO defence pact and the post-World War II security structure. Trump has made light of the concerns of Denmark, a steadfast US ally that joined the United States in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. "I'm a fan of Denmark, too, I have to tell you. And you know, they've been very nice to me," Trump said. But you know, the fact that they had a boat land there 500 years ago doesn't mean that they own the land." Secretary of State Marco Rubio is due to meet next week with Denmark's foreign minister and representatives from Greenland. – APP

Syrian army says swept Aleppo district after clashes with Kurdish fighters

The violence in Syria's second city erupted after efforts to integrate the Kurds' de facto autonomous administration and military into the country's new government stalled

ALEPO: Syria's army said it had completed a "security sweep" on Saturday of a neighbourhood in Aleppo where it clashed with Kurdish forces, though shelling could still be heard following calls for fighters to surrender themselves and their weapons. Government forces began striking the Sheikh Maqsud area of Aleppo to surrender themselves and their weapons immediately". The violence in Syria's second city erupted after efforts to integrate the Kurds' de facto autonomous administration and military into the country's new government stalled. Since the start of the fighting on Tuesday, at least 21 civilians have been killed, according to figures from both sides, and tens of thousands have fled Aleppo. The clashes, some of the most intense since Syria's new Islamist authorities took power, present yet another challenge as the country struggles to reunify after ousting

longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. Both sides blamed the other for starting the violence in Aleppo. Early Friday, Syrian authorities announced a window for the Kurdish fighters to leave, but they refused to "surrender" and vowed to defend their districts. In response, Syria's army warned it would renew strikes on military targets in Sheikh Maqsud and urged civilians to get out ahead of the district's takeover by security forces. An AFP correspondent saw residents laden with belongings fleeing before the two-hour humanitarian corridor closed. Kurdish forces reported coming under artillery and drone attacks, and claimed in a post on social media to be mounting a "fierce and ongoing resistance". The army said three soldiers had been killed by Kurdish fighters, while state television accused them of launching drones at residential areas of Aleppo. A flight suspension at Aleppo airport was extended until late Saturday. The SDF controls swathes of Syria's oil-rich north and northeast, and was key to the defeat of the Islamic State group in 2019. But Turkey – a close ally of Syria's new leaders – views its main component as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which agreed last year to end its four-decade armed struggle against Ankara. Elham Ahmad, a senior official in the Kurdish administration in Syria's northeast, accused Syrian authorities of "choosing the path of war" by attacking Kurdish districts and of "seeking to put an end to the agreements that have been reached". "We are committed to them and we are seeking to implement them," she told AFP.

Briefs

Japan calls on Iran to avoid using force to stop protests

TOKYO: Japanese Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu on Sunday called on Iran to avoid using force against peaceful protests. Motegi noted that many people have been killed or injured in the ongoing protests and said Japan was "deeply concerned about the deterioration of the situation." The country is monitoring developments closely and is opposed to the use of force. "The government of Japan strongly calls for the immediate cessation of violence and strongly hopes for an early settlement of the situation," Motegi said in a statement, adding the administration was taking necessary measures to protect Japanese nationals in Iran.—APP

China voices support for Somalia

BEIJING: China's foreign minister said Beijing supported Somalia in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity in a phone call on Sunday with his Somali counterpart, a Chinese ministry statement said. Foreign Minister Wang Yi held the phone call during his visit to Africa, and said China opposed Somaliland's "collusion with Taiwan authorities to seek independence," referring in the statement to Somalia's breakaway region. Somalia was scheduled to be part of the Chinese diplomat's annual New Year tour of Africa, which also includes Ethiopia, Tanzania and Lesotho, but the visit to the East African nation was postponed due to what the Chinese embassy said was a "schedule change."—APP

Bomb attacks on Thailand petrol stations injure 4

BANGKOK: Assailants detonated bombs at nearly a dozen petrol stations in Thailand's south early Sunday, injuring four people, the army said, the latest attacks in the insurgency-hit region. A low-level conflict since 2004 has killed thousands of people as rebels in the Muslim-majority region bordering Malaysia battle for greater autonomy. Several bombs exploded within a 40-minute period after midnight on Sunday, igniting 11 petrol stations across Thailand's southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala, an army statement said. Authorities did not announce any arrests or say who may be behind the attacks. "It happened almost at the same time. A group of an unknown number of men came and detonated bombs which damaged fuel pumps," Narathiwat Governor Boonchay Homayam told local media, adding that one police officer was injured in the province. A firefighter and two petrol station employees were injured in Pattani, the army said. All four were admitted to hospitals, none with serious injuries, a Thai army spokesman told AFP.

Ugandan opposition turns flag into protest symbol

KAMPALA: Hundreds screamed with excitement as Uganda's opposition leader passed by a recent rally, with the crowd waving a sea of national flags — a dangerously politicized symbol in the run-up to this week's election. Analysts say it is almost a foregone conclusion that President Yoweri Museveni, 81, will win a seventh term in Thursday's vote, given his near-total control over the state apparatus in the east African country. But his opponent, 43-year-old Robert Kyagulanyi, better known as Bobi Wine, has framed the election as a protest vote and cannily turned the national flag into a symbol of resistance. Police last month warned against using the flag "casually and inappropriately." Wine's supporters have faced frequent intimidation by the security forces during the campaign, according to the United Nations Human Rights Office and other observers.—APP

PN Flotilla's Oman visit to strengthen ties

Pakistan and Oman are maritime neighbours and frequent visits of dignitaries, port calls by ships and joint exercises are a regular feature. The visit of PN and PMSA ships will further strengthen bilateral relations between the two navies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Flotilla comprising of PNS RAH NAWARD (Sail Ship), PNS MADADGAR and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) ship PMSA KASHMIR visited Port Sultan Qaboos, Muscat, Oman. Upon arrival at the port, the ships were warmly welcomed by Omani authorities. During the visit, Mission Commander, Commodore Amir Iqbal, along with the Commanding Officers held meetings with naval leadership of Oman. Mission Commander called on Acting Commander of Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), DG Ops and Plans, Commander Maritime Security Centre, Commander Said Bin Sultan Naval Base and Commandant Sultan Qaboos Naval Academy. During these interactions, matters of mutual interest, Navy-to-Navy engagements, and cooperation in maritime security were discussed. RNO Officers and Midshipmen also visited onboard ships and discussed topics of mutual maritime interest with PN officers. Pakistan Navy Ships were opened for visitors; wherein, large number of Pakistani community and students



from Pakistan School, Muscat visited onboard. Following the port call, PN and PMSA ships conducted a Passage Exercise with Royal Oman Navy ship KHASAB. The exercise at sea aimed

to enhance interoperability between the two navies and promote shared learning through bilateral conduct of naval exercises. Pakistan and Oman are maritime neighbours and frequent

visits of dignitaries, port calls by ships and joint exercises are a regular feature. The visit of PN and PMSA ships will further strengthen bilateral relations between the two navies.

Iranian army vows to protect public property

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned on Saturday that safeguarding security was a "red line" and the military vowed to protect public property, as the clerical establishment stepped up efforts to quell the most widespread protests in years. The statements came after US President Donald Trump issued a new warning to Iran's leaders on Friday, and after Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Saturday declared: "The United States supports the brave people of Iran." Unrest continued as state media said a municipal building was set on fire in Karaj, west of Tehran, and blamed "rioters." On Friday, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said rioters were attacking public properties and warned that Tehran would not tolerate people acting as "mercenaries for foreigners." State TV broadcast footage of funerals of members of the security forces, it said, who were killed in protests in the cities of Shiraz, Qom and Hamedan. A witness in western Iran reached by phone said the Revolutionary Guards were deployed and opening fire in the area from which they were speaking, declining to be identified for their safety. In a statement broadcast by state TV, the IRGC — an elite force which has suppressed previous bouts of unrest — accused terrorists of targeting military and law enforcement bases over the past two nights, killing several citizens and security personnel and saying property had been set on fire. Safeguarding the achievements of the 1979 revolution and maintaining security was "a red line," it added, saying the continuation of the situation was unacceptable. The military announced it would "protect and safeguard national interests, the country's strategic infrastructure, and public property." In a statement published by semi-official news sites, the military accused Israel and "hostile terrorist groups" of seeking to "undermine the country's public security." On Friday, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said rioters were attacking public properties and warned that Tehran would not tolerate people acting as "mercenaries for foreigners." The Revolutionary Guards' public relations office said three members of the Basij security force were killed and five wounded during clashes with what it described as "armed rioters" in Gachsaran, in the southwest. Another security officer was stabbed to death in Hamedan, in western Iran. The son of a senior officer, Brig. Gen. Martyr Nourali Shoushtari, was killed in the Ahmadvand area of Mashhad, in the northeast. Two other security personnel were killed over the past two nights in Shush, in Khouzestan province. Authorities have described protests over the economy as legitimate while condemning what they call violent rioters and cracking down with security forces. Iranian rights group HRANA said it had documented 65 deaths, including 50 protesters and 15 security personnel as of January 9. The Norway-based human rights group Hengaw said more than 2,500 people had been arrested over the past two weeks. A doctor in northwestern Iran said that since Friday, large numbers of injured protesters had been brought to hospitals.—APP

Man found guilty of trying to rape woman on flight

After offering the woman, who the court heard was born in 1993 and is from Aberdeenshire, wine, he attempted to force her hand and head towards his exposed crotch

NEWS DESK

LONDON: A man has been found guilty of attempting to rape a Scottish woman on an Easyjet flight. Nicola Cristiano, 45, from Italy, moved seats to sit beside the woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, during the night-time journey from Naples to Edinburgh on 13 May. After offering the woman, who the court heard was born in 1993 and is from Aberdeenshire, wine, he attempted to force her hand and head towards his exposed crotch. Judge Alison Stirling remanded Cristiano in custody and asked for background reports to be prepared ahead of sentencing at the High Court in Edinburgh on 6 February. Earlier The High Court in Edinburgh heard evidence from a fellow passenger and a member of the cabin crew. Forensic evidence also showed there was a trace of Cristiano's semen on the victim's cheek.

Rescuers race to find dozens missing in deadly Philippines landfill collapse

MANILA: Rescuers raced against time on Sunday to find dozens of people still missing after a deadly landfill collapse in the central Philippines. A huge mound of garbage at the 15-hectare Binaliw open landfill in Cebu City collapsed suddenly on Thursday afternoon, burying more than 100 workers and nearby structures and underneath. The Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office told Arab News that as of Sunday, at least six people were dead, while 30 remained under the debris. Only light equipment was brought to the site, and rescuers were combing through the high piles of decomposing waste manually. "The recovery operations are ongoing. Heavy equipment cannot yet be brought into the area because the site is still unstable, and moving any structure or beam could cause the garbage mound to collapse again," the agency said. "We're still hoping that there are survivors." While the cause of the landfill collapse remains unclear, the local government in Cebu said factors such as rain softening the soil and September's earthquake shifting rock formations contributed to the disaster. For environmentalists, however, it was not unexpected. Jessie Baring, a Cebu City-based chemical engineer and environmental advocate, said it was an "accident waiting to happen." As he compared a few months of drone imagery, he told Arab News he had observed a "big lapse on the part of the operator, as they have stockpiled the garbage as if it were on a flat land." Greenpeace Philippines said in a statement that the incident painted a "grim picture" of the Philippines' "broken waste management system" and compared it to the Payatas tragedy in July 2000, when more than 200 residents died after a massive garbage dump collapsed at the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City. "The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act No. 9003) — a law passed after the Payatas tragedy — was primarily designed to ensure waste prevention through source reduction and segregation, but enforcement has been inconsistent," Greenpeace data said. Since 2019, when the landfill was opened, it received 600 tons of waste every day, according to the Movement for a Livable Cebu, which called for an independent investigation into the landfill disaster and a review of local government waste management plans. "The residents of Barangay Binaliw have long complained and endured the stench, flies, untreated wastewater leachate, deep well water contamination and other health issues," said Joel Lee, MLC's executive director. "Unless we take decisive action, we are bound to face worse consequences."—APP

DPM inaugurates new Chancery building in Jeddah

A brief video report highlighting the project's features was displayed. In his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister lauded the efforts of the Consulate General of Pakistan, Jeddah, and the support provided by the authorities of Saudi Arabia for making the project a reality

DNA

JEDDAH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, today inaugurated the new chancery building in a small and graceful ceremony attended by the Ambassador of Pakistan in Saudi Arabia, Ahmad Farooq, Saudi dignitaries, the Consul General of Pakistan in Jeddah, Syed Mustafa Rabbani, prominent Pakistani citizens, and officials of the Pakistan Consulate, Jeddah. The Pakistani flag was raised in the premises of the new chancery building, followed by a tree plantation in the Chancery lawn, ribbon cutting, unveiling the plaque, and offering prayers for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He emphasized that the government is committed to facilitating overseas Pakistanis through the provision of effective consular services. After viewing the building and facilities, the DPM expressed satisfaction with the completion of the project and authorized the transfer of operations and Consular services to the new chancery building at the earliest. The Western Region of Saudi Arabia is home to approximately 1.8 million Pakistanis, and the new chancery building and its facilities will go a long way in facilitating services for the community.



Qatar, Türkiye send thousands of tons of aid to Sudan

MERSIN, Türkiye: Qatar and Türkiye have dispatched a humanitarian aid vessel carrying more than 2,400 metric tons of relief supplies to Sudan, it was announced this weekend. The aid is aimed at supporting vulnerable communities affected by conflict, food insecurity and limited humanitarian access, the aid agencies involved said on Saturday. The shipment, delivered through a partnership between the Qatar Fund for Development and the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, includes food, clothing, tents, blankets and essential household items for displaced and atrisk populations across Sudan. The dispatch ceremony in Mersin was attended by Attila Toros, the governor of Mersin, alongside AFAD Director Ali Hamza, Qatar's First Secretary in Türkiye Abdulaziz Al-Hamadi, and a QFD delegation led by Yousef Al-Mulla, acting manager of the humanitarian aid department. The QFD said it remains committed to easing human suffering and supporting stability and resilience in communities impacted by conflict, and that the initiative highlighted the close cooperation between Qatar and Türkiye in providing coordinated, life-saving humanitarian assistance and responding to urgent needs in crisis-affected regions.—APP

Israeli fire kills three people in Gaza, tension rises

CAIRO: Israeli fire killed at least three Palestinians in two separate incidents across the enclave, local health authorities said, as tension rises over continued violence. Medics said one Palestinian was killed in the Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City, in an area under Palestinian control, while two others were killed in the town of Bani Suhaila east of Khan Younis, an area Israel still occupies. There was no comment from the Israeli military on the two incidents. Fighting has largely abated since Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in October, two years into the war, but it has not stopped entirely. Israel and Hamas have traded blame over the violations of the deal. A Hamas official told Reuters on Sunday that the group urged mediators to intervene to stop "daily Israeli killings that aim to derail the ceasefire deal." More than 440 Palestinians, most of them civilians according to Gaza health officials, have been killed since the truce, as well as three Israeli soldiers.—APP

Thousands of Australians without power after tropical cyclone

SYDNEY: Thousands of people in Australia's northeast state of Queensland were without power on Sunday after a tropical cyclone crossed the coast bringing heavy rain and destructive winds. Kofi, a category one cyclone, made landfall between the towns of Ayr and Bowen, about 500 km (310 miles) north of state capital Brisbane, before weakening to a tropical low, the nation's weather forecaster said. The storm, with wind gusts of up to 95 kph (59 mph) and heavy rain, hit coastal towns including Mackay, a tourist hub and gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, it said. Queensland state Premier David Crisafulli said around 15,000 properties had lost power due to Kofi, which had also damaged property and boats, and closed roads. Kofi brought rainfall of up to 200 mm (7.8 inches) to some areas overnight and was expected to result in heavy downpours over the next 24 to 48 hours, Crisafulli said. "There's the prospect of flooding, Queenslanders will handle that," he said in televised remarks from Brisbane. Earlier, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described flash flooding as a "major risk" across a large stretch of Queensland's coast. The weather forecaster said the severe weather would likely persist through Sunday before possibly easing on Monday.—APP

Briefs

Dollar inflows from exchangers dip

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: Banks received 30 per cent fewer US dollars from exchange companies in the first half of the current fiscal year, according to official data. Exchange companies sold about \$1.4 billion to banks during July-December FY26, compared with around \$2bn in the corresponding period of FY25, reflecting a decline of nearly 30pc. Exchange companies are required to sell surplus foreign currency in the banking market. However, they are also allowed to sell dollars to individuals for specific purposes.

"The customers bought about \$1.2bn in six months from exchange companies, kept \$400m in bank accounts and the remaining \$800m is not traceable," said Malik Bostan, Chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP). The untraceable \$800m is believed to have been used for purchasing virtual currencies. Trading in virtual currencies remains unregulated in Pakistan, though the State Bank is working on a framework to regulate cryptocurrency transactions.

The government has expressed support for cryptocurrency trading and is willing to legalise it with the assistance of the State Bank. Selling dollars to the general public is not straightforward, as exchange companies typically issue cheques for encashment through banks or directly transfer dollars into buyers' bank accounts instead of providing cash.

In Gaza hospital, patients clinging to MSF

KHAN YUNIS: At a hospital in Gaza, wards are filled with patients fearing they will be left without care if Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is forced out under an Israeli ban due to take effect in March. Last month, Israel announced it would prevent 37 aid organisations, including MSF, from operating in Gaza from March 1 for failing to provide detailed information on their Palestinian staff.

"They stood by us throughout the war," said 10-year-old Adam Asfour, his left arm pinned with metal rods after he was wounded by shrapnel in a bombing in September. "When I heard it was possible they would stop providing services, it made me very sad," he added from his bed at Gaza's Nasser Hospital. Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, which oversees NGO registrations, has accused two MSF employees of links to Palestinian militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, allegations MSF vehemently denies. – APP

India lacks 'locus standi' to comment on Pakistan-Bangladesh defence ties

Indian observations regarding Dhaka's procurement of JF-17 are totally misplaced and unwarranted, say sources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has categorically rejected Indian observations regarding Pakistan-Bangladesh cooperation in construction and other key sectors, including defence-related engagements. "The Indian observations regarding the potential procurement of JF-17 Thunder multi-role fighter aircraft by Bangladesh are totally misplaced and unwarranted," said sources dealing with FO, adding that such remarks reflect unnecessary interference in bilateral affairs. They further highlighted that India had no locus standi to comment on the nature or scope of relations between Islamabad and Dhaka. They maintained that bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh is a sovereign matter and does not require validation or approval from any third country. The FO's stance comes as India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Rangh Jaiswal had earlier said that New Delhi was closely observing discussions be-

tween Pakistan and Bangladesh concerning the possible procurement of JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft from Pakistan. Responding to a question pertaining to the resumption of direct flights between Dhaka and Karachi from January 29, and whether India's permission would be required for the use of Indian airspace, Jaiswal said such matters would be managed under existing arrangements. New Delhi's remarks came in response to the meeting between Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu and Bangladesh Air Force Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan where the two sides "held detailed discussions on the potential procurement of JF-17 Thunder fighter jets" from Pakistan. Providing details of the meeting, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) ACM Sidhu briefed his Bangladeshi counterpart on PAF's recent advancements and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting the Bangladesh Air Force through a comprehensive training framework from basic to advanced flying and specialised courses across PAF institutions.

ISLAMABAD TRAGEDY

G-7/2 cylinder blast; Eight dead, 19 pulled from rubble

Investigators are examining whether the blast occurred due to the explosion of a gas cylinder or as a result of a gas leakage that led to ignition

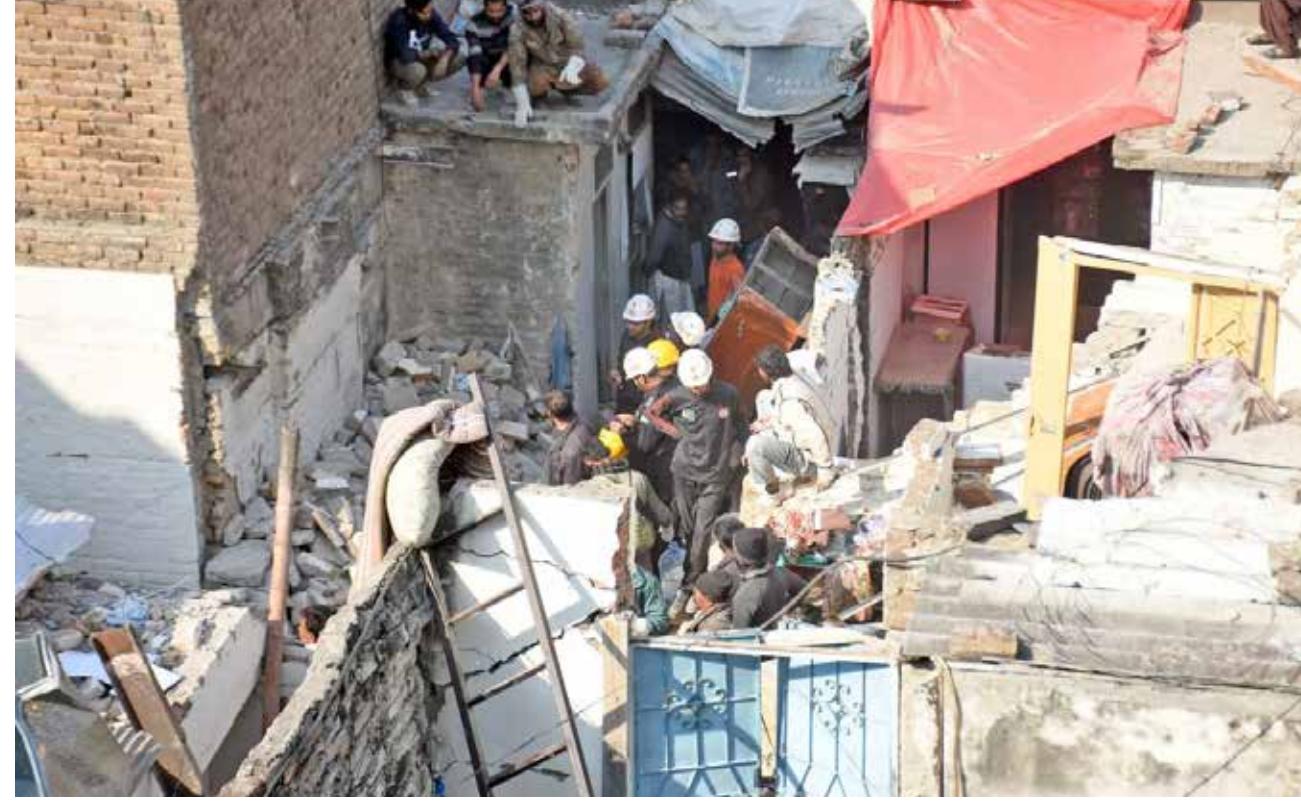
SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Eight people lost their lives and 11 were injured after a cylinder explosion in Islamabad's G-7/2 sector, where rescue teams recovered 19 people from the debris, Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf told here Sunday. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine whether the blast was caused by a cylinder explosion or a gas leak.

An explosion caused by a gas cylinder occurred in the G-7/2 area of the federal capital, resulting in loss of life and injuries. The incident led to the collapse of parts of the structure, trapping people under the rubble. Rescue teams were dispatched to the site soon after the explosion was reported. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Sahibzada Yousaf, while briefing the media, confirmed that the total number of people who died in the incident has reached eight. He said that a coordinated rescue operation was carried out to retrieve those trapped under the debris.

According to the ADCG, a total of 19 people were recovered during the rescue operation. Out of these, 11 people sustained injuries, while eight were found dead. The injured were shifted to nearby hospitals for medical treatment. Hospital authorities have confirmed that several injured individuals are receiving care, while some were discharged after first aid. Sahibzada Yousaf stated that rescue teams worked for several hours to clear the rubble and ensure that no one remained trapped at the site. Heavy machinery was used to remove debris, while emergency workers searched the area manually to avoid further harm to survivors.

The ADCG said that the situation at the site is now under control, and the rescue



operation has been completed. However, security personnel remain present in the area to prevent public movement and to assist investigation teams. Authorities have started a formal inquiry to determine the cause of the explosion. Sahibzada Yousaf said that investigators are examining whether the blast occurred due to the explosion of a gas cylinder or as a result of a gas leakage that led to ignition. He added that all possible angles are being

reviewed to establish the facts. Officials are also collecting evidence from the site, including remains of the cylinder and gas equipment, to support the investigation. Statements of witnesses and residents are being recorded to understand the sequence of events before the explosion. The district administration has assured that action will be taken if negligence is found at any level. Officials said that safety checks related to gas cylinders and connec-

tions in the area will also be reviewed to prevent similar incidents in the future. Residents of nearby buildings reported hearing a loud blast followed by dust and smoke. Many people rushed out of their homes in fear, while others gathered to help rescue efforts before emergency services arrived. The administration has appealed to citizens to follow safety guidelines while using gas cylinders and to report any signs of gas leakage to the relevant authorities.

US says carried out large scale strikes against IS

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US and allied forces carried out "large-scale" strikes against the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group in Syria on Saturday, the US military said, the latest response to an attack last month that killed three Americans. US Central Command (Centcom), which oversees American military forces in the region, said multiple strikes "targeted ISIS throughout Syria," using an acronym for the terrorist group. Centcom's post on X did not give specifics on where they took place. Grainy aerial video accompanying the post showed several separate explosions, apparently in rural areas. The strikes were part of Operation Hawkeye Strike, which was launched "in direct response to the deadly ISIS attack on US and Syrian forces in Palmyra," Centcom said.

Two US soldiers and a US civilian interpreter were killed on December 13 after a lone gunman – whom Washington described as an IS militant – ambushed them in Palmyra.

Syria's interior ministry later said the gunman was a member of the security forces who had been set to be fired for

extremism. "We will never forget, and never relent," US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Saturday in a post on X, replying to the Centcom statement.

The United States and Jordan carried out a round of strikes last month in response to the Palmyra attack, with Centcom saying at the time that "more than 70 targets" had been hit. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, later reported those strikes killed at least five IS members, including a cell leader. On January 3, Britain and France announced joint strikes targeting an underground facility they said IS had likely used to store weapons. The US personnel targeted in Palmyra were supporting Operation Inherent Resolve, the international effort to combat IS, which seized swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory in 2014. The IS members were ultimately defeated by local ground forces backed by international air strikes and other support, but the IS still has a presence in Syria, especially in the country's vast desert. US President Donald Trump has long been sceptical of Washington's presence in Syria, ordering the withdrawal of troops during his first term but ultimately leaving American forces in the country.

IMF hails PIA privatisation

Global lender resident representative says PIA's transfer to private ownership meets a key EFF commitment

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has welcomed the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), calling the sale a landmark step in Pakistan's push to reduce state involvement in commercial sectors, The News reported, citing Arab News. In a statement provided to Arab News on Saturday, Mahir Bin-

ici, the IMF's resident representative in Pakistan, said the transfer of the national carrier to private ownership fulfils a primary commitment under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Binici described the divestment as a milestone in the authorities' reform agenda aimed at attracting private investment to support long-term economic growth. The endorsement follows the landmark sale of a 75% stake in PIA to a consortium led by the Arif Habib Group. The deal, valued at Rs135 billion (\$486 million), concluded last month following a competitive bidding process. This second attempt at privatisation succeeded where a previous effort a year ago failed, largely due to improved operational conditions – including the recent lifting of EU and UK flight bans that was imposed after the airline's deadly Airbus A320 crash in Karachi in 2020 that killed 97 people – which significantly enhanced the airline's market value and appeal to private investors. The IMF's supportive remarks come as recent government data highlights the mounting financial strain caused by underperforming state entities.

Pak Navy reaffirms operational readiness

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy demonstrated its operational readiness and combat preparedness through a comprehensive exercise in the North Arabian Sea, showcasing both conventional and unmanned capabilities, as per dictates of evolving naval warfare. The exercise included the successful live firing of LY-80(N) Surface to Air Missile (SAM) from Vertical Launching System at extended range, validating the long-range capabilities of Pakistan Navy's modern air defence systems. LY-80(N) SAM successfully engaged and neutralized an aerial target, demonstrating Pakistan Navy's robust air defence capabilities. The exercise also featured the successful engagement of surface targets using Loitering Munition (LM), demonstrating Pakistan Navy's precision strike capabilities. Loitering Munition (LM) successfully engaged and destroyed surface targets, showcasing its effectiveness in modern naval warfare. Successful open-sea trials of Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) were also conducted, marking a significant leap in autonomous naval technology. The trials validated the platform's ability to combine high-speed performance with mission-critical durability. Key capabilities demonstrated include extreme maneuverability, precision navigation and weather resilience. USV offers a low-risk, high-impact solution with the stealth of a tactical interceptor. Commander Pakistan Fleet, Vice Admiral Abdul Munib, witnessed the exercise, which showcased Pakistan Navy's ability to employ advanced systems. – Agencies

Musk's X to open source new algorithm in seven days

DNA

NEW YORK: Elon Musk said on Saturday that social media platform X will open to the public its new algorithm, including all code for organic and advertising post recommendations, in seven days. "This will be repeated every 4 weeks, with comprehensive developer notes, to help you understand what changed," he said in his X post. Earlier this week, the European Commission decided to extend a retention order sent to X last year, which related to algorithms and dissemination of illegal content, prolonging it to the end of 2026, spokesperson Thomas Regnier told reporters on Thursday. In July 2025, Paris prosecutors investigated the social media platform for suspected algorithmic bias and fraudulent data extraction, which Musk's X called a "politically-motivated criminal investigation" that threatens its users' free speech.

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