



# Islamabad POST

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**US values ties with Pakistan, says Natalie**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Women play vital role in uplift**

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**Pakistan, UK explore joint ventures**

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**PM Shehbaz says**

## State determined to uproot menace of terrorism in KP

Premier says establishment of lasting peace in KP "inevitable", govt taking practical steps to maintain law & order

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the state was fully determined to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country, while stressing that the establishment of lasting peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become inevitable. The premier stated this while addressing participants of a KP security workshop in Islamabad earlier today. He said the government was taking practical steps to further improve the law and order situation in the province.

PM Shehbaz described the KP province as one of country's most important and strategic regions. He said KP had made unparalleled sacrifices in the war against terrorism, adding that national security remained the government's top priority. The prime minister said that a comprehensive strategy was being adopted to address both internal and external security challenges in the country and paid tribute to the sacrifices rendered by the security forces in the fight against terrorism.

PM Shehbaz went on to say that the nation would have to remain united to counter terrorism. He recalled that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had voted in favour of Pakistan in a referendum. He also said other provinces had contributed Rs800 billion from their own shares to combat terrorism in KP. The prime minister said there was no distinction between "good" and "bad" Taliban. He questioned why the menace of terrorism had once again re-emerged after Pakistan's successful efforts to reign in militancy in recent past. Referring to the Afghan situation, PM Shehbaz said Pakistan had hosted four million Afghans. He said Afghanistan would have to decide whether it wanted to live peacefully. Moving on to the differences of KP government with the Centre, the premier said he had called

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### Field Marshal Asim Munir stresses modern policing

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), visited the National Police Academy in Islamabad where he interacted with officers of the Police Service of Pakistan. The Federal Minister for Interior and the Minister of State for Interior were also present during the visit. Upon arrival, the Field Marshal was warmly received by the Commandant of the Academy and presented with a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out police contingent. He laid a wreath at the Police Martyrs' Monument and offered Fataha, paying solemn tribute to the Shuhada of the Police who laid down their lives in the line of duty while safeguarding peace, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring public safety across the country. He acknowledged the supreme sacrifices rendered by police personnel in the face of terrorism, crime and internal security challenges. During the visit, the Field Marshal was briefed on the School for High-Impact Elite Law Enforcement Development (SHIELD) and other training programs aimed at capacity building and modernization of the police.

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ISLAMABAD: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), visited the National Police Academy in Islamabad where he interacted with officers of the Police Service of Pakistan. — DNA

### Beijing urges Afghanistan to protect Chinese

Suicide bombing claimed by Daesh kills seven including a Chinese national in Kabul

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Beijing demanded on Tuesday that Afghanistan protect Chinese citizens after a bombing at a restaurant in Kabul killed at least seven people, including a Chinese man. China, which shares a rugged 76-kilometre (47-mile) border with Afghanistan, has close ties with the Taliban government. "China has made urgent representations with the Afghan side, demanding that the Afghan side spare no effort to treat the injured, further take effective measures to protect the safety of Chinese citizens," foreign ministry

Continued on Page 06

### Polish minister visit to Pakistan

## Diplomatic row between New Delhi and Poland

The report added that Jaishankar, in televised remarks, said he wanted to discuss Sikorski's "recent travels to the region", calling it a direct reference to the Polish minister's visit to Pakistan in October last year

### Pakistan renews airspace closure for India

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has extended the ban on Indian-registered aircraft from using its airspace for another month until February 24, 2026, according to a Notam (notice to airmen) issued by Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) on Tuesday. According to the new Notam, the restriction will remain in effect from January 25, 2025, to February 24, 2026 (PST) until 5am. The ban applies to all Indian-owned, operated and leased aircraft, including military flights. The PAA said the decision continues an existing restriction that has already been in place for the past nine months. Pakistan closed its airspace for Indian airlines in a

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BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The death toll from a devastating fire at Karachi's Gul Plaza rose to 28 on Tuesday as rescue teams continued searching the smouldering building, with 81 people still missing. Police surgeon Dr Summaya Syed said that 28 bodies have been brought to the Civil Hospital so far and samples of 50 families have been received for DNA profiling and cross-matching. The port city's biggest fire in over a decade started late on Saturday at Gul Plaza, which houses 1,200 shops in a multi-storey complex spread across an area larger than a football field.

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### Briefs

#### UAE President accepts Trump offer

NEWS DESK

ABU DHABI: The UAE accepted an invitation to join US President Donald Trump's newly proposed Board of Peace, the UAE foreign ministry said on Tuesday, placing Abu Dhabi among the first governments to publicly endorse the initiative. The ministry said the UAE stood ready to contribute actively to the mission of the Board of Peace, supporting greater cooperation, stability, and prosperity for all, marking Abu Dhabi's formal alignment with Washington's new conflict-resolution effort. Abu Dhabi's acceptance comes as governments worldwide react cautiously to Trump's plan, which aims to begin with the Gaza conflict before widening to tackle other conflicts, according to a copy of the letter and draft charter seen by Reuters.

#### Flash flood warning issued

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has issued a flash flood warning for the Kabul River and its tributaries for January 22 and 23, with the possibility of upper parts of the country getting affected. In its alert on Tuesday, the FFC said a "strong westerly wave is likely to affect the upper parts of the country from the evening of January 21 to January 24, 2026. Consequently, flows in River Kabul, along with its associated tributaries, may rise from January 22 to January 23, 2026". The alert said that "on account of expected moderate to isolated heavy rainfall coupled with snowfall over the upper parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Swat, Chitral, Buner, Shangla, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Bajaur, Chitral, Mardan,

## PTI-backed Nasir Abbas notified as Senate Opp leader

Raja Nasir reaffirms his loyalty to Imran Khan, says parliament should raise voice for release of political prisoners

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday notified Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) chief and PTI-backed Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas as the opposition leader in the upper house of parliament. "In pursuance of sub-rule (3) of Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, the chairman Senate has been pleased to declare Senator Raja Nasir Abbas as Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, with immediate effect," said a notification issued by the Senate Secretariat. The post has been lying vacant since August last year, when the then-opposition leader in the upper house of the parliament, Shibli Faraz, was disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) following his conviction in cases related to riots on May 9, 2023. The development came a week after Tehreek Tahafuz Ayam-e-Pakistan (TTAP) chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai was appointed leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. Speaking on the floor of the upper house after his notification, Raja Nasir reaffirmed

## Ruling alliance calls for empowered LB system

Sattar calls for declaring incident a national tragedy; PPP's Raza says not appropriate time to "drag" 18th Amendment

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The deadly inferno at Karachi's Gul Plaza, which claimed at least 26 lives with 81 people are reportedly missing, echoed in the National Assembly as Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan lawmakers called for an empowered local government system to prevent such incidents. Addressing the National Assembly, the defence minister said that the lack of fire-extinguishing systems demands the need for every province to have a mechanism where people can address issues at the local level. Asif said there was a consensus that an effective local government system should be adopted, but due to "political wrangling," the constitutional amendment was withdrawn. "The 18th Amendment has proven to be a hoax as all powers have been transferred to the provincial government," the minister added. "The incident has raised an alarm. It is time to take action. There should be meaningful amendments to the constitution to implement a uniform curriculum and an

Continued on Page 06

## Nadra, banks, FBR data available on dark web

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senator Afnanullah Khan claimed on Tuesday that data from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and banks is available on the dark web. The PML-N lawmaker made the startling revelation during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior. Data of any Pakistani citizen can be purchased for just Rs500, the senator said, adding: "Data theft at this level is not possible without the involvement of someone from within the department." He said a fraudster had travelled to

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## Oil, gas discovery in KP brings good news for energy sector

PESHAWAR :A breakthrough has been achieved in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's oil and gas sector, as Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has announced the discovery of new oil and gas reserves in the province. This development is expected to support Pakistan's energy needs and have a positive impact on the local economy. OGDCL has formally informed the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) about the discovery through an official notice. According to the details, daily production of 3,100 barrels of crude oil has been achieved from the Bargzai X-1 well located in the Kohat district.

In addition, a well in the Nashpa Block has yielded 8.15 million cubic feet of gas per day, which is being described as an important advancement in view of the country's growing energy needs. Officials reported that the wellhead flowing pressure has been recorded at 3,010 pounds per square inch (psi). OGDCL stated that drilling at the Bargzai X-1 well was completed on December 30, 2024, reaching a depth of 5,170 meters. Meanwhile, drilling operations at the Nashpa Field were successfully completed using modern and advanced drilling systems. Energy experts believe that this new discovery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could play a vital role in strengthening Pakistan's energy sector, reducing dependence on imported fuel and saving valuable foreign exchange.—APP

## Biometric verification system enforced in courts across Punjab

LAHORE: A new biometric verification system has come into force from Tuesday in courts across Punjab, including the Lahore High Court and all district courts, aimed at enhancing transparency and eliminating fraudulent practices in the judicial process. Under the newly implemented system, biometric verification has been made mandatory for all parties before any court proceedings. Petitioners, respondents, and sureties will now be required to undergo biometric verification through NADRA. The court sources said that without biometric verification, case hearings will not be conducted and bail bonds will also not be accepted. The initiative seeks to curb fake cases, bogus sureties, and the use of false identities in courts. The move will significantly improve transparency and ensure the presence of genuine litigants during proceedings. Legal experts have described the enforcement of the biometric system as a major judicial reform, while judicial circles say it marks the beginning of a new era of accountability and transparency in the court system. —APP

# Pakistan, UK explore enhanced coop in energy, minerals sector

The two sides discussed avenues for cooperation in oil and gas exploration and the minerals sector

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, held a meeting with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E. Jane Marriott, to discuss enhanced bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas as well as minerals sectors. During the meeting, High Commissioner Jane Marriott remarked that the potential in Pakistan is tremendous and noted that significant reforms are underway in the economic realm. She expressed the United Kingdom's keen interest in strengthening collaboration with Pakistan. The two sides discussed avenues for cooperation in oil and gas exploration and the minerals sector. Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik emphasized that transparent and credible processes are essential to inspire investor confidence and attract investment. He highlighted that the Government of Pakistan is taking concrete steps to strengthen institutional capacity across the energy sector. The meeting also reviewed progress in cooperation in the minerals sector. Both sides appreciated the growing collaboration between the British Geological Survey and the Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) to shape a comprehensive capacity-building initiative. The British side has indicated support of up to USD 400 million for this initiative. The Minister stated that once finalized, this program would prove highly beneficial for the development of Pakistan's minerals sector. The Minister underlined the importance of a strong and effective regulator for an efficient oil and gas sector, and noted that the United Kingdom could play a vital role in supporting, restructuring, of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). He proposed undertaking a comprehensive diagnostic for restructuring and capacity building, including the introduction of modern governance tools to enhance institutional performance of OGRA. High Commissioner Jane Marriott agreed that this regulator plays a significant role in sustainability of the sector and such an exercise could be jointly explored. Inviting greater participation of British companies, the Minister encouraged British firms to explore opportunities in Pakistan. Ms. Marriott acknowledged the strong British capabilities in offshore exploration and stated that cooperation in this area holds significant potential. The Minister further noted that Pakistan's recent offshore bidding round was well received, with participation from Turkish Petroleum, and suggested that British companies could team up with Pakistan's state-owned enterprises to forge mutually beneficial partnerships in exploration activities. Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik also extended



an invitation to the British High Commissioner for the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum (PMIF) scheduled for April 8-9 this year. Ms. Jane Marriott recalled that last year's PMIF was impressive and assured that the UK side would reach out to British companies especially

service providers to ensure strong participation in the upcoming forum. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepen Pakistan-UK collaboration in energy and minerals, aimed at promoting sustainable development, investment, and institutional strengthening.

## Sindh CM launches 'Once Upon a Time- Aik Dafa Ka Zikr Hai' book

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah highlighted his government's education priorities, stressing the need to expand access, enhance teacher quality, and bring out-of-school children into the education system. He added that private sector partnerships and initiatives complement public efforts to build an accountable and inclusive education framework. He was speaking at Beaconhouse's golden jubilee celebration at its PECHS Campus, commemorating 50 years of outstanding service in education. The chief minister lauded the institution's journey from a small Montessori in 1975 to one of the world's largest private education networks, now educating more than 400,000 students in Pakistan and abroad. Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister began by offering a dua for the shuhada of the Gul Plaza incident, expressing solidarity with the bereaved families before paying rich

tribute to Beaconhouse's visionary leadership and sustained commitment to quality and inclusive education. Beaconhouse's golden jubilee celebrations highlighted the institution's remarkable evolution from a Montessori with just 19 children to a globally recognised education network. The event was attended by Beaconhouse Chairperson Mrs Nasreen Mahmud Kasuri, CEO Mr Kasim Kasuri, former foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, members of the Sindh government, senior educationists, Beaconhouse leadership, teachers, and distinguished guests. The chief minister observed that Beaconhouse's success reflects not only institutional longevity but enduring relevance in a sector that shapes societies and national character. He noted that the network's expansion following post-nationalisation policy shifts played a key role in widening access to quality schooling beyond elite and missionary

institutions that had long dominated the education landscape. Paying special tribute to Mrs Nasreen Mahmud Kasuri, Murad Ali Shah acknowledged her pioneering role in setting high standards for teaching and learning across the country. He described Beaconhouse as one of Pakistan's largest female employers in education, with over 18,000 staff – mostly women – serving as teachers, school leaders, and education entrepreneurs. He further noted that Beaconhouse's presence across all provinces and Azad Jammu & Kashmir has strengthened national cohesion through standardised curricula and initiatives such as The Educators, which have made structured and affordable education accessible to lower-income families. Internationally, he said, Beaconhouse has emerged as an effective ambassador of Pakistan's soft image, earning respect and recognition at global education forums.—APP

## CJP consults SCBA to improve case management, court efficiency

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan has engaged with advocates of the Supreme Court, advocates-on-record and office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association to introduce a series of measures aimed at improving case management, procedural efficiency and facilitation for advocates and litigants. According to a press release issued on Tuesday, it was decided that the proposed monthly cause list will be issued in advance to allow better preparation of cases. The weekly cause list will be released by Wednesday, subject to changes due to roster sittings or non-availability of benches. The court has also laid down a clear mechanism regarding the delisting of cases. Ordinarily, intimation of delisting will be conveyed at least 48 hours before the fixed date, and advocates will be responsible for timely informing the parties. In cases where delisting takes place within 24 hours, matters will generally be redistributed or re-fixed before available benches, except on Fridays. If redistribution is not possible, such cases will be fixed in the following week in line with the approved policy. It was further decided that the existing policy on early hearing will be strictly implemented. Criminal cases in which a substantial portion of the sentence has already been served, cases involving convicts aged 80 years and above, and cases settled through compromise will be given priority under the early hearing category. The press release stated that judgments and orders, once signed by the bench, will be promptly uploaded and shared with the concerned advocates through email, with strict compliance to be ensured by the relevant officers. A late-hearing mechanism has also been approved, allowing cases to be fixed for hearing after the lunch break on a joint request by advocates from both sides, subject to approval by the Chief Justice. No adjournment will be granted in such cases on any ground. Benches at branch registries will continue to be nominated in accordance with the pendency of cases at each registry. For addressing grievances and facilitating procedural matters, advocates and litigants have been advised to approach the Public Facilitation Center, where the Registrar of the Supreme Court, along with deputed officers, will be available daily from 11am to 11:15am. All concerned officers have been directed to ensure effective implementation of these decisions to promote efficiency, transparency and improved service delivery at the Supreme Court.—DNA

# Pakistan's edu spending reaches Rs 5.03t

### STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in Pakistan's history, household spending on education (Rs. 2.8 trillion) has exceeded government investment (Rs. 2.23 trillion), according to a new report released today by the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (ISAPS). The finding, unveiled at the National Policy Dialogue to launch ISAPS's 15th annual report on Public Financing of Education here on Tuesday, signaled a major shift in the country's education landscape. Pakistani families are now bearing the majority of the Rs. 5.03 trillion total cost of education, raising serious questions around equity, access, and the state's responsibility in providing quality education for all, according to the findings of the report. This is the first analysis in Pakistan to comprehensively account for both public budgets and household-level education spending. According to ISAPS, total education financing has reached Rs. 5.03 trillion. Of this, the public sector contributes Rs. 2.23 trillion, making up 44 per cent of the total. The remaining 56 per cent, amounting to Rs. 2.80 trillion, comes directly from households. This includes Rs. 1.31 trillion spent on private



school fees, Rs. 613 billion on shadow education and tuition, and Rs. 878 billion in other out-of-pocket costs. "Families are financing education at a scale that raises fundamental equity concerns," said Dr. Salman Humaun, Executive Director of ISAPS. "When household spending surpasses public investment, we must ask who is able to afford education and who is being excluded." Speaking at the dialogue, Mr. Mazhar Siraj, Education Team Leader at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), emphasized the need to move beyond input-heavy approaches. He noted that outcome-based financing and efficiency reforms are critical, but innovative financing can only succeed where strong data systems and governance frameworks are in place. Ms. Iz Zahra Farrukh, Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank, stated that the expansion of private schooling reflects the failure of the public system to meet families' expectations. She observed that this shift represents families opting out of public schools.—DNA

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## Punjab CM reviews progress of PDP

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the authorities to carry out comprehensive beautification of entry and exit points of cities, including ensuring cleanliness beneath overhead bridges, development of green belts and establishment of play areas. Presiding over a special meeting to review the progress of the Punjab Development Plan (PDP), here on Tuesday, the chief minister ordered decoration of overhead bridges and underpasses and directed that all PDP projects be geo-tagged to ensure transparency and effective monitoring. She also sought a comprehensive plan for the construction of washrooms on provincial highways to facilitate travellers. The chief minister instructed that roads must be fully reconstructed and restored following excavation for sewerage and drainage projects. She further ordered the establishment of control rooms and management cells in the offices of all deputy commissioners

to monitor progress of PDP projects. During the briefing, it was informed that transparency measures adopted in PDP Phase-I had resulted in savings of Rs 2.8 billion. The first phase of the Lahore Development Plan (LDP) has been completed successfully, while work on the second phase is under way. Under the Punjab Development Plan, development projects worth Rs 234 billion are currently in progress across seven cities. The meeting was informed that sewerage, disposal, drainage and water storage tank projects would be undertaken in Sargodha, Dera Ghazi Khan, Gujrat and Jhang, while trunk sewerage systems, new disposal stations and rainwater drainage projects would be developed in Jhelum, Hafizabad and Okara. A total of 526 machinery units will be provided for sewerage and drainage systems under the plan, while Phase-II will extend coverage to eight additional cities. CM Maryam Nawaz stressed that pits dug during

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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

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Emergency Ambulance.....1122  
& Rescue Services.....451152  
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RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



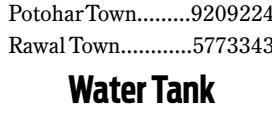
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Rawal Town.....5773343



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## Senate chairman for active role of women in national uplift

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that for national development, the active participation of women in all sectors, including business, is essential, as no nation can progress by sidelining half of its population. He stated that gender is not a barrier to progress and cited Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto as an example, saying that by becoming the first Muslim woman Prime Minister, she proved that women can excel in every field. He was addressing a gala dinner held in honor of the participants of the Pakistan Women Chambers Presidents' International Conference as the chief guest. Chairman Senate said that during his tenures as Speaker, Prime Minister, and Chairman Senate, he always ensured equal opportunities for women and prioritized women's empowerment. Highlighting the economic role of women, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that women have demonstrated their capabilities not only at small-scale levels but also in large industrial projects, and today they have become a key pillar in strengthening the country's economy. He added that the struggle and determination of businesswomen are a source of pride for the nation, and they should be provided with access to capital, markets, and technical training at every level so they can further expand their businesses. He emphasized that to promote women-led businesses, the public and private sectors must jointly create opportunities where women can avail loans on easy terms, marketing support, and export facilities. Chairman Senate further stated that the current government is striving to address the challenges faced by women and resolve their issues, ensuring women's empowerment. He said that equal rights and an equal role for women are essential for the country's development and prosperity. Refer-



ring to several important laws passed by the Senate for the protection of women's rights, he said these laws aim to provide women with security in every field and help them move forward. Earlier, Patron-in-Chief of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, in his address highlighted the need to promote international partnerships and trade opportunities for women. He said that the efforts of Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce President Samina Fazil in organizing the conference are commendable, and her struggle to address the challenges faced by women deserves appreciation. He assured that the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce would continue its full support. Talking about issues in the country's business environment, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that during several foreign visits to Azerbaijan, the UAE, and Thailand, efforts were made to bring investment to Pakistan; however, high electricity costs,

business expenses, power tariffs, and taxes have discouraged investors. He urged the government to improve the business climate by reducing taxes, power tariffs, and interest rates. He also requested the Chairman Senate to convene a meeting of commercial counselors in the Senate to take steps to increase Pakistan's exports. He suggested that the government announce incentives for women-led businesses to boost GDP and reduce the revenue shortfall. Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce President Samina Fazil, in her address, said that women choosing business as a new path and making progress in it is encouraging. She paid tribute to Zafar Bakhtawari for his support and said that under the leadership of Ahsan Bakhtawari, the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce has played an important role in promoting international business linkages in a short period of time. She further emphasized that women-led businesses should

be supported for national development, incentives should be announced for them, facilities should be provided to chambers, and more business leaders should be included in this mission. A large number of presidents of women chambers participating in the conference, prominent business personalities, and distinguished guests attended the gala dinner. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to promoting women's business development, global cooperation, and creating new opportunities, expressing hope that the conference would prove to be a milestone for women's economic inclusion and the country's development. During the ceremony, shields were also presented on behalf of the Prime Minister to businesswomen and women chambers office-bearers. More than 30 presidents and office-bearers of women chambers from across the country participated in the conference.

## Speakers emphasize need for integrated research

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a joint seminar on Health Education, Research and Policy in Pakistan on Tuesday emphasized the urgent need for integrated research, strengthened health education, and evidence-based policymaking to address the country's growing public health challenges. The Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS), Islamabad, in collaboration with The Aga Khan University (AKU), Karachi, organized the hybrid seminar at the PAS Secretariat to enhance collaboration among stakeholders, promote health sciences education and research, and contribute to the development of a regulatory framework for a National Health Plan. More than 85 scientists, academicians, scholars, medical practitioners, pharmacologists, and policymakers from

universities and research organizations across the country attended the event physically, while over 42 researchers participated online. In his opening address, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Wasay, Professor at AKU and Fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, highlighted the distinctive health and life sciences challenges facing Pakistan. He stressed the urgent need for integrated and innovative approaches to ensure sustainable management and security of health resources in the country. Secretary General PAS, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aslam Baig, underscored the Academy's role in providing a national platform for scientists, academicians, and postgraduate researchers to deliberate on science and technology issues for socioeconomic development. He also briefed participants on the establishment of the Scientific Advice to Government Unit (Policy Unit) at PAS, aimed at reviewing and upgrading existing government policy documents in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Other speakers included Major General (R) Amer Ikram, former Executive Director, NIH; Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Manan Haider Khan, Associate Professor, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University and Member Allied Health Council, Islamabad; Prof. Dr. Ayesha Rauq, National University of Medical Sciences; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Vice Chancellor, Shifa University; Dr. Obaidullah Khan, Senior Researcher, PHRI; and Prof. Dr. Anwar ul Hassan Gilani, Fellow PAS and WHO Advisor.—APP

## No restriction on Baloch students' admissions in Punjab universities

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday informed the Senate that there was no restriction or ban on admissions of Baloch students in Punjab's public sector universities. Responding to a point raised by Senator Kemar Murtaza in the Senate, the minister said that a total of 3,850 Baloch students were currently enrolled in various universities across Punjab and that their quota remained fully intact. He said the majority of these students were studying at Punjab University, Government College University, Bahauddin Zakaria University, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, and other public sector institutions. He said that in some universities, fewer admissions had occurred only because applications had not been submitted against the quota. Providing a gender

and merit-wise breakdown, Azam Nazeer Tarar said that out of the total 3,850 students, 3,419 were male and 431 were female. He said 58 percent of the students had secured admission on open merit, while 42 percent were admitted against the reserved Baloch quota, under a uniform policy. The minister said there was no discrimination in the admission process, explaining that universities followed a consistent yardstick whereby candidates with the highest merit within the quota were granted admission. Responding to concerns regarding medical college admissions, he said each university regulated admissions in accordance with decisions of its syndicate, while the federal government had issued a general directive encouraging universities to accommodate Baloch students under their respec-

tive quota frameworks. He clarified that there was no ban or restriction on Baloch students' admission to medical colleges, but minimum merit criteria applied as medical education was a professional and sensitive field. Azam Nazeer Tarar said the matter could be further taken up with the Punjab government if needed, adding that senior adviser to the Punjab government Nosheen Rehman had volunteered to pursue the issue at the provincial level. Despite constraints, Punjab continued to offer admissions to students from Balochistan under special quota arrangements, he said. The minister assured the House that any further concerns raised by senators would be addressed and necessary facilitation extended to ensure equal educational opportunities for students from all provinces.—DNA

## Tarar stresses creativity promotion, ethical oversight of TikTok politics

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday underscored the need to foster creativity and bring TikTok-driven politics and journalism under a clear ethical and regulatory framework, cautioning that without such measures society cannot move forward. Addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the Pakistan Federal Union of Columnists and Creators (PFUC) after administering oath to the newly elected office-bearers, Information Minister said that bizarre acts are often staged merely to secure maximum likes on TikTok, while little attention is paid to the government's initiative of distributing one million laptops and other public welfare initiatives. He emphasized the need to promote creative content, saying it helps build awareness in a society facing multiple challenges. He noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has revived the health card scheme first introduced by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2012, yet it receives little attention, while TikTok politics continues to draw the most likes. He acknowledged that dissent holds a vital place in society, warning that its absence renders a com-

munity lifeless. As a minister, he said, he accepts criticism, adding that narrative battles are best addressed through collaboration and the promotion of creativity. He said dissent has ample space in society, recalling his journey through student politics, activism, bureaucracy, and law as phases essential for any mature politician. After years on the streets, student politics and a decade serving as deputy secretary to the chief minister secretariat, he entered electoral politics, stressing that he was neither a parachutist nor from a legacy family. These experiences, he noted, taught him to understand the system. "I bear criticism, including that directed at PML-N, for the sake of improvement," he added. During his formative years, he recalled, print media played a pivotal role in shaping journalists, politicians, and society at large. Newspapers, he noted, operated under a strict code of ethics and the close scrutiny of editorial boards. Senior journalists, many of whom dedicated decades to the profession, mentored young reporters and helped nurture successive generations. He cited the contributions of renowned journalists Irfan Siddiqui and Khawaja Farrukh Saeed, who carved distinguished names in the field. Stressing the need for a regulatory framework for social media, he said the time had come to "nip the evil in the bud." He warned that absconders would be brought back to the country and creators crossing red lines would be held accountable under the law. Those promoting extremism, he added, must answer for their actions, as it is not possible to use the microphone and camera at will. He said today's politicians show unmatched tolerance for dissent, unlike the intolerance of the 1990s. Sanity later prevailed with the Charter of Democracy signed by PML-N and PPP, but a third force emerged that divided society and fueled hatred and extremism. "We have always maintained that dialogue is the only solution, and we continue to urge talks to resolve issues," he added. PML-N suspended its election campaign when PTI founder Imran Khan was injured in a fall from a lift, with party leaders visiting him to inquire about his health. After winning the 2013 election, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif went to Bani Gala and offered joint efforts to improve people's lives.—APP

**46000 trees planted after mulberry removal: Senate**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday informed the Senate that Islamabad had become greener than before, as 46,000 trees had been planted following the removal of 26,000 paper mulberry trees. Responding to a point raised regarding the alleged cutting of trees in the federal capital, the minister said that all road and infrastructure projects in Islamabad were being executed strictly in accordance with the Islamabad Master Plan approved in 1960. The minister said that all claims could be independently verified through Google satellite imagery, which clearly reflected Islamabad's green character over different time periods. Replying to a question raised by Senator Syed Ali Zafar, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry explained that paper mulberry (wild mulberry) trees were introduced in Islamabad in the 1970s through aerial seeding to rapidly create greenery, but the species was not indigenous to the area. He said scientific studies conducted since the early 1990s had established that paper mulberry pollen was a major cause of asthma and pollen allergies among residents. He said the removal of paper mulberry trees began in 2024 following Islamabad High Court orders, but was temporarily halted after the Supreme Court took suo motu notice. He said that a commission subsequently constituted by the apex court reviewed the matter and fully endorsed the removal, declaring it necessary in the larger public interest.—APP

**NUST hosts training programme**

ISLAMABAD, Jan 20 (APP): The Iqbal Executive Development Centre (IEDC), Jinnah School of Public Policy & Leadership (JSP-PL-NUST), commenced a two-day executive training programme for 136 probationary officers of the 53rd Common Training Programme (CTP) of Civil Services Academy (CSA). Titled "21st Century Leadership Transformation for the Digital Era," the programme's inaugural ceremony was graced by General (Retd) Zubair Mahmood Hayat, former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), and Rector NUST Dr Muhammad Zahid Latif. In his opening address, Rector welcomed the participants and emphasized the need for transformational public leadership to address Pakistan's evolving governance challenges. He highlighted integrity, strategic foresight, ethical courage, and citizen-centric service delivery, enabled by digital transformation, as core attributes of effective public leadership. Ensuing was an enlightening talk by the former CJCS on "Going Beyond – Leadership and Governance." The session focused on the significance of reflective thinking, purposeful statecraft, strategic intelligence, operational clarity, and leadership beyond conventional administrative roles.—APP

## PPAF-YMSESDO taking steps for strengthening youth

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and YMSESDO successfully organized a Youth-Led COP Simulation in Punjab, in collaboration with the Native Youth Club for Climate Change (NYCCC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Punjab on 20 January at Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The full-day simulation brought together students, youth leaders, academics, policy practitioners and civil society representatives to enhance youth understanding of global climate negotiations and bridge the gap between climate policy and grassroots action, received a press release here. The event aimed to build practical knowledge of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) process, empower young people and promote meaningful youth participation in climate governance at provincial and national levels. The program commenced with an opening address by Ms. Arifa Tahir, Chairperson of Department of Environmental Sciences, LCWU, which highlighted the importance of academic institutions in fostering climate leadership and civic engagement among students. A key highlight of the event was the panel discussion titled "From Smog to Solutions: Youth Leading Punjab's Green Shift," featuring Ms. Zile Huma, Deputy Secretary, Governor House Punjab, Ms. Saba Raffay, Climate Change Specialist, Ms. Maryam Khan, Deputy Director, EPA Punjab, Ms. Muzzamil Majeed, Climate Youth Parliamentarian alongside students of LCWU. The discussion explored ethical leadership, community engagement and the role of youth in local climate action. The program also included expert addresses by Ms. Uzma Nomani, Manager Climate Change & Resource Mobilization, PPAF and Mr. Anwar Ullah, representing YMSESDO (Yar Muhammad Samejo Educational Society and Development Organization), who shared insights on climate financing, community resilience and grassroots development initiatives. Case study of YOUNGO highlighted global and local youth-led climate movements, followed by an interactive quiz session and a creative drawing activity. The centerpiece of the event was the Mock COP Simulation where participants experienced the full COP negotiation process, including stakeholder representation, dialogue and consensus-building. The simulation provided hands-on exposure to climate diplomacy, negotiation dynamics and multilateral decision-making. The event also included a keynote address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Rizwana Anjum, Team Lead, CM Green Credit Program, who underscored the importance of youth inclusion in climate planning and policy implementation. The program ended with a vote of thanks by M. Umair Mufakir, followed by a shield distribution ceremony and a group photo.—DNA

## Mazdoor Union lauds CDA admin for addressing employees' issues

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting of the central office-bearers of the CDA Mazdoor Union and representatives of the CBA committees was held at the Central Union Office, Chairman Office Complex. The meeting was presided over by Union President Aurangzeb Khan and was attended by central office-bearers, CBA committee representatives and a large number of CDA employees. Addressing the meeting, General Secretary of the CDA Mazdoor Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen expressed gratitude to the CDA administration for holding a Joint Works Council meeting to address workers' issues. He appreciated the administration for engaging in positive negotiations on all demands and for issuing immediate instructions for their resolution. He stated that on the demand of the CDA Mazdoor Union, the resolution of issues including the line of promotion through the CDA Board is a commendable step. This development will help clear long-pending promotions of employees and ensure a more secure and brighter future for them. Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen further said that the case regarding the allotment of plots to employees is currently under hearing in the courts. He urged the administration to take a personal interest in the matter and while respecting court decisions, complete the process of balloting at the earliest. He also demanded that all field staff including sanitation workers who perform duties beyond prescribed working hours, be granted overtime and other benefits to ensure their economic stability. He reaffirmed that the CDA Mazdoor Union will continue its struggle for the rights of workers and expressed confidence that the remaining issues would also be resolved soon.—APP

## Briefs

**Police conduct grand search, combing operation in multiple areas**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police carried out a grand search and combing operation in various areas of the federal capital to curb crime and ensure public safety. A police spokesperson told APP on Tuesday that the operation was conducted under the supervision of zonal SPs, with the participation of both male and female police officers. Prior to the operation, senior police officers thoroughly briefed all personnel about their duties and operational procedures. During the operation, police teams checked 281 individuals, 164 houses and 16 shops. In addition, 121 motorcycles and 31 vehicles were inspected as part of the comprehensive security sweep. The spokesperson said that during checking, 26 suspicious individuals and 13 motorcycles were shifted to the concerned police stations for further verification. He added that the objective of the search and combing operation was to tighten the noose around criminal elements and prevent crimes in the area. He said Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad has issued clear directives to conduct grand search operations across the district to eradicate crime. He reaffirmed that the protection of citizens' lives and property remains the top priority of Islamabad Police.—APP

**RDA inflows rise to \$11.707b in Dec 25**

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$11,707 billion by the end of December 2025, as compared to US \$11,494 billion by November (2025) end. The data showed that the inflows of remittances during December were recorded at US\$213 million as compared to US\$181 million in November and US\$205 million in October 2025, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 10,093 to 893,193 in December 2025 from 883,037 accounts in November 2025. —APP

**NA suspends business to debate Gul Plaza fire**

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Tuesday suspended its routine legislative business to hold an urgent discussion on the deadly fire at Gul Plaza in Karachi that caused major loss of life and property. The decision was taken after Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar moved a motion seeking postponement of the Private Members' Business to allow the House to debate the tragedy. He said the issue was of an urgent nature and required time for members from both the treasury and opposition benches to speak on the Karachi incident. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah informed the House that both the Karachi tragedy and the FATA merger and development matters would be taken up together, assuring members from both sides of the aisle that they would be given an opportunity to speak. He later put the motion to the House, which was adopted unanimously. Following the adoption of the motion, the Deputy Speaker gave the floor to MQM-P lawmaker Dr Muhammad Farooq Sattar, who had also called for suspending the routine agenda in view of the gravity of the incident.—APP

# Al-Shifa Trust raised Rs 35m at fundraising event

Health experts note that much visual impairment remains avoidable in Pakistan, but rising costs and limited facilities strain rural households. Funds from "Noor Phir Sey" will expand surgical capacity, outreach, and subsidised treatment in underserved regions.

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Donors contributed around Rs35 million to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital during a fundraising dinner titled "Noor Phir Sey" held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad, the trust said. The funds will support Trust's free and subsidised eye care services throughout the country. The fundraising event combined charitable appeals with cultural and Sufi music performances and drew participation from corporate entities, philanthropists, and members of civil society. Several attendees also pledged to donate their eyes posthumously. Major contributors included leading corporations, foundations, and individual donors. President of the Al-Shifa Trust, Maj Gen (retd) Rehmat Khan, thanked individual and corporate donors for their support and said sustained philanthropy remained critical for addressing preventable blindness in Pakistan. He said the trust had grown from serving around 25 patients daily in its early years to treating nearly 5,000 patients a day over the past three decades. He added that the trust's cross-subsidisation model allowed paying patients to finance free treatment for those unable to afford care. Nearly 80 percent of patients receive free treatment at its hospitals in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Kohat, Sukkur, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit. Lahore Eye Hospital is expected to begin operations by 2027. He informed that construction of the Haveli Lakhia facility has been completed and that it will be inaugurated during the month of Ramadan. The total project cost is Rs162 million, with Rs122 million allocated to construction and Rs40 million to medi-



cal equipment. Notable donors included OGDCL, Askari Bank, Bank of Punjab, Rupani Foundation, Dr. Tahira Idrees, and Group Capt. Imtiaz Ali Khan. Pakistan's blindness rate has declined from 1.78 per-

cent in 1990 to about 0.5 percent today, attributing the improvement partly to expanded access to cataract surgery and early diagnosis. Health experts note that much visual impairment remains avoidable in Pakistan, but rising costs and limited facilities strain rural households. Funds from "Noor Phir Sey" will expand surgical capacity, outreach, and subsidised treatment in underserved regions.

## Pak-China strategic partnership vital for regional peace: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday underscored that the Pakistan-China strategic partnership is vital for sustainable peace, development and prosperity in the region. During a meeting with Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, Mr. Zhao Leji, in Beijing, the Speaker reiterated Pakistan's strong resolve to further strengthen bilateral relations, particularly on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties. Members of the Pakistani parliamentary delegation accompanying the Speaker were also present during the meeting. Ayaz Sadiq expressed Pakistan's deep pride in its unparalleled and time-tested friendship with China, saying that the bilateral relationship is built on strong foundations of mutual respect, trust and confidence. He emphasized that the peoples of Pakistan and China are bound together in an unbreakable bond of friendship. Highlighting the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, the Speaker stressed that enhanced parliamentary cooperation, increased exchanges and the further activation of Parliamentary Friendship Groups would play a significant role in deepening bilateral relations and further reinforcing the strategic partnership between the two countries. He said that the 75-year-long parliamentary and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, based on friendship and mutual respect, serve as a model for the international community. The Speaker described the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a game-changer not only for Pakistan but for the entire region. He lauded China's remarkable development under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, terming it exemplary for the world, and described the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a visionary project of key importance for regional development and shared prosperity. Ayaz Sadiq thanked Chairman Zhao Leji for the warm reception and gracious hospitality extended to the Pakistani parliamentary delegation and formally extended an invitation to the Chairman of the National People's Congress to visit Pakistan. On the occasion, Zhao Leji appreciated the Speaker's positive sentiments towards China and reaffirmed that China attaches great importance to its longstanding and friendly relations with Pakistan. He agreed with the Speaker's proposal to further strengthen inter-parliamentary exchanges and commended Pakistan's role in promoting peace and stability in the region. Zhao Leji also reiterated China's commitment to further deepening its strategic partnership with Pakistan. Members of the Pakistani parliamentary delegation present at the meeting included Romina Khurshid Alam, Muhammad Nauman, Zeh Jaffar and Maulana Abdul Ghafour Haideri.—DNA

## Pakistan Indonesia deepen trade ties focusing rice-agri investment

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a detailed meeting with the Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, to review and advance bilateral trade, investment, and sector-specific cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia. During the meeting, the Federal Minister briefed the Ambassador on Pakistan's evolving trade strategy, with a particular focus on rice exports, a key priority assigned by the Prime Minister. He noted that Pakistan remains among the world's leading rice exporters, offering internationally recognized quality, while acknowledging that global price competition—especially following recent market interventions by major producers—has created challenges for exporters. He informed that the government is actively working on financial and commercial mechanisms to enhance price competitiveness without compromising quality, enabling Pakistan to sustain and expand its market share. Jam Kamal Khan highlighted Pakistan's proposal to re-engage selected partner countries, including Indonesia, through both open-market and government-to-government (G2G) frameworks, stressing that price,

reliability, and quality are central considerations for importing countries. In this context, he underscored the importance of reviving the Pakistan-Indonesia rice cooperation framework and initiating fresh dialogue to unlock mutually beneficial opportunities.

Officials recalled that a rice MoU signed in 2015—providing for up to one million metric tons of rice procurement annually on a G2G basis—had expired in 2019. Pakistan has already shared a revised draft with the Indonesian side and expressed hope for its early finalization to institutionalize long-term cooperation in the staple commodity. The Commerce Minister also raised issues affecting agricultural exports, particularly kinnar (mandarin). He noted that Pakistan is awaiting the issuance of import quotas by Indonesia to ensure uninterrupted seasonal exports, warning that delays could result in losses for growers and exporters. Additionally, concern was expressed over the recent increase in food and agricultural testing requirements for Pakistani kinnar, from eight to twenty-four tests, which adds cost and processing time. It was shared that Pakistan's Department of Plant Protection is already engaged with Indonesian counterparts to address the matter.—APP

## Khawaja Asif calls for empowered local govts after Gul Plaza fire

ISLAMABAD: The deadly blaze at Gul Plaza, had exposed the failure of urban governance and highlighted the urgent need for an empowered local government system across the country. Speaking in the National Assembly during a discussion on the Karachi tragedy, Asif said no words could adequately express the grief over the loss of precious lives. He noted that managing a mega city like Karachi had become "humanly impossible" without devolved governance, particularly in view of frequent fatal incidents, including deadly accidents involving dumper trucks. "I am not blaming individuals, I am blaming the system," he said, adding that excessive concentration of powers at provincial capitals had rendered governance ineffective. He said that despite the Gul Plaza

fire, Asif said the absence of an effective local system had resulted in a lack of coordination on the ground, forcing different institutions, including defence and aviation fire units, to respond in an ad hoc manner. Calling the situation a wake-up call, he urged parliament to undertake serious reflection and introduce meaningful constitutional reforms to strengthen local governments. Earlier, MQM leader Dr Farooq Sattar said the Gul Plaza fire should be declared a national tragedy and discussed not only in the National Assembly but also in the Senate and provincial assemblies. Thanking the House for allowing the discussion, he said Karachi was Pakistan's only truly national city, home to people from all provinces, languages and faiths, and therefore deserved ownership by the entire country.—APP

## Islamabad police, Chinese embassy launch language training

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, inaugurated the sixth phase of a Chinese language course for police officers. The program, held under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to bridge communication gaps and enhance security coordination. The course is designed to equip personnel with basic Mandarin proficiency while fostering cultural sensitivity. Beyond immediate linguistic skills, the program serves as a pillar for expanded educational and cultural cooperation between the two nations' law enforcement agencies. Gwadar Pro reported. This training follows a high-level meeting on January 7 in Beijing between Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Chinese Minister for Public Security Wang Xiaohong. During those talks, both sides finalised a joint strategy to enhance the professional capacity of police forces and discussed "sister-city" cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing. The ongoing language initiatives are part of a broader framework of people-to-people exchanges aimed at ensuring the smooth execution of CPEC Phase II projects by improving direct interaction between local security forces and Chinese stakeholders.—APP

## Talal details NFC transfers to KP in NA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Tuesday told the National Assembly that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had received more than Rs 5.8 trillion under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award since 2010, rejecting claims that the province had been financially neglected. Taking the floor to the House, the minister said that from July 2010 to November 2022, KP received over Rs 5,867 trillion through the NFC. He said the province was also given Rs117 billion for internally displaced persons, while Rs115 bn was provided for development schemes. In addition, he said, the federal government disbursed Rs481bn to beneficiaries in the province under the Benazir Income Support Programme and granted KP an additional one percent share under the NFC, amounting to more than Rs705bn—a facility not extended to any other province. Talal Chaudhry said these figures showed that substantial financial resources had been provided to the province, and that governance should be judged by performance rather than claims.—APP

## Geopolitical issues dominate the World Economic Forum

DR. MAJID RAFIZADEH

THE annual meeting of the World Economic Forum is taking place at a critical moment due to geopolitical landscapes, climate issues, economic uncertainty in some regions caused by conflicts, and rapid technological transformation. The forum should not merely be viewed as a high-profile gathering of political and corporate elites, but also as a critical arena in which global priorities are articulated, policy narratives are debated, and strategies are offered and coordinated. It is important to point out that the overlapping dynamics that are discussed – such as geopolitical issues, climate disruption and economic opportunities – affect how governments, markets and societies interact. The significance of the upcoming meeting also lies in its potential to be a platform for agenda-setting in global governance. One criticism might be that the forum does not produce any binding agreements that can be implemented. But we ought to remember that it does facilitate dialogue among actors who exert significant and decisive influence over financial flows, security issues and technological development. As a result, informal multilateral spaces such as the forum are critical. One of the key topics on the WEF agenda expected to dominate discussions is the geopolitical landscape. The international order is no longer defined by a single dominant power. There are several major powers that pursue their security and economic interests through unilateral actions or partnerships. Some may argue that this trend has intensified conflicts and uncertainty. Some current issues to consider can be the prolonged war in Ukraine and its effects on European security architecture, the confrontation between Israel and armed groups across the Middle East, and the strategic rivalry between the US and China over Taiwan and advanced semiconductor supply chains. The most critical issues are economic resilience, climate transition, geopolitical issues and emerging technologies, which are intertwined. Issues related to military deterrence, cyber security, economic sanctions and technological sovereignty are no longer peripheral concerns in international politics. That is why the forum is likely to focus on these issues. For example, cyber operations attributed to state actors in Russia, Iran and North Korea, and the US and European sanctions regimes against Russia and Iran, have reshaped global energy and financial markets. Smaller states face heightened vulnerability as they navigate competing centers of power, illustrated by countries such as Serbia balancing between the EU and Russia. Therefore, the forum can be important in offering a venue where rep-

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representatives of these actors can engage in direct discussion. Although such dialogue does not eliminate conflict, it can remove some miscalculations. Another important issue is economic resilience; at the forum, discussions on economic resilience are more likely to emphasize the strengthening of financial systems against external shocks, diversification as well as investment in strategic industries. More attention ought to be given to emerging economies, which face the challenge of sustaining development. For example, countries such as Egypt, Pakistan and Argentina illustrate the strain created by volatility and debt-servicing obligations. Also, countries such as Nigeria and Bangladesh confront vulnerabilities linked to climate-related disruptions to agriculture.

To assist these countries, access to capital, technology and markets remains the most important issue. Another critical issue on the agenda is most likely the energy transition and the broader challenge of climate change. Climate disruption is impacting food security, public health, migration patterns and political stability. For instance, severe droughts in the Horn of Africa, catastrophic flooding in some regions, record-breaking heatwaves in southern Europe, and rising sea levels threatening island nations such as the Maldives and Tuvalu, show how climate change is already reshaping social and economic conditions. At the same time, the global economy is still deeply dependent on fossil fuels, making this a challenge to transition. As a result, climate finance – investment required to modernize infrastructure, deploy renewable energy and support adaptation in vulnerable regions – can be vital.

Developing states often lack the fiscal capacity to undertake such transitions and transformations without substantial external assistance. For example, sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya and Senegal have ambitious solar and wind projects but face high borrowing costs. At the forum, discussions will likely focus on mobilizing large-scale capital, reducing investment barriers. These conversations also show the growing recognition of environmental issues and how they are interconnected with long-term economic stability and geopolitical security.

Finally, another important topic is emerging technologies, especially artificial intelligence and advanced digital systems. Technological advances, such as AI-driven automation, are radically transforming production; some argue that these are growing at a pace unmatched in previous industrial revolutions. Another dimension is the transformation of work and education as automation changes labor demand, and societies have to reconsider how skills are developed. Discussions in Davos are therefore more likely to address the creation of shared regulatory principles as well as investment in digital infrastructure. While critics argue that the forum privileges elite perspectives, we should consider its capacity to shape discourse. In a nutshell, the World Economic Forum meeting is taking place at a time of significant global challenges. The most critical issues are economic resilience, climate transition, geopolitical issues and emerging technologies, which are intertwined. Decisions made in one domain reverberate across others. Whether the forum's influence ultimately leads to more inclusive and sustainable outcomes depends on whether dialogue translates into action.

## Trump Enchained a Nation for a Dying Fuel

Qamar Bashir



**Oil today is worth far less in strategic power than at any time since its discovery. Global demand growth peaked. Electric vehicles already account for over one-fifth of new car sales worldwide, and by 2030 over half of all cars sold in Europe and China are expected to be electric. Renewable electricity costs have collapsed – wind and solar are now the cheapest power in history in many regions. Meanwhile, breakthroughs in nuclear fission efficiency, experimental fusion, high-density batteries, hydrogen systems, and grid-scale storage are transforming energy security permanently**

THE world has been shaken by an extraordinary development that cuts to the heart of sovereignty, law, and global power. Demonstrations have erupted across continents after the United States captured the sitting president of Venezuela – a leader who, under international law, enjoys immunity not because he is above the law, but because he represents the sovereignty and dignity of his nation. When a president is seized, the state itself is symbolically seized. Today, it is not merely one man before a New York court, but thirty million Venezuelans whose sovereignty stands on trial.

This single act has ignited global outrage. From New York to Chicago, protesters marched with banners reading "Hands off Venezuela" and "No Blood for Oil," rejecting America's unilateral policing of the world. In Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Berlin and Buenos Aires, demonstrators condemned what they called kidnapping and aggression. In Caracas, supporters filled the streets calling it an act of war. At the UN Security Council, China demanded the president's release, Russia denounced lawlessness, and Brazil's President Lula called it a grave violation of sovereignty. Even U.S. allies expressed discomfort, warning that force without legal mandate shatters the system meant to prevent war.

Yet Washington appears determined to prove power through force at a moment when it is losing ground elsewhere. Economically, the United States no longer dominates global production and trade. Financially, the world is slowly reducing dependence on the dollar. Culturally and politically, influence is drifting toward Asia and the developing world. And most critically, the era of oil – once America's greatest lever – is fading fast.

Oil today is worth far less in strategic power than at any time since its discovery. Global demand growth peaked. Electric vehicles already account for over one-fifth of new car sales worldwide, and by 2030 over half of all cars sold in Europe and China are expected to be electric. Renewable electricity costs have collapsed – wind and solar are now the cheapest power in history in many regions. Meanwhile,

breakthroughs in nuclear fission efficiency, experimental fusion, high-density batteries, hydrogen systems, and grid-scale storage are transforming energy security permanently.

That means oil is no longer the irreplaceable lifeblood of economies. Its share of global energy has already dropped from over 50% in the 1970s to under 30% today – and it is projected to fall toward 20% by 2030. When electricity – not oil – powers transport, logistics, and industry, the geopolitical value of oil falls with it. Long-term market forecasts now warn that beyond 2030, oil demand may permanently decline. Once falling demand collides with oversupply, oil becomes not a golden asset but a stranded one. Extracting, transporting, and securing it by military force will become economically irrational and politically toxic.

So the world is entering a new energy-power order.

Power will no longer belong to those who sit on oil wells, but to those who control renewables, nuclear science, advanced storage, micro-grids, AI-driven energy efficiency, and fusion research. Nations investing in these technologies – China, the EU, Japan, South Korea, and others – will command the future. Those clinging to oil supremacy will discover that history has moved on without them.

Seen through this lens, the U.S. operation in Venezuela looks like the desperate act of a declining empire trying to freeze time. It is the attempt to preserve oil-era dominance in a post-oil world. But military coercion cannot reverse scientific progress. It cannot stop the spread of clean, decentralized energy systems that free nations from dependence on oil routes controlled by others.

Even U.S. allies now sense the danger. Canada, historically deferential to Washington, watched nervously as threats and resource claims crept closer to its own sovereignty.

European states, once obedient followers in U.S. interventions,

now speak of legality and restraint, knowing that today Venezuela is on trial – but tomorrow any nation could be.

The American justification – that Venezuela fuels narcotics and instability – collapses before basic facts. Synthetic drug supply chains run largely

through Mexico and other channels, not Venezuelan oil platforms. The narrative is politically convenient, but structurally hollow. What truly matters is geopolitical access, leverage, and psychological dominance. But that dominance is slipping – and Washington knows it. As more states trade in their own currencies, as energy sources diversify, as technology redistributes power, the ability of one state to command others declines. And when influence fades, the temptation to use force grows.

Yet force comes at a cost. The protests sweeping the world do not only defend Venezuela. They defend the principle that sovereignty cannot be dragged off an airplane at gunpoint. They defend the idea that power must answer to law, and that even the strongest nation cannot declare itself judge, jury, and executioner over global governance.

Even inside the United States, many now fear the moral and strategic price of endless intervention. They understand that the military might cannot substitute for respect, legitimacy, and trust. They also understand that every unlawful action accelerates the erosion of American authority rather than restoring it.

The irony is that by trying to prove relevance through force, the United States risks proving the opposite. Oil empires are ending. Technology empires are rising. And the nation that fails to adapt becomes the nation left behind.

What the world is witnessing is not merely the abduction of a president, but the panic of a superpower watching history escape its grasp. The capture of a head of state will not return America to uncontested supremacy. Instead, it will be remembered as a moment when the world realized that legitimacy, law, and innovation – not missiles – define real power. And the final judgment may not be delivered in a New York courtroom, but in the court of history – where nations are measured not by how loudly they threaten, but by whether they respect the sovereignty, dignity, and future of others.

– 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

## Why Greenland Suddenly Matters

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



**Equally compelling is what lies beneath Greenland's ice. The island is believed to possess significant deposits of rare earth elements, indispensable for advanced electronics, renewable energy technologies, and modern defence systems. In an era where China's dominance over rare earth supply chains has become a strategic vulnerability for the West, Greenland offers...**

GREENLAND, for centuries perceived as a silent expanse of ice at the edge of the known world, has emerged as one of the most consequential pieces on the contemporary geopolitical chessboard. What was once regarded as inhospitable and peripheral is now viewed as pivotal, even decisive, in shaping future balances of power. The renewed American fixation on Greenland, particularly under President Donald Trump's return to office, is rooted not in impulse but in a sober assessment of geography, resources, and the profound transformations unfolding in the Arctic.

Trump's earlier proposal in 2019 to purchase Greenland was initially dismissed as eccentric. Yet with the accelerating effects of climate change and intensifying great-power rivalry, the logic behind that idea has gained strategic coherence. The current discourse is less about literal annexation and more about leverage, influence, and long-term control. Diplomatic overtures, economic incentives, and deliberately provocative rhetoric have all been employed to signal that Washington considers Greenland essential to its national security calculus. The language of choice – suggesting an "easy way or a hard way" – is designed less to announce imminent action than to apply pressure and redefine negotiating boundaries.

At the core of this interest lies the Arctic's transformation from a frozen backwater into a navigable and contested space. Melting ice is opening sea routes that dramatically shorten distances between Asia, Europe, and North America. Voyages that once took forty days via the Suez Canal may soon be completed in little more than twenty through Arctic passages. Greenland occupies a commanding position at the Atlantic entrance of these emerging routes, particularly near the Northwest Passage and the future transpolar corridor. Influence over Greenland would grant the United States a vantage point from which to monitor, secure, and potentially shape the

rules governing these new arteries of global trade and military movement.

Equally compelling is what lies beneath Greenland's ice. The island is believed to possess significant deposits of rare earth elements, indispensable for advanced electronics, renewable energy technologies, and modern defence systems. In an era where China's dominance over rare earth supply chains has become a strategic vulnerability for the West, Greenland offers the prospect of diversification and autonomy.

Added to this are potential reserves of oil, gas, and other minerals, whose exploitation becomes more feasible as ice retreats. For an administration intent on economic self-reliance and industrial strength, Greenland appears not merely as territory, but as strategic insurance. Yet Greenland's allure is not purely material. There is a symbolic dimension that resonates deeply with Trump's political ethos. Territorial expansion, bold deal-making, and visible assertions of power align neatly with an "America First" narrative that prizes dominance and psychological advantage. In this framing, Greenland becomes a statement as much as a strategy – a demonstration that the United States intends to shape the future rather than react to it.

This ambition, however, collides with political, legal, and moral constraints. Greenland is an autonomous land whose people have repeatedly and unequivocally rejected the idea of becoming Americans. Their attachment to self-rule, cultural identity, and gradual movement toward greater independence from Denmark is profound. Denmark itself, as a sovereign state and a founding member of NATO, has made clear that any attempt at coercion would be unacceptable. Such a move would not merely strain alliances; it could shatter them, calling into question the very foundations of the post-Second World War order built on respect for sovereignty. The repercussions of any forced acquisition would be

far-reaching. NATO unity could fracture, European allies might impose diplomatic and economic penalties, and international institutions would likely condemn the act as illegal. The anticipated economic benefits of resource access could quickly be outweighed by the costs of military deployment, legal disputes, market volatility, and the long-term obligation to subsidise infrastructure and services for a small, remote population. Within the United States, such an action would provoke intense domestic division, with supporters hailing strategic boldness and critics warning of imperial overreach and constitutional crisis.

Rival powers would almost certainly respond. Russia, which has heavily militarised its Arctic frontier and views the region as central to its future, would regard expanded U.S. influence in Greenland as a direct challenge. Increased patrols, strategic signalling, cyber activity, and closer coordination with China could cyber, accelerating an Arctic arms race. What is framed as a move for security could thus generate new insecurities, heightening the risk of miscalculation in a fragile environment.

Environmental and humanitarian concerns further complicate the picture. Accelerated resource extraction could worsen ecological damage, intensify ice melt, and threaten Arctic biodiversity. Greenland's indigenous communities might face displacement or erosion of rights, transforming a strategic project into a moral dilemma with global repercussions. Ultimately, the secrets Greenland may reveal extend beyond minerals, shipping lanes, or military bases. They speak to the nature of power in an era defined by interdependence, climate change, and contested norms. Greenland stands at the intersection of ambition and restraint, opportunity and risk. In seeking to unlock its strategic value, the world may discover that the greatest revelation lies not in Greenland itself, but in how nations choose to pursue power in a rapidly changing world.

## Briefs

### State determined to uproot menace...

FROM PAGE 01  
KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi to congratulate him on assuming office, and the latter had expressed gratitude in response but did not make contact again. He said that the government wanted to bring stability to the province through public welfare projects. Development work was under way in the sectors of education, health and infrastructure, the premier concluded. It is worth mentioning that relentless counter terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan is underway to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country. Pakistan has experienced a rise in cross-border terrorist incidents since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in 2021. The provinces of KP and Balochistan, which border Afghanistan, have been particularly affected by these attacks. ISPR Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, in his presser on January 6, said that law enforcement agencies carried out 75,175 IBOs across the country in 2025.

### Field Marshal Asim Munir stresses...

FROM PAGE 01  
He interacted with Cadet Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs), highlighting the pivotal role of the police as the first line of defence in protecting the lives, property, and honour of citizens. Addressing Inspectors General of Police (IGPs), Additional IGPs, and senior police officials, he underscored the importance of interagency cooperation, modern policing practices, and fostering public trust in law enforcement agencies. He emphasized that a strong, professional, and people-centric police force is indispensable for ensuring internal security and the rule of law. The Field Marshal remarked that the duty of the police to enforce law and order is a sacred trust and assured that the Armed Forces will always stand fully with the brave and proud police personnel of Pakistan.

### Ruling alliance calls for...

FROM PAGE 01  
empowered local government system throughout the country." The defence minister said that "dictators" had introduced empowered local bodies in the country, but civilian governments tried to avoid devolving power to the grassroots level. "They (civilian governments) often come up with lame excuses to defer local body elections," he added. MQM-P MNA Farooq Sattar called for the Gul Plaza incident to be declared a national tragedy. "Karachi has been giving 65% of [country's] revenue for 75 years," remarked Sattar. Questioning the government about the place of Karachi in its priorities, the lawmaker called for an investigation committee to be formed and the operationalisation of the Department of Civil Defence.

### Nadra, banks...

FROM PAGE 01  
India in 2023 using the fake passport of a consultant at the attorney general's office. The affected lawyer, who was present during the meeting, told lawmakers that the hoaxter used his identity and a fake passport to travel to India. He added that he later had to take his parents to Nadra to prove himself a Pakistani citizen. At this, the Immigration and Passports director general said that the Nadra shared with them details of several such cases of forgery. He said that a dashboard has been set up to prevent fraudulent travel.

# Crisis in Pakistan hockey deepens; PM Shehbaz asked to take notice

*The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has recently intervened, issuing a letter that rejected the unilateral scrutiny of hockey clubs*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The crisis in Pakistan hockey has deepened as political maneuvering continues to overshadow the sport. Reports suggest that Shehla Raza, who was herself a candidate for the presidency of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), now wants to bring in her own nominee

from Sindh. Sources claim she is backing the President of the Sindh Hockey Association to take over the PHF leadership. This tussle has further destabilized hockey in the country, with critics pointing out that the government and the Prime Minister have shown little interest in resolving the matter, leaving the sport in decline. The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has recently intervened, issuing a letter that

rejected the unilateral scrutiny of hockey clubs. The PSB emphasized that such processes must be transparent and inclusive. Tariq Bugti, who had been tasked with overseeing club scrutiny and elections, controversially declared himself as President of the PHF. This move has been widely criticized, with the PSB raising serious questions about the financial credibility of the federation. Observers note that the cur-

rent PHF President is not elected through a transparent process but rather nominated, which undermines the legitimacy of the federation's leadership. The ongoing disputes, personal ambitions, and lack of accountability have left Pakistan's national sport in disarray. Once a source of pride and international recognition, hockey in Pakistan now struggles under the weight of mismanagement and political infighting.

## Pak beat Scotland to register maiden win in U19 WC 2026



platform to chase down the target comfortably. Usman was in top form with the bat, playing sensibly for the green shirts and guiding his side closer to victory by scoring a half-century. The 111-run partnership was finally broken when Manu Sarawat struck, claiming the prized wicket of Usman Khan, who had played a gutsy innings of 75 off 85 balls, including five boundaries and two sixes, leaving the team at 159-3 in 38.1 overs. Hussain was inching closer to his third

Youth ODI half-century and a win for his side but was soon dismissed by Sarawat for 47 off 92 balls, including three boundaries. Skipper Farhan Yousaf then hit the winning runs, remaining unbeaten on 18 off 11 deliveries, while Huzaifa faced nine balls without scoring. After being asked to bat first, Scotland suffered early setbacks as pacer Ali Raza struck in the opening over, dismissing both openers – Theo Robinson for four off two balls and Max Chaplin for two.

Captain Thomas Knight and Rory Grant then steadied the innings, adding valuable runs and taking the total past the 50-run mark. Their partnership was broken when Momin Qamar removed Grant for a vital 21 off 45 deliveries, including one boundary, leaving Scotland at 59-3 in 16.5 overs. A few overs later, Momin struck again to claim his second wicket, dismissing Finlay Carter for 12 off 16 balls with the help of two fours. Knight and Ollie Jones combined to rebuild the innings, forging a steady partnership that carried Scotland past 100 in the 26th over. However, the 40-run stand ended when Ali Raza returned to hit the stumps and dismiss Jones for a crucial 30 off 35 deliveries, which included three boundaries, with the score at 115-5 in 28.4 overs. Scotland came under further pressure in the next over as Momin Qamar claimed the prized wicket of skipper Knight, who top-scored with 37 off 72 balls, including three fours. – APP

## Fullkrug heads winner as Milan edge Lecce at home

*Fullkrug heads late winner as AC Milan edge Lecce at home in hard-fought Serie A clash, boosting title hopes and lifting morale after recent inconsistent league performances this season*

MILAN: A profligate AC Milan secured a hard-fought 1-0 home win over Lecce on Sunday, with Nicolas Fullkrug heading in a late winner to ensure they kept pace in the Serie A title race. Milan are second in the table with 46 points, three behind city rivals Inter Milan at the summit. Milan found it hard to break through in the first half, probing patiently without reward, and saw an early effort from Rafael Leao ruled out for offside. The pressure from Milan continued after the break, but Lecce goalkeeper Vladimiro Falcone stood firm, producing a string of outstanding saves, including one stop to deny Christian Pulisic that left the US forward stunned. The breakthrough finally came in the 76th minute, when Alexis Saelemaekers lifted a delicate ball back from the byline that was met by Fullkrug, who made no mistake with a close-range header for his first goal for the club. "I got an incredible assist for Ale and yeah, it's the dream of a striker to get an assist like this," said Fullkrug to DAZN. "I'm very thankful and very grateful to be here to wear the shirt, to get the trust you also need as a striker... It's a very good group, great atmosphere, and that's why I'm 100 per cent happy." Fullkrug suffered a broken toe soon after moving to northern Italy and local media widely report that thieves stole half a million euros worth of watches and jewelry from his hotel room while he was away for Milan's midweek win at Como. Asked by DAZN if his goal made up for his recent misfortune, Fullkrug smiled and said: "Yeah, it's enough." – APP

## Ali Raza stars as Pakistan register first victory in U-19 World Cup

HARARE: Pacer Ali Raza starred as Pakistan beat Scotland by six wickets to get off the mark at the U-19 World Cup at the Takashinga Sports Club in Harare on Monday. Ali took four wickets to help Pakistan bowl Scotland out for a paltry 187 before a match-defining century stand between Usman Khan and Ahmed Hussain took the side over the line. Pakistan opted to bowl upon winning the toss and Ali Raza instantly justified the decision, clean bowling Theo Robinson and Max Chaplin in the first over with full and straight deliveries. Captain Thomas Knight dug in for his 37 but when he was bowled by Momin Qamar (3-46), Scotland were 115 for six. Finlay Jones (33) and Manu Sarawat (25) compiled a valiant seventh-wicket stand of 58 but there was little resistance thereafter as Scotland were bowled out with 11 balls unused. – APP

## PSB Board Summons AFP Officials to Hear Election Appeals

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The long-running dispute over the elections of the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) has entered a decisive phase, as the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has scheduled a crucial board meeting on January 23 in Islamabad. According to an official document, two appeals filed by the Athletics Federation of Pakistan will be taken up during the 35th meeting of the Pakistan Sports Board, where the board is expected to deliberate and decide on the matter. The appeals challenge the order passed by the Adjudicator, Pakistan Sports Board, arising out of Petition No. 9 of 2025, which declared the elections of the AFP president and other key office bearers unconstitutional. The board meeting has been convened following the Islamabad High Court's decision to dismiss Writ Petition No. 5150 of 2025 on January 15, 2026. The court ruled that the petitioner federation had an alternate statutory remedy available before the Pakistan Sports Board and referred the matter back to the PSB with directions to decide the appeals strictly in accordance with the rules.

In this regard, the Pakistan Sports Board has summoned key office bearers of the Athletics Federation of Pakistan to appear before the board. Those directed to attend include Brigadier (Retd) Wahab Hussain, President AFP; Shahida Khanum, Senior Vice President; Humaira Mahmood Khan, Vice President; and Tariq Sidhu, President of the National Association of Athletics Technical Officials. Additionally, the appeal filed by the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) against the Adjudicator's order in favour of Salman Iqbal Butt, coach of Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem, will also be heard during the same board meeting. In this connection, coach Salman Butt has been formally served a notice to appear before the PSB Board. The upcoming hearing is being viewed as critical, as the PSB Board's decision is expected to determine the future course of the Athletics Federation of Pakistan's electoral process and administrative structure. It is worth mentioning that serious questions have also emerged regarding the financial transparency of the Athletics Federation of Pakistan, after it reportedly failed to submit adjustment accounts and supporting records of Rs 107.50 million in federal government grants received over the last three financial years.

## Morocco to file legal complaint over Cup of Nations final fiasco

*Morocco to pursue legal action after Africa Cup of Nations final chaos as Senegal walk off pitch over penalty decision before returning to beat hosts in Rabat decider*

RABAT: Morocco will pursue legal action over the outcome of Sunday's Africa Cup of Nations final, where opponents Senegal walked off the field to protest a penalty awarded against them but later returned to win the match.

Morocco were beaten 1-0 after extra time by Senegal in the decider in Rabat, but the hosts had a chance to win the trophy with a last-gasp penalty at the end of regulation time. Senegalese players stormed off in protest after a VAR decision to hand Morocco a spot kick for a tug on the shoulder of striker Brahim Diaz, who then squandered the kick after having to wait some 14 minutes before the Senegal side returned.

"This situation had a significant impact on the normal course of the match and on the players' performance," it added.

It is unclear what Morocco wants

to achieve with their complaint other than being seen to formally remonstrate over the outcome of the match. Earlier on Monday, FIFA President Gianni Infantino and CAF condemned the behaviour of Senegalese players and mem-

bers of the coaching staff after the chaotic scenes, saying violence and walk-offs had no place in football. "We also witnessed unacceptable scenes on the field and in the stands – we strongly condemn the behaviour of some supporters as well as some Senegalese players and technical staff members," Infantino said.

"It is unacceptable to leave the field of play in this manner and, equally, violence cannot be tolerated in our sport, it is simply not right. 'We must always respect the decisions taken by the match officials on and off the field of play. Teams must compete on the pitch and within the Laws of the Game, because anything less puts the very essence of football at risk.' CAF said it was reviewing footage and that disciplinary proceedings will follow, adding that it 'condemns the unacceptable behaviour from some players and officials'." – Agencies

## Pakistan renews airspace closure for India

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tit-for-tat move after New Delhi suspended the critical Indus Water Treaty amid heightened bilateral tensions following the deadly Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). Following Pakistan's decision, India shut its airspace to Pakistani airlines on April 30. Pakistan's initial restriction was extended on May 23 for another month. On May 6-7, India launched unprovoked attacks on multiple Pakistani cities. In response, Pakistan's armed forces launched a large-scale retaliatory military action, named "Operation Bunyan Marsos", and targeted several Indian military targets across multiple regions.

## Beijing urges Afghanistan to protect Chinese

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spokesman Guo Jiakun told a news conference. Six Afghans were also killed in Monday's explosion at the Chinese Noodle restaurant in central Kabul, city police spokesman Khalid Zadran said. The blast was claimed by the regional branch of the Daesh group, the SITE Intelligence Group reported, saying it was a suicide attack targeting Chinese nationals. The Kabul police spokesman said the restaurant in the Shahr-e-Naw area mostly served Chinese Muslims. Five Chinese nationals were also among the wounded, Beijing said, warning its citizens against travelling to Afghanistan. "Chinese citizens and enterprises already in Afghanistan should enhance their awareness of prevention, strengthen security measures and evacuate high-risk areas as soon as possible," Guo said. Taliban officials have vowed to restore security to the country and are courting foreign investors to secure crucial revenue streams as foreign aid funding dries up. Chinese business visitors have flocked to Afghanistan since the Taliban government took power in 2021 for the second time.

## Diplomatic row between New Delhi and Poland

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the former said, "Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorism and not help fuel the terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood." According to the report, this was a "direct reference to the Polish FM's visit to Pakistan in October 2025, where he had met Pakistan's top leadership". The report further quoted Jaishankar as saying that Sikorski, a former journalist who covered Afghanistan in the 1980s, was "no stranger to the region" and would be "certainly familiar with the longstanding challenge of cross-border terrorism". The Indian minister also took exception to the Polish minister's previous comments about Delhi's import of Russian oil; the report noted that Sikorski had stated in Paris earlier this month that he was "satisfied" by India's reduction of Russian oil imports "because this is financing the war machine of Putin". "I have repeatedly underlined that the selective targeting of India is both unfair and unjustified. I do so again today," Jaishankar told Sikorski, according to The Hindu. Speaking to reporters after the meeting at Hyderabad House, Sikorski said that while the two sides agreed on concerns over terrorism, India's participation in "Zapad 2025" military exercises in Russia and Belarus was seen as "threatening", the report said.

## Plaza death toll rises...

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The blaze in Karachi's historic centre raged for more than 24 hours before it was extinguished. The police surgeon said that the number of missing people stands at 81, adding that some names in the list were repetitive and that 74 of the missing people have been confirmed.



## Briefs

**PSX gains 860 points to close at 188,622 points**

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday continued its upward momentum and closed bullish, gaining 860.09 points, a rise of 0.46 percent, to settle at 188,621.78 points as compared to 187,761.69 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 1,225,807 million shares with a traded value of Rs 63,897 billion, against 1,198,656 million shares valuing Rs 63,800 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization increased to Rs 21,305 trillion from Rs 21,195 trillion a day earlier. Out of 487 active companies in the ready market, 240 advanced, 213 declined, while 34 remained unchanged. Hasco Petroleum topped the volume chart with 113,003 million shares, followed by K-Electric Limited with 70,448 million shares and Treet Corporation with 58,611 million shares.

The top gainers included PIA Holding Company Limited (B), which rose by Rs 200.32 to close at Rs 20,966.33, and Sazgar Engineering Works Limited, which increased by Rs 159.34 to settle at Rs 1,903.80.

On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited declined by Rs 137.41 to close at Rs 28,123.84, while Service Industries Limited fell by Rs 35.95 to close at Rs 1,814.62. In the futures market, turnover stood at 234,020 million shares with a traded value of Rs 16,606 billion, compared to 236,133 million shares worth Rs 14,794 billion in the previous session. Out of 316 futures-market companies, 194 recorded gains, while 118 declined and four remained unchanged. Among futures contracts, TREET-JAN led the turnover with 22,413 million shares, followed by KEL-JAN with 20,866 million shares and PIBTL-JAN with 19,172 million shares.—APP

## Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.91 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 279.92.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 280.75 and Rs 282.95, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.70 to close at Rs 327.18 from the previous day's close of Rs 325.48, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.76, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 2.37 and closed at Rs 377.27 compared to the previous day's Rs 374.90. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham lost 01 paisa and closed at Rs 76.21, whereas the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged at Rs 74.64.—APP

## Gold price jumps by Rs 4,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices recorded a no table increase in the local market on Tuesday as the price of 24-karat gold per tola surged by Rs 4,300 to Rs 493,662. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs 3,686 to Rs 423,235, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs 3,379 to Rs 387,979, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Silver prices also moved upward, with 24-karat silver per tola increasing by Rs 87 to Rs 9,869, whereas the price of 10 grams of silver went up by Rs 75 to Rs 8,461. In the international market, gold prices rose by \$43 to \$4,713 per ounce, while silver prices increased by \$0.87 to \$33.94 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

# Pakistan, Indonesia move to deepen trade ties

Both sides also discussed prospects in energy, biodiesel, minerals, and infrastructure, including opportunities under Special Economic Zones and the possibility of involving friendly countries in CPEC-linked projects

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a detailed meeting with the Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, to review and advance bilateral trade, investment, and sector-specific cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia. During the meeting, the Federal Minister briefed the Ambassador on Pakistan's evolving trade strategy, with a particular focus on rice exports, a key priority assigned by the Prime Minister. He noted that Pakistan remains among the world's leading rice exporters, offering internationally recognized quality, while acknowledging that global price competition—especially following recent market interventions by major producers—has created challenges for exporters. He informed that the government is actively working on financial and commercial mechanisms to enhance price competitiveness without compromising quality, enabling Pakistan to sustain and expand its market share. Jam Kamal Khan highlighted Pakistan's proposal to re-engage selected partner countries, including Indonesia, through both open-market and government-to-government (G2G) frameworks, stressing that price, reliability, and quality are central considerations for im-

porting countries. In this context, he underscored the importance of reviving the Pakistan-Indonesia rice cooperation framework and initiating fresh dialogue to unlock mutually beneficial opportunities. Officials recalled that a rice MoU signed in 2015—providing for up to one million metric tons of rice procurement annually on a G2G basis—had expired in 2019. Pakistan has already shared a revised draft with the Indonesian side and expressed hope for its early finalization to institutionalize long-term cooperation in the staple commodity. The

Commerce Minister also raised issues affecting agricultural exports, particularly kinnar (mandarin). He noted that Pakistan is awaiting the issuance of import quotas by Indonesia to ensure uninterrupted seasonal exports, warning that delays could result in losses for growers and exporters. Additionally, concern was expressed over the recent increase in food and agricultural testing requirements for Pakistani kinnar, from eight to twenty-four tests, which adds cost and processing time. It was shared that Pakistan's Department of Plant

Protection is already engaged with Indonesian counterparts to address the matter. Beyond agriculture, the meeting explored broader avenues for economic collaboration. Jam Kamal Khan invited Indonesian investors to consider Pakistan as a regional hub for palm oil storage, processing, and onward supply to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and other markets. He highlighted Pakistan's expanding port and logistics infrastructure, operated by leading international firms, and its strategic location as a gateway to emerging region-

al markets, said a release issued here on Tuesday. Both sides also discussed prospects in energy, biodiesel, minerals, and infrastructure, including opportunities under Special Economic Zones and the possibility of involving friendly countries in CPEC-linked projects. The Federal Minister emphasized Pakistan's readiness to facilitate Indonesian investment through policy support, connectivity, and market access. The Ambassador of Indonesia welcomed Pakistan's proposals and appreciated the positive momentum generated by recent high-level exchanges between the two countries. He assured that the issues raised—particularly on rice cooperation, agricultural market access, and trade facilitation—would be conveyed to Jakarta for consideration, noting Indonesia's strong interest in food security, diversified sourcing, and competitive pricing. The two sides agreed to intensify institutional engagement, including the early convening of the Joint Trade and Development Committee and trade forums, as well as virtual consultations to maintain momentum. Both reaffirmed their commitment to translating longstanding friendly relations into concrete economic outcomes through structured dialogue, timely decisions, and private-sector engagement.—DNA

## Uzbekistan willing to launch value-added joint ventures: Minhojiddin

FAISALABAD: Minhojiddin Raufov, Head of Uzbek Trade Delegation, said that Uzbekistan is willing to launch value-added joint ventures with Pakistani counterparts to fully exploit the available raw material available in the both countries. Addressing the business community during a meeting in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he appreciated the progress made by Pakistan in the field of textile and said that Pakistan is already in contact with Uzbek investors and is purchasing yarn for its domestic consumption in addition to manufacturing export surplus. He proposed that two countries should consider launching joint ventures as the international community was doling out loans to Uzbekistan while cheap electricity, gas and other raw materials are available in abundance in their country. He said that joint ventures established in Uzbekistan would provide a huge market of landlocked Central Asian States where their surplus products could be exported without any hurdle. On this occasion, Madam Dilorom Abdullaeva said that animals' skins are available in abundance in Uzbekistan but we intend to convert it into value-added shoes and bags for export purposes. She said that her country was looking for cooperation from Pakistani counterparts to help them in this field. She requested the FCCI to arrange a delegation for B2B meetings with their counterparts in Uzbekistan and assured that a subsidized package could also be offered to the business community to participate in the exhibitions organized in Uzbekistan. She said that logistics and banking are prerequisite for bilateral trade and both these facilities are available in Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Mr Rehan Naseem Bharara, Immediate Past President FCCI, said that he is already doing business with Central Asian States including Uzbekistan. He stressed the need to motivate the businessmen of the two countries to exchange views and explore new opportunities to enhance bilateral trade for the benefit of the two nations. He also introduced Faisalabad and FCCI and said that regular exchange of trade delegations would strengthen bilateral trade. Mian Muhammad Tayyab, Umer Farooq Khalon, Junaid Mehmood and other members participated in the question answer session while Muhammad Ali, Executive Committee Member offered vote of thanks. Later on, Rehan Naseem Bharara decorated the guests with collar pins specially designed to mark the 50 Years Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the FCCI. He also presented them FCCI shields. Mr Kasimov Ilkhomjon of Uzbekistan was also present at the meeting, along with Muhammad Yousa and Muhammad Ahmed.—DNA

## Morocco pushes to reform social security system amid eco pressure

DUBAI: Morocco's prime minister said on Tuesday that the country was pursuing radical social and economic reforms in the wake of inflationary and economic pressures. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Aziz Akhannouch said his government had expanded healthcare to more than 80 percent of its population, up from just 42 percent when he took office three years ago. He said this also coincided with consistently strong economic growth and headline inflation reducing to below 1 percent. "In a world that doubts itself, Morocco has decided to protect its population, reform and look forward," he told attendees in Davos. In late 2025, Morocco was rocked by its largest demonstrations in over a decade as youth led groups mobilized nationwide against deteriorating public services, deepening social inequality, and chronic unemployment. Akhannouch said the country was aware of the difficulties facing Moroccans and was determined to ensure the country would remain on a positive trajectory. Part of this included the provision of financial aid to more than 12 million citizens, and the formation of trusts for orphans to be paid out when they turn 18. "Health means dignity, if you want to have a decent life you have to have good health," he said. Nevertheless, Akhannouch noted that the government had not forgone its budgetary principles—and had in fact balanced the country's debt payments and achieved successful fiscal reforms. He noted S&P's decision in 2025 to raise Morocco's sovereign rating to BBB/A3 and restore its investment grade status.—APP



Armenia's trade turnover with Russia reaches record \$14b: Lavrov

MOSCOW: Trade turnover between Armenia and Russia has reached a record \$14 billion thanks to membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a press conference summing up Moscow's diplomatic activities in 2025. "Thanks to the fact that the EAEU provides Armenian goods with free access to the markets of other member countries, Armenia's foreign trade turnover, primarily with the Russian Federation, has reached record levels, currently standing at \$14 billion, a level never seen before," the Russian Foreign Minister said. Lavrov recalled that Armenia became a full member of the EAEU in 2015, when its GDP was \$10.5 billion. Now, according to the minister, the country's GDP is \$26 billion. "Armenia's GDP has more than doubled since its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. It is difficult to ignore the figures that characterize Armenia's economic development over the past 10 years," he said.—APP

## Israel demolishes buildings

JERUSALEM: Israel demolished structures inside the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency's East Jerusalem compound on Tuesday after seizing the site last year, in an act condemned by the agency as a violation of international law. Surrounded by Israeli forces, bulldozers razed several large buildings and other smaller structures inside the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's compound, where dozens of agency staff once worked. UNRWA, which has been accused of bias by Israel, has not used the building since the start of last year after Israel ordered it to vacate all its premises and cease its operations. A spokesperson for UNRWA, Jonathan Fowler, told Reuters that Israeli forces entered the compound around 7 a.m. local time (0500 GMT), forced out the compound's security guards and then brought in bulldozers to begin demolishing buildings inside. "This is an unprecedented attack against UNRWA and its premises and it also constitutes a serious violation of international law and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations," Fowler said. Some former UNRWA staff said the structures that were demolished on Tuesday had been used to store aid for the West Bank and Gaza.—APP

## Syria says 120 Daesh detainees escaped prison

CAIRO: Syria's Interior Ministry said on Tuesday that about 120 Daesh detainees escaped from Shaddadi prison, after the Kurdish website Rudaw reported that a spokesperson for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, Farhad Shami, said around 1,500 Daesh members had escaped. The Syrian ministry said Syrian army units and ministry special forces entered Shaddadi following the breakout. It said security forces had recaptured 81 of the escapees after search and sweep operations in the town and surrounding areas, with efforts continuing to arrest the remaining fugitives. Earlier, the Syrian army said "number of" Daesh militants had escaped a prison that had been under SDF control in the eastern city of Shaddadi, accusing the SDF of releasing them. After days of fighting with government forces, the SDF agreed on Sunday to withdraw from both Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, two Arab-majority provinces they had controlled for years and the location of Syria's main oil fields.—APP



Beijing: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met with Chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC) Mr. Zhao Leji during their official visit to China.

## Israel orders Gaza families to move in first forced evacuation since ceasefire

CAIRO: Israeli forces have ordered dozens of Palestinian families in the southern Gaza Strip to leave their homes in the first forced evacuation since October's ceasefire, as residents and Hamas said on Tuesday the military was expanding the area under its control. Residents of Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Younis, said the leaflets were dropped on Monday on families living in tent encampments in the Al-Reqeb neighborhood. "Urgent message. The area is under IDF control. You must evacuate immediately," said the leaflets, written in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, which the army dropped over the Al-Reqeb neighborhood in the town of Bani Suhaila. In the two-year war before the US brokered ceasefire was signed in October, Israel dropped leaflets over areas that were subsequently raided or bombed, forcing some families to move several times. Residents and a source from the Hamas militant group said this was the first time they had been dropped since then. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The ceasefire has not progressed beyond its first phase, under which major fighting has stopped, Israel withdrew from less than half of Gaza, and Hamas released hostages in return for Palestinian detainees and prisoners. Virtually the entire population of more than 2 million people are confined to around a third of Gaza's territory, mostly in makeshift tents and damaged buildings, where life has resumed under control of an administration led by Hamas. Israel and Hamas have accused each other of major breaches of the ceasefire and remain far apart on the more difficult steps planned for the next phase. Mahmoud, a resident from the Bani Suhaila area, who asked not to give his family name, said the evacuation orders impacted at least 70 families, living in tents and homes, some of which were partially damaged, in the area. "We have fled the area and relocated westward. It is maybe the fourth or fifth time the occupation expanded the yellow line since last month," he told Reuters by phone from Khan Younis, referring to the line behind which Israel has withdrawn. "Each time they move it around 120 to 150 meters (yards) inside the area. We have fled the area and relocated westward. It is maybe the fourth or fifth time the occupation expanded the yellow line since last month," he told Reuters by phone from Khan Younis, referring to the line behind which Israel has withdrawn. "Each time they move it around 120 to 150 meters (yards) inside the area. We have fled the area and relocated westward. It is maybe the fourth or fifth time the occupation expanded the yellow line since last month," he told Reuters by phone from Khan Younis, referring to the line behind which Israel has withdrawn. "Each time they move it around 120 to 150 meters (yards) inside the area. We have fled the area and relocated westward. 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