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US mulls action against Iran amid heightened tensions

Detailed News On Page-08

UK PM secures visa free entry of British people

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Govt committed to utilization of all resources

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**Meets EU ambassador**

Shehbaz reaffirms resolve to deepen Pakistan-EU ties

The Ambassador transmitted best wishes from EU leadership and emphasized the EU's continued engagement with Pakistan to enhance trade opportunities under GSP+ and through proactive initiatives, including the inaugural High-Level EU-Pakistan Business Forum scheduled for 28-29 April 2026 in Islamabad

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's House. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Tauseef Shah, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi, and Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch. Welcoming the EU Ambassador, who assumed his duties in Pakistan in September 2025 after presenting credentials to the President, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended warm greetings and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to further strengthening multifaceted cooperation with the European Union. He highlighted key areas of mutual interest, including trade and investment, development cooperation, security, migration management, and climate action. The Prime Minister underscored the vital importance of the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in boosting bilateral trade and supporting Pakistan's export-oriented sectors. He stated that the Government of Pakistan remains fully committed to collaborating closely with the EU on mutually beneficial trade enhancement measures, particularly through sustained engagement under the GSP+ framework. Prime Minister Sharif also expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the 7th round of the Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue, held in Brussels in November 2025 and led on the Pakistan side by

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of European Union meeting the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Pak will not join Abraham Accords

US travel advisory for Pakistan "update, not downgrade," says FO spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on Thursday that Pakistan will not become a party to the Abraham Accords, reiterating that Islamabad's stance on the Palestinian issue remains unchanged. Addressing a weekly briefing in Islamabad, Andrabi dismissed reports linking Pakistan's participation in the Board of Peace to the Abraham Accords, calling such claims a misconception. "Joining the Board of Peace has no connection with the Abraham Accords and does not represent any deviation

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Pakistan beat Australia in T20 opener**BUREAU REPORT**

LAHORE: Pakistan opener Saim Ayub's all-round performance helped Green Shirts secure a 22-run victory over Australia in the first T20I of three-match series at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday. Ayub backed his blazing 40-run knock with two wickets to help the Green Shirts to defend a modest total 168. Set to chase 169, Australia's batting unit faltered and could accumulate 146/8 in 20 overs. The touring side got off to a briefly flamboyant start to the pursuit, with their opening pair of Matthew Short and stand-in captain raising 21 runs off

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Briefs

Iraqi PM slams Trump threat**NEWS DESK**

BAGHDAD: A former Iraqi prime minister has denounced threats made by US President Donald Trump to end US support for Iraq if he were to return to power. Nouri Maliki, who has links to Iran, was selected at the weekend by the ruling coalition of Shia-led parties as its nominee for prime minister. The US president wrote on Truth Social that Maliki would be a "very bad choice", adding: "Last time Maliki was in power, the Country descended into poverty and total chaos." Maliki, whose time in office between 2006 and 2014 was marked by sectarian violence, stepped down after the Islamic State (IS) group seized large parts of the country.

EU to declare Iran Pasdaran a terrorist organization**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The European Union has decided to designate Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), known as Pasdaran Inqilab, as a terrorist organization. The decision comes amid mounting pressure from the United States, which has long urged Europe to take a tougher stance against Tehran. EU officials cited the IRGC's alleged involvement in widespread human rights violations, including violent crackdowns on protesters and the killing of Iranian citizens. The move marks a significant escalation in Europe's policy toward Iran, potentially deepening tensions between Tehran and Western powers while signaling solidarity with Washington's approach to the regime.

UK secures visa free travel to China

Xi acknowledged past "twists and turns" in bilateral relations but stressed that engagement between the two nations is "unavoidable"

DNA

BEIJING: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced a major facilitation for UK citizens: visa-free entry to China for trips of up to 30 days. The landmark agreement, secured during his high-profile visit to Beijing—the first by a UK prime minister in eight years—aims to boost business ties and tourism between the two nations. Speaking after productive talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Starmer described the relationship as being in a "good, strong place." He highlighted that the visa waiver would enable easier access for British businesses eager to expand in the world's second-largest economy. "Businesses have been crying out for ways to grow their footprints in China," Starmer stated. "We'll make it easier for them to do so, including via relaxed visa rules for short-term travel, supporting them to expand abroad—while boosting growth and jobs at home.

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NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Chinese officials said a recent trade agreement with Canada is not meant to undercut other countries, after Donald Trump threatened to impose 100% tariffs on Canadian products if Canada finalizes the "deal" with Beijing. "It does not target any third party," China's foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Monday of the new "strategic partnership" between Canada and China. Trump threatened the tariffs in a Truth Social post over the weekend, and warned in subsequent posts that China is "successfully and completely

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Armed forces fully prepared to safeguard country's sovereignty

Field Marshal stresses importance of maintaining optimal preparedness to meet security challenges

DNA

RAWALPINDI: DChief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Field Marshal Asim Munir, on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan Armed Forces' preparedness to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity against all threats. He made this affirmation during a visit to Bahawalpur Garrison, where he was briefed on key operational, training and administrative matters of the Corps, with particular emphasis on preparations for multi-domain warfare, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. During the visit, the ISPR said, COAS Munir observed a high-intensity field exercise, Steadfast Resolve, conducted at Khaipur Tamewali (KPT). The exercise demonstrated the integration of niche and

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Eye treatment

Tarar confirms Imran inspected at PIMS hospital

Following checkup, former prime minister was shifted back to Adiala jail, says Attaullah Tarar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday confirmed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan was briefly taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) amid concerns raised by his party. Tarar said eye specialists had examined the PTI founder at Adiala Jail and advised that he be shifted to PIMS for further assessment and treatment.

Acting on the doctors' recommendations, the minister said, the former premier was taken to the hospital on Saturday night. He said that at Pims, Imran's eyes were examined again and, after obtaining his written consent, doctors carried out a minor medical procedure that lasted around 20 minutes. Following the procedure, the minister said, he was shifted back to Adiala Jail with the necessary medical instructions.

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Afzidi not allowed to meet Imran Khan

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afzidi on Thursday reached a police picket, established near Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, in yet another attempt to meet the incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan. CM Afzidi's visit comes a day after an Islamabad court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for him in a case wherein he had been accused of making misleading statements against state institutions. Speaking to reporters at the Factory Naka near the prison, the KP chief minister said he had "serious reservations"

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SERENA HOTELS



Winter Retreat

Buffet Breakfast for two**Minibar****15% Discount on Laundry****15% Discount on Food & Beverages****PKR 20,000 per night****PKR 25,000 per night****PKR 25,000 per night****PKR 20,000 per night****Gilgit Serena Hotel****Hunza Serena Hotel****Sost Serena Hotel****Serena Shigar Fort***Offer is valid till 31 March, 2026 | This offer cannot be combined with any other offers**For room reservations, please dial: 05811 455894 or email at muhammad.javed@serena.com.pk*

Briefs

Gilani for locally manufactured Pak-brand vehicle

DNA

ISLAMABAD - Chief Executive Officer of the Engineering Development Board (EDB), Mr. Hamad Ali Mansoor, called on Acting President of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, at the Awan-e-Sadr today. Mr. Hamad Ali Mansoor briefed Mr. Gilani on the role and mandate of the Engineering Development Board, an apex body under the Ministry of Industries and Production, established in 1995 to strengthen Pakistan's engineering sector. He outlined EDB's key initiatives to promote industrial growth, enhance exports, support research and development, improve technical skills and align the sector with international standards. The CEO also apprised the Acting President of ongoing policy measures, including long-term strategic planning, rationalisation, industrial development frameworks, automobile and electric vehicle policies, as well as efforts to foster innovation, technology adoption and human resource development in the engineering industry. Mr. Gilani appreciated the proactive role of the Engineering Development Board in advancing Pakistan's engineering sector. He emphasised the importance of transitioning to electric vehicles in view of environmental concerns and the need to support sustainable economic growth. The EDB is committed to a locally manufactured made-in-Pakistan vehicle under a Pakistani brand, as well as economic electric bikes, may be introduced to promote affordable mobility and strengthen domestic manufacturing. -APP

American Snowboarding entrepreneur visits Pakistan

This series offers a unique platform to showcase American expertise and build lasting partnerships as we commemorate 250 years of American independence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad launched its Freedom 250 lecture series to engage the Pakistani public on key priorities such as entrepreneurship, the digital economy, and critical minerals. As part of this series, Dr. Courtney Burton, founder and chair of the board of directors of U.S. company Burton Snowboards, and Saman Khan, a Pakistani professional athlete and alumna of the U.S. Department of State ESPNW Global Sports Mentoring Program, connected with sports professionals, youth, and business leaders. On January 28, at an event at the newly constructed United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan headquarters, they highlighted the role of sports entrepreneurs in innovation, and cross-cultural exchange. They emphasized that sports foster essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and resilience, and create opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities to drive positive change both locally and globally. The U.S. Embassy's Minister Counselor for Public Diplomacy Andy Husar said: "Pakistan has a young, energetic population and untapped potential in sports and entrepreneurship. By engaging



and build lasting partnerships as we commemorate 250 years of American independence.

APP

Negative policies have broken public's backbone

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shahid Rasheed Butt, prominent business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, stated that current policies have severely impacted the public and undermined the confidence of both youth and the business community. He noted that professionals and workers are leaving the country, foreign investors are staying away, and local investors are withdrawing. He emphasized that shifting the consequences of elite mismanagement onto the public must end. He called for serious, long-term reforms to restore business confidence and ensure Pakistan remains attractive to investors. In a statement, Shahid Rasheed Butt said a 43.3 percent decline in foreign direct investment from July to December 2026 has been recorded.

percent, and fertilizer prices rose by 13 percent, creating significant challenges for farmers. Shahid Rasheed Butt noted that from July to January, credit disbursement to the private sector was 578.4 billion rupees, down from 1,520 trillion rupees in the same period last year. He said this indicates weak private sector conditions and stagnant investment. Last year's figure for the same period of foreign exchange earnings were 21.3 billion dollars, with 16.1 billion held by the State Bank of Pakistan, much of it borrowed. He described the situation as concerning for the future. He highlighted that agricultural growth reached 2.9 percent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, up from 1.0 percent last year. However, major crops excluding wheat declined by 0.7 percent. Cotton production fell by 1.2 percent, green fodder output dropped by 14.4

BJP using census to stoke sectarian divisions in IIOJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC) has said that the Indian BJP-led government is once again attempting to divide occupied Jammu and Kashmir on sectarian lines under its Hindutva-RSS agenda. APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement issued in Srinagar, said that several private, communal, illogical and unnecessary questions reflecting anti-Kashmiri and sectarian agendas have been introduced in the new census format by the BJP and other like-minded leaders of parties. He said these questions have the potential to fragment Kashmiri society along sectarian lines. The APHC said that after initially dividing occupied Jammu and Kashmir at gunpoint in August 2019, the BJP-led Indian government is now seeking further division through the census exercise. Sources said the census includes questions such as: "Which sect of religion does a family belong to? Who are the relatives inside and outside Kashmir? What properties, particularly those of in-laws, does a family own? Does the family have any links or relations with any militant (mujahid) or Hurriyet camp." The APHC said the exercise amounts to intelligence gathering under the guise of a census. It added that the inclusion of such intrusive and suspicious questions, coupled with recent statements by the BJP and other like-minded parties, has reinforced fears of a deliberate attempt to foment sectarian discord in Jammu and Kashmir where Muslims have historically lived as both citizens and voters. The All Parties Hurriyet Conference said that the BJP-appointed Lieutenant Governor regime imposed by New Delhi is brazenly violating international laws in IIOJK, especially after the illegal abrogation of the territory's special status in August 2019. -APP

Pak-China mineral coop to transform Pak's mineral sector

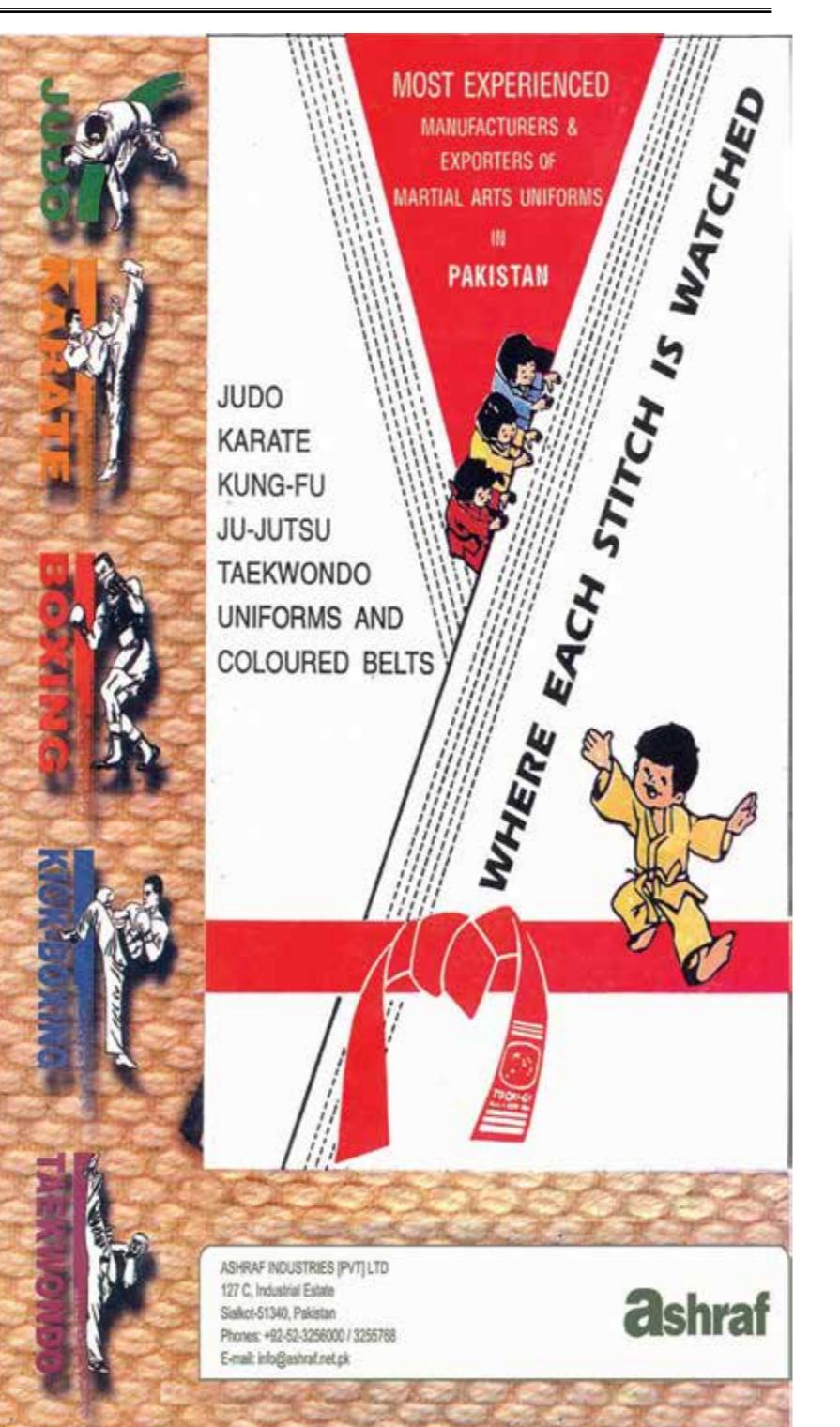
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has invited China to invest in copper, gold, rare earth elements, account to be published by Govt. Proportionate Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Mr. Aslam Iqbal, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Zou Lin and Pakistan's "rich in mineral resources" and stressed the importance of enterprise cooperation for sustainable development. Referring to the new phase of CPEC 2.0, he encouraged Chinese companies to take a leading role in bilateral projects while strengthening local technical capacity. Citing the Saindak project as an example, he noted that more than 5,200 Pakistani professionals have been trained, gaining valuable technical and managerial skills, reflecting China's commitment to human resource development alongside mineral cooperation. With the slogan "Our Shared Prosperity Empowered by Minerals," the Pak-China Mineral Cooperation Forum was officially launched here at Jinnah Convention Center, in the presence of senior government officials and leading companies from both countries, marking a new chapter in bilateral collaboration in Pakistan's mineral sector. "It is a great honour and privilege for me to launch Pak-China mineral cooperation forum," said the Minister who was chief guest of the occasion. "Pakistan invites China to invest in copper, gold, rare earth elements and other critical minerals so that our mineral wealth can

be transformed into industrial strength, export competitiveness and shared prosperity," Iqbal said. "The mineral sector holds a central place in Pakistan's economy for achieving our development targets. Pakistan's mineral and energy sectors are valued at nearly six to seven billion dollars, yet our current mineral exports stand at only about two billion dollars annually," he said. Ahsan Iqbal said that it was time to take Pak-China mineral cooperation beyond extraction to wards value addition, processing, smelting and refining. Projects such as Saindak copper-gold, Duleh lead-zinc and Thar coal are successful examples of this collaboration. He said, "More than 90 percent of Pakistan's mineral exports are currently raw or semi-processed, which means value, jobs and technology leave the country with the raw material. Under Uraan Pakistan, this situation must and will change." According to Ahsan Iqbal, their goal was to "establish mineral processing plants, smelters, refining facilities and mineral-based industrial clusters linked with special economic zones, moving decisively from extraction to value addition." He said, "China's role is pivotal in transforming Pakistan's mineral economy, as Chinese companies possess advanced expertise across the entire mineral value chain, from geological surveys to processing, smelting, refining and project financing." -APP

Pak, Rwanda keen to further expand avenues for mutual investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Rwanda reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation, enhancing trade linkages, and expanding avenues for mutual investment. The engagement was also graced by Honorable Prudence Sebahizi, Minister of Trade and Industry of Rwanda by Muhammad Junaid, Anwar Chaudhary, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs of Pakistan late on Wednesday. The engagement was also graced by H.E. Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Mr. Claude Bizimana, CEO, NAEB; and Ms. Doreen Ntawebasa, Director General (Trade & Investment), MINICOM Rwanda.



Trump: a blessing in disguise for global self-reliance?

In an era defined by Donald Trump's "America First" agenda during his second term, the world is witnessing a profound shift. Trump's policies—marked by tariffs, demands for higher defense contributions from allies, and a transactional approach to diplomacy—have inadvertently compelled nations to reassess their dependencies on the United States. While critics decry this as isolationism, proponents argue it fosters self-reliance among countries long accustomed to leaning on U.S. support. From Europe's push for military autonomy to India's diversification of partnerships and Pakistan's precarious balance act, a shift is reshaping global dynamics. This evolution, though challenging, may ultimately strengthen international resilience by encouraging nations and individuals to stand on their own feet. Europe stands as the most prominent example of this transformation. Historically, the continent has relied heavily on the U.S. for security through NATO, with American troops and funding underpinning collective defense. However, Trump's insistence on allies contributing more—escalating demands to 5% of GDP on defense—has sparked a reevaluation. The 2025 National Security Strategy explicitly calls for Europe to assume primary responsibility for its own defense, signaling an end to the U.S. "propping up the world order." This pressure has revived discussions on European military independence. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has openly stated that the "decades of Pax Americana are largely over, urging Europe to pursue its own interests vigorously." The EU, already an economic powerhouse, is now facing growing pains. The military alliance, once a cornerstone of European security, is reshaping. 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Briefs
Shehzad reaffirms resolve to...

From PAGE 01
Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Ambassador Karobis conveyed his sincere gratitude for the warm reception and hospitality extended since his arrival. He assured the Prime Minister of his dedication to advancing Pakistan-EU relations across all domains. The Ambassador transmitted best wishes from EU leadership and emphasized the EU's continued engagement with Pakistan to seize opportunities under GSP+ and through proactive initiatives, including the inaugural High-Level EU-Pakistan Business Forum scheduled for 28-29 April 2026 in Islamabad. The meeting reflected the shared resolve of both sides to build on existing partnerships and explore new avenues for economic collaboration, sustainable development, and strategic dialogue in the coming period.

UK secures visa free travel to...

From PAGE 01
The change aligns the UK with around 50 other countries already enjoying similar privileges, including France, Germany, Italy, Australia, and Japan. It applies to both tourists and business visitors, removing the previous requirement for a visa for stays under 30 days. Downing Street emphasized that this step would particularly benefit sectors like pharmaceuticals, finance, and services, where the UK seeks greater market access. In a parallel development underscoring deepening economic links, UK headquarters of multinationals like Astazen announced a significant \$15 billion (\$10.9 billion) investment in China through 2030. The commitment includes expanding manufacturing sites, research and development facilities, and creating many in the country.

Armed forces fully prepared...

From PAGE 01
Emerging technologies, including unmanned aerial systems, advanced surveillance capabilities, electronic warfare assets and modern command-and-control mechanisms, are being developed to shift towards technology-enabled multi-domain operations. Addressing officers and troops, the army chief commended their high morale, professional competence, and operational readiness. He stressed the importance of maintaining optimal preparedness to meet future battlefield and security challenges.

Tarar confirms...

From PAGE 01
The information minister stressed that Imran's vital signs remained stable throughout the procedure and that his overall health was satisfactory. "He is absolutely healthy," Tarar said, adding that access to medical facilities and specialist care is provided to all prisoners whenever required, strictly in accordance with jail rules. Responding to a question about rumours circulating on social media regarding the ousted prime minister's health, Tarar rejected the claims, saying there was no truth to suggestions that Imran's condition was serious.

Pak will not join...

From PAGE 01
Pakistan's principled position on Palestine," the FO spokesperson added. He said that Pakistan's decision to join the Board of Peace was taken collectively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, constitution, and all relevant stakeholders, after completing all procedural requirements. Andrabi said that Pakistan's primary objective in joining the Board of Peace is to help consolidate and sustain the ceasefire in Gaza.



ISLAMABAD: Players of the Legends of Pakistan team and Media Eleven posing for a picture before the friendly match. The Legends of Pakistan defeated Media Eleven. High Commissioner of Brunei Kamal Ahmed was the chief guest. From the Legends of Pakistan those who participated included: Rana Mujahid Secretary Pakistan Hockey Federation, Shehzad Senior, Zeeshan Ashraf, M Usman, Khalid Hameed, Ahmed Alam, Tahir Zaman, Syed Ziaullah Shah, Abdul Qadeer, Nadeem Lodhi and others. While the Media Eleven was represented by Afzal Butt, Nasir Aslam Raja, Ansar M Bhatti, Javed, Hafeez, Ejaz and others. -DNA

Sri Lanka boost T20 World Cup security

Cricket matches have long been a stage for expressing political tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours, which fought a four-day conflict last year

DNA

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will deploy elite armed units to protect teams at next month's T20 World Cup, part of enhanced security measures with a special emphasis on matches between perennial rivals India and Pakistan, officials have told AFP.

The island is co-hosting the biennial cricket tournament with India and will hold 20 games between February 7 and March 8.

The Indian and Pakistani teams will play

each other at least once, in their group

A clash in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo

on February 15. Cricket matches have long been a stage for expressing political tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours, which fought a four-day conflict last year. Sri Lanka has given the "highest priority" to ensuring the tournament runs smoothly and is "paying special attention to the India-Pakistan matches", sports minister Sunil Kumara Gamage told AFP late on Wednesday. Elite commando units, usually assigned to guard visiting heads of state, will be deployed to protect all participating teams, police and security officials said.

"From the time they step out of the airport until they return to their aircraft, they will be

protected by armed guards," an official said, asking not to be named. India and Pakistan have previously refused to travel across the border for sporting events, opting to play on neutral ground via a hybrid model instead. Hence, for the T20 World Cup, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has shifted their matches to Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh also tried to have their matches moved out of India due to security fears, but the ICC rejected the request. An angry Bangladesh then withdrew from the tournament, and Scotland were drafted in as their replacement.

Pakistan has indicated that it may boycott the event in solidarity with Bangladesh.

Aryna Sabalenka faces Svitolna roadblock in Melbourne final quest

Aryna Sabalenka faces a Ukrainian roadblock between her and a fourth straight Australian Open final on Thursday, and she is determined to blast past it

From PAGE 01
RELENTLESS: Belarussian top seed Aryna Sabalenka faces a Ukrainian roadblock between her and a fourth straight Australian Open final on Thursday, and she is determined to blast past it

RELENTLESS: Belarussian top seed Aryna Sabalenka faces a Ukrainian

roadblock between her and a fourth straight Australian Open final on Thursday, and she is determined to blast past it. The 27-year-old has won the Melbourne title twice, in 2023 and 2024, and seemed destined for another crown last year but was upset in the final by Madison Keys. That defeat left her shattered and she is desperate to go all the way this time. "I think every player when they get to the tournament is trophy or nothing," she said ahead of facing 12th seed Elina Svitolina.

But she is wary of the threat posed by a player in search of her first final at a major.

"I'll just go, and I'll be focused on myself and my game, and I'll be fighting for every point. That's my approach," said Sabalenka, a four-time Grand Slam champion.

Like other Ukrainian players, Svitolina does not shake hands with opponents from Russia and Moscow's ally Belarus. That will include Sabalenka.

Sabalenka third seed Coco Gauff in the last round and hoped that would bring "a little smile" to her fellow Ukrainians during a bitter winter under attack by Russia.

She is also the 2022 Wimbledon champion, with big-match experience under her belt.

But she is conscious that Pegula has already knocked out Keys and fourth seed Amanda Anisimova. "She's a very experienced opponent and she moves well, and also her ball stays quite low," she said. "So that makes it a bit difficult sometimes to play her, but I will try to adjust. Will try to do my best, definitely."

Pegula is zeroing in on her first Slam crown at the age of 31. The closest she has come was losing the 2024 US Open final, also to Sabalenka. She plays a player who stunned second and sixth-seeded Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek in the quarter-finals and has won 18 of her last 19 matches. "She's really tough to play, she has a massive serve, big groundstrokes, and also her ball stays quite low," she said. "So that makes it a bit difficult sometimes to play her, but I will try to adjust. Will try to do my best, definitely."

"With a bit of drama, we did it," said City captain Bernardo Silva. "With the schedule, with the amount of injuries we have at the minute, to have those two full weeks to prepare the team to recover some players, to focus on other competitions for now is going to be really good." City know the dangers of the play-off round only too well after being dumped out at that stage by Real Madrid 12 months ago. A week on from an embarrassing defeat to Bodo/Glimt that put their place in the top eight at risk, City made amends against a Galatasaray side that will go into the play-offs. Haaland had been left to the bench by Guardiola for the first time in Premier League this season for Saturday's 2-0 win over Wolves. - Agencies

Senegal coach Thiaw banned, fined after AFCON final chaos

M. ANSAR BHATTI

JOHANNESBURG: The long-standing daily allowance issue of the Pakistan national hockey team has been resolved following players' protest, as the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) on Thursday approved a daily allowance of \$115 per player for the national squad. The PSB directed its finance department to release the approved payments ahead of the team's departure to ensure players face no inconvenience during their international assignment.

Director General PSB Muhammad Yasin Pirzada said the allowance was approved in accordance with the government-sanctioned budget and would cover Pakistan's participation in the FIH Pro League. He added that despite this, the PTI founder underlined a medical procedure for an eye ailment at a hospital in Islamabad on Saturday night. Referring to the Tahir's statement, Afridi insisted the government was previously denying that Imran had been taken to a hospital and said the PTI would "respond strongly".

Daily Allowance Issue Resolved After Hockey Players' Protest

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China says Canada deal does not...

FROM PAGE 01

taking over" Canada. In response, Prime Minister Mark Carney has said that Canada is not pursuing a free-trade deal with China and has "never" considered it. He added that Canadian officials have made their position clear to their American counterparts.

Trump threatened Canada with 100% tariffs if it makes a deal with China. From

the same, he is wary of the threat posed by a player in search of her first final at a major.

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Haaland ends barren run as Man City reach Champions League last 16

MANCHESTER: Erling Haaland ended his 10-game wait for a goal from open play as Manchester City beat Galatasaray 2-0 on Wednesday to book their place in the Champions League last 16. Ryan Bertrand was also target for Pep Guardiola's men, who took advantage of results elsewhere going their way to sneak into the top eight and avoid a

perilous play-off next month.

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Pak beat Australia in T20 opener

FROM PAGE 01

their first 10 deliveries before Alzabir gave Pakistan the breakthrough by dismissing the former, who made a four-ball five. The 22-year-old all-rounder struck again in his next over to get rid of Head, who smashed two sixes and as many fours on his way to a 13-ball 23. Following Ayub's twin strike, Cameron Green and Matt Renshaw (15) attempted to anchor the run chase by knitting a 40-run partnership for the third wicket, which culminated with the latter's run out in the final over of the eighth inning. His dismissal sparked a collapse as Australia began to lose wickets at an alarming rate, including that of mainstay Green, who remained their top-scorer with a cautious 36 off 31 deliveries, and consequently slipped to 112/8 15.4 overs. No.10 batter Xavier Bartlett then played a quickfire came at the back-end, scoring an unbeaten 34 off 25 deliveries, but his efforts were insufficient to steer Australia over the line.

Amir, Yahya, Junaid Shine in Junior Tennis Championship

FROM PAGE 01

The boys' U-14 quarterfinals highlighted the technical skills of the younger players. Muhammad Junaid extended his winning streak with a 5-3, 4-2 victory over Ohad-e-Mustafa. Muhammad Ayan and Muhammad Muaz also progressed comfortably, with Ayan beating Behroze Memon 4-1, 4-1, while Muaz overcame M Faizan 4-1, 4-0. M Ibraheem Hussain Gill showed great resilience to edge past Aliyan Ali 4-0, 3-5, 4-1

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Amir Mazari, Muhammad Yahya and Muhammad Junaid continued their winning streak by defeating their respective opponents in the ongoing Milat Tractors Junior National Tennis Championship 2026 at the Punjab Tennis Academy courts. The event is being organised by the Punjab Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA).

The boys' U-18 category produced some of the most intense contests of the day. Amir Mazari of Aitchison College displayed clinical precision to defeat Omer Jawad 6-4, 6-1 and book his place in the semifinals, while Muham-

mad Yahya recorded a convincing 6-1, 6-4 victory over Hamza Ali Rizwan.

In the most grueling match of the session, Muhammad Junaid Khan staged a remarkable comeback against M Faizan. After losing the opening set 6-4, Junaid fought back to

claim the next two sets 6-4, 7-5. Ruhab Faiz also advanced by defeating Muhammed Muaz 6-4, 6-3.

In the girls' U-14 category, Esha Rabi

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Khadija Khalil beat Shahnoor Umer 4-1, 4-0, while Shahnoor Umer defeated Wajeeha Fatima 5-4, 4-0. Eman Shahbaz also registered a straight-set win over Zainab Abdullah 4-2, 4-0.

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Briefs

Judicial inquiry ordered in plaza fire case

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Thursday announced that a judicial inquiry will be conducted into the Gul Plaza fire. "To further probe this and to promote departmental transparency, the sub-committee decided ... a letter is being penned to the honourable Sindh High Court chief justice," Memon told a press conference in Karachi. He added that the SHC top judge will be requested to appoint a serving judge to "review everything and decide on it". A cabinet sub-committee – chaired by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and including ministers Memon, Nasir Hussain Shah, Saeed Ghani, and Ziaul Hassan Lanjra – reviewed a report submitted by a two-member team.

"The meeting with the chief minister went on for four to five hours and important decisions were made in light of the commissioner and additional IC's report," Memon noted. Providing details of January 17, when the blaze erupted, Memon said there were between 2,000 and 2,500 people present in the building, including workers and visitors.

10-month-old infant's body recovered from Lahore manhole

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif grieved

DNA

LAHORE: The rescuers on Thursday found the body of 10-month-old Rida Fatima, who, along with her mother Sadia, fell into a manhole near Bhati Gate in Lahore. The child's body was recovered – after nearly 17 hours – from a sewer line on Outfall Road, said the Rescue 1122. The development comes after DIG Operations Faisal Kamran said that the mother's body was found from the sewerage line at Outfall Road, three kilometres from the said manhole, adding the flow of sewage was so intense that it took the body away.

The DIG said that a high-level committee has been formed to probe the incident, adding that the probing body will soon submit its findings. Expressing grief over the unfortunate incident, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered strict action against "negligence and carelessness" of the administration. The CM, on her way back from Bakhar, convened an emergency meeting at the airport and ordered immediate submission of an impartial fact-finding report over the incident.

PSX sheds over 6,000 points

THE Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 182,338.12 points, down 6,042.26 points, or 3.21%, from 188,380.38.

The index touched a high of 188,923.39, up 543.01 points, or 0.29%, before falling to a low of 181,961.14, down 6,419.24 points, or -3.41%, for the session.

"The market was jittery owing to potential Iran and US conflict and tensions heating up seriously," said AAH Soomro, an independent investment and economic analyst. He added: "A lesser-than-expected earnings result in FFC [Fauji Fertiliser Company] led to the stock hit lower lock and the market erased 3,500 points in a go." "A good and timely correction as earnings season isn't exciting and a good consolidation point," he added.

Adding to the uncertainty, US President Donald Trump warned Iran that time was running out to avert American military action, citing a naval strike group in regional waters and urging talks over Tehran's nuclear programme, further stoking regional risk premiums. – APP

Rwanda keen to strengthen ties with Pakistan, says minister

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, also addressed the gathering and echoed similar sentiments, expressing enthusiasm for enhanced economic cooperation between the two nations



DNA

RWANDA Keen to Strengthen Bilateral Ties with Pakistan Through Coffee Trade Islamabad, January 29, 2026 – Rwanda's Minister of Trade and Industry, Prudence Sebahizi, emphasized his country's strong interest in expanding relations with Pakistan during his address at the inauguration of the first-ever Rwanda Coffee Festival in Islamabad today. The two-day event, held at the Mövenpick Hotel, featured various stalls showcasing premium brands of Rwandan coffee, allowing attendees—including importers, roasters, business leaders, and government officials—to sample and explore the East African nation's renowned specialty brews. Organized by

the High Commission of the Republic of Rwanda in Pakistan in collaboration with Rwanda's National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), the festival aims to introduce Rwanda's high-quality coffee to the Pakistani market and foster direct business partnerships. In his speech, Minister Sebahizi highlighted Rwanda's global reputation as a leading coffee exporter, drawing a parallel to Pakistan's prominence in rice production. "Rwanda is famous for its exceptional coffee exports, just as Pakistan is celebrated worldwide for its quality rice," he stated. "In Rwanda, Pakistan is well-known as a producer of premium rice. Likewise, we aspire for Rwanda to become recognized in Pakistan—and beyond—as a source of top-tier coffee exports." The minister described his recent meetings with Pakistani government

officials as highly fruitful, expressing optimism about future collaborations. He noted that these interactions have laid a solid foundation for deeper trade, investment, and bilateral engagement. Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, also addressed the gathering and echoed similar sentiments, expressing enthusiasm for enhanced economic cooperation between the two nations. He underscored the mutual benefits of diversifying trade partnerships, noting Pakistan's interest in importing high-quality specialty coffees while highlighting opportunities for Rwandan businesses to explore Pakistan's robust rice and other agricultural exports. Minister Khan praised the initiative as a practical step toward building stronger commercial links and pledged continued support from his ministry to facilitate smoother market access and joint ventures. Rwanda's coffee sector supports hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers and has seen export growth in recent years, with the country eager to diversify markets like Pakistan, which already imports Rwandan tea and shows growing interest in coffee and other products.

This initiative aligns with ongoing efforts to boost Rwanda-Pakistan ties, including discussions on trade agreements and mutual market access. The festival includes panel discussions on coffee industry opportunities, B2B meetings, and networking sessions to connect exporters and importers directly. Both ministers concluded by looking forward to more interactions, stating that enhanced cooperation would deliver economic benefits to both nations.



No survivors found in Colombia plane crash with 15 aboard

Aircraft, carrying 13 passengers and two crew members, took off from border city of Cucuta

DNA

BOGOTA: Colombian authorities on Wednesday located a missing plane carrying 15 people in the northeast of the country, with no survivors found, an Air Force source and local media said. The aircraft carrying one lawmaker among the passengers, went missing near Colombia's troubled border with Venezuela on Wednesday, state airline Satena and aerospace authorities said. The aircraft, carrying 13 passengers and two crew members, took off from the border city of Cucuta and lost contact with control towers shortly before it was due to land in nearby Ocaña. The area is mountainous with highly changeable weather and swathes are controlled by Colombia's largest guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army, better known by its Spanish acronym ELN. It was scheduled to land around 12:05 pm, the airline said in a statement. Security and search protocols have been activated, according to the air authority. One lawmaker and one legislative candidate are feared to have been aboard. "We have received with concern the information about the air accident ... where my colleague Diogenes Quintero, Carlos Salcedo and their teams were travelling," local parliamentarian Wilmer Carrillo said. Quintero is a member of Colombia's chamber of deputies and Salcedo is a candidate for the upcoming elections. "We call for calm and await the official statement from the competent authorities," Carrillo said. The aircraft is a Beechcraft 1900 twin-propeller plane, operated by private charter firm SEARCA.

Petrol price 'likely to drop', diesel rate to go up from Feb 1

Ministry of Finance to decide petroleum prices via consultation with PM Shehbaz Sharif

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of the fortnightly fuel price announcement, the government is likely to reduce the rates for petrol from February 1, industry sources said on Thursday. Initial estimates indicate that, they added, petrol price will be slashed by Rs0.36 per litre, the sources said. Contrastingly, the rate for high-speed diesel is likely to be hiked by Rs9.47 per litre along with an Rs3.69 per litre increase for kerosene oil. Meanwhile, the price of light diesel is expected to surge by Rs6.95 per litre. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) will submit its working on petroleum prices to the Petroleum Division on January 30 (tomorrow), whereas the Ministry of Finance will decide the prices after consultation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In the previous review, the government, on January 15, had decided to keep the petrol price and high-speed diesel prices unchanged at Rs253.17 and Rs257.08 per litre, respectively, until end-January. The unchanged prices were due to the increase in petroleum levy (PL) on petrol by Rs4.62 per litre and Re0.80 on high-speed diesel – which left consumers without any relief.

Petrol is mainly used by commuters in small vehicles, rickshaws and two-wheelers. Higher fuel prices significantly impact the budgets of middle and lower-middle class households, who rely on petrol for daily travel.

On the other hand, a significant portion of the transport sector relies on high-speed diesel. Its price is considered inflationary since it is predominantly used in heavy goods transport vehicles, trucks, buses, trains, and agricultural machinery such as tractors, tube wells, and threshers.

The consumption of high-speed diesel particularly contributes to the increased prices of vegetables and other food items.

Displacement of Tirah population: A saga of ill-preparation by KP govt

PESHAWAR: As cold weather tightened its grip on the snow-clad peaks of Tirah Valley, thousands of families began a familiar yet painful journey downward carrying children, elderly relatives, and whatever belongings they could manage to avoid biting chill after it recently received heavy snowfall. For poor tribesmen of Maidan, Bagh and Rajgal valleys of Tirah consisting of Khyber and Orakzai tribal districts, seasonal migration is not new phenomena. What made this winter different for these populations was not only the heavy snowfall, but absence of timely KP Govt support too that added to their miseries. Nestled in the rugged Koh-e-Sufaid range near Pak-Afghan border, Tirah Valley becomes nearly inaccessible during harsh winters. Over the years, residents have learned to move early, often voluntarily, to safer and warmer places such as Bara, Peshawar, Hangu and surrounding areas. The current month was no exception as heavy snowfall blanketed these valleys mostly inhabited by Afridis, and Akakhel tribes whom began migrating towards Bara tehsil of Khyber and Peshawar, hoping to find shelter, assistance and relief. But many found themselves stranded on icy roads and in makeshift camps, exposed to freezing temperatures, waiting for much needed help. What has angered residents of Tirah and opposition leaders alike is that this displacement was not sudden or unforeseen but the situation deteriorated due to the lackluster approach of KP Govt. On October 28 last, the Deputy Commissioner of Khyber had formally informed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government of an imminent voluntary displacement from Tirah's snow-bound valleys and requested advance arrangements for transportation, food supplies, cash assistance, and establishment of transit and registration points. The letter clearly stated that migration would take place with the consent of local communities and recommendations of a representative jirga, keeping in view seasonal realities and administrative preparedness. However, despite these early warnings, little was done on the ground. – DNA

Pak Navy takes over command of Combined Task Force-150



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Navy took over the command of Combined Task Force-150 (CTF-150) for the 14th time during a change of command ceremony held at the Headquarters of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Bahrain. Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir of Pakistan Navy assumed command from Commodore Fahad S. Al Joadi of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF). While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150 assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this prestigious responsibility and contribute towards maritime security and stability across the region. Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir also reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's resolve to counter illicit maritime activities while ensuring the safety

and security of vital sea lines of communication.

CTF-150 is one of the five task forces operating under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Its mission is to deter and disrupt non-state actors engaged in the trafficking of weapons, narcotics, and other illicit goods across the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Oman. Successful anti-narcotics operations conducted by Pakistan Navy ships during the RSNF's command of CTF-150 are a testament to Pakistan Navy's resolve and commitment to regional peace and security through collaborative maritime efforts. The change of command ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain, Commander Combined Maritime Force, Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Forces, and representatives of several other navies operating under CMF.

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Ph: +92 51 228 7691 | +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693