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Greek language and culture day celebrated in Capital at Roots

Detailed News On Page-08

Maryam Nawaz assures Bugti of full support

Detailed News On Page-08



Pakistan to train non-IT professionals

Detailed News On Page-03



Briefs

Pakistan hosts D-8 officials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hosted the Informal Retreat of D-8 Commissioners on 5-6 February 2026 in Lahore. The session was organised primarily to discuss the strengthening of the D-8 Secretariat and to approve its financial and administrative matters ahead of the commencement of the 51st Session of the D-8 Commission and the 12th D-8 Summit, scheduled to be held in April this year in Jakarta. D-8 Commissioners from all member states, including Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Türkiye and Pakistan, attended the meeting. The Secretary-General of D-8, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, also participated in the Retreat. The Retreat served as a platform for open dialogue and brainstorming among the Member States and the Secretariat, with a focus on practical strategies to enhance cooperation, improve institutional effectiveness, and accelerate the implementation of D-8 priority areas and ongoing initiatives. During the two-day informal visit, the D-8 delegates visited several historical, cultural and nationally significant sites in Lahore. These included the Wagah Border, the historic Shalimar Gardens, Lahore Fort (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), and the Badshahi Mosque.

PAF conducts Golden Eagle drills

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Air Force successfully conducted Exercise Golden Eagle in the Southern Air Command's area of responsibility, aimed at validating combat readiness and operational agility through the synchronized employment of PAF's complete combat potential. The exercise was conducted on a Two-Force construct, focusing on AI-enabled, net-centric operations while integrating indigenous niche, disruptive and smart technologies in line with evolving regional security dynamics. Operating within a robust Integrated Air Defence System, friendly forces shaped the battlespace through seamless fusion of kinetic operations with cyber, space and Electro-Magnetic Spectrum Operations. The kinetic phase featured First-Shoot, First-Kill swing-role combat aircraft equipped with long-range BVR air-to-air missiles, extended-range stand-off weapons and precision strike capabilities, supported by Airborne Early Warning & Control platforms and Air-to-Air Refuellers.

Pak envoy to Hungary meets Dar

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Hungary, Asif Memon, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The Ambassador briefed the DPM/FM on follow-ups to the understandings reached during the Hungarian Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan last year. The DPM/FM welcomed the positive momentum in bilateral relations and advised further strengthening of trade, education, and people-to-people ties.

Cybercrime case

Non-bailable arrest warrant out for Afridi

District and sessions judge orders CM Sohail Afridi's arrest in state institutions defamation case

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court issued non-bailable warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Monday in a case related to defamation of state institutions. The order was issued by a district and sessions court after CM Afridi failed to appear before it despite repeated notices. The case was registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) against the firebrand politician under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) Act, accusing him of levelling misleading allegations and harming reputation of the state institutions. Senior Civil Judge Abbas Shah conducted hearing of the case and ordered authorities concerned to arrest and produce CM Afridi. The court subsequently adjourned the hearing and fixed February 21 as the next date of hearing. This development adds to legal woes of KP chief executive as earlier this month, reports from the Punjab Forensic Science Agency and Nadra linked video evidence of the May 9 riots case to Afridi, prompting the court to seek a complete report on February 14. The May 9, 2023, events refer to the riots that were triggered by the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Khan from the premises of Islamabad High Court (IHC) in a graft case. During the protests, the miscreants targeted several civil and military installations across the country.

Continued on Page 06

Junaid Akbar announces plan to quit NA seat

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Junaid Akbar has announced his decision to relinquish the National Assembly seat and part ways with the party's parliamentary setup, citing persistent frustration over being denied the right to speak in the National Assembly. In a message shared in the PTI parliamentary party's WhatsApp group, Akbar said he would speak to the National Assembly speaker on Saturday and formally write a letter seeking a separate seat, declaring that he would now move forward as an independent. The politician also confirmed the authenticity of an audio recording attributed to him. "My patience has run out," he said, adding that he would no longer be part of the party's parliamentary committee or sit with its members. Akbar said he did not recognise the authority of the

Continued on Page 06

CDF Asim Munir calls for multi-national engagements

International PATS competition concluded at Kharian



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The 9th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition successfully concluded at Kharian on 9 February 2026. The closing ceremony was graced by the Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, as the Chief Guest, said an ISPR news release.

Continued on Page 06

Raqami Islamic Bank milestone for Pak-Kuwait economic ties

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Kuwait, Nassar Abdul Rahman Jasser, Acting Governor State Bank of Pakistan, senior govt officials, and executives from the banking and financial sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Mu-

hammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday termed the granting of a commercial licence to Raqami Islamic Digital Bank a major milestone in Pakistan's evolving



financial sector and a significant step toward deepening Pakistan-Kuwait bilateral economic cooperation. Addressing at the license awarding ceremony, the prime minister said that strong political relations must be complemented by robust economic engagement, stressing that sustainable partnerships cannot flourish without trade, investment, and financial collaboration. "Pakistan and Kuwait are brotherly countries bound by decades of strong cultural, political, and people-to-people relations," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, adding, "It is now time to further strengthen our economic and investment ties so that this relationship grows from strength to strength." The prime minister congratulated Raqami Islamic Digital Bank on becoming Pakistan's third licensed digital retail bank, expressing confidence that

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi cutting cake to celebrate the 66th Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito. – DNA

PM Shehbaz 'to attend' Board of Peace meeting

Body's inaugural session set to take place in Washington, say sources

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is all set to attend the inaugural session of US President Donald Trump-led Board of Peace on February 19 in Washington, sources confirmed on Tuesday. Sources added that the government of Pakistan has formally informed the Gaza Peace Board about the prime minister's participation in the inaugural session. The planned meeting was first reported US media outlet by Axios, which said the gathering would also serve as a fundraising conference for the reconstruction of Gaza.

Continued on Page 06

Indonesian Minister, Dar discuss economy

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday held delegation-level talks with Indonesian Minister for Investment and Downstream Industry Rosan Roeslani, wherein they discussed the ways to strengthen Pakistan-Indonesia economic and investment ties. Indonesian Minister Roeslani, who is also CEO of Indonesia's Sovereign Wealth Fund (Danantara) is visiting here to hold comprehensive talks with the deputy prime minister on the prospects of enhancing Pakistan-Indonesia

Continued on Page 06

Birthday of Japanese Emperor

Pakistan greatly values ties with Japan: President

On bilateral relations, the Ambassador praised Pakistan's participation in the Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025, where the Pakistan Pavilion won two awards – the Bronze Prize in the Exhibition category and the Editors' Choice Award

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, extended warm greetings to Japan on the occasion of its Armed Forces Day, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties. The President attended a reception hosted by the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, at Serena Hotel, Islamabad, to celebrate the 66th Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito. Speaking as the chief guest, President Zardari highlighted the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with Japan. He expressed hope that these ties would continue to grow under the leadership of Japan's newly elected Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, the country's first female premier.

Continued on Page 06

President welcomes Uzbek president's invitation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that Pakistan attached great significance to its close brotherly relations with Uzbekistan, underscoring the importance of

Picture on Page 2

effective follow-up on the outcomes of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's recent historic and result-oriented state visit to Pakistan. The president said this while

Continued on Page 06

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Japan-Pakistan Business Seminar

Akamatsu for
boosting ties thru
AI, human capital

Panelists from both countries discussed the secrets behind Japan's economic growth to date and the history of business relations between the two nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to bolster bilateral economic cooperation, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan, Akamatsu Shuichi, hosted the "Japan-Pakistan Business Seminar 2026" at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad on Tuesday. The seminar brought together a high-profile assembly of approximately 100 participants, including government officials, industry leaders, and academic representatives. Haroon Akhtar Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Industries & Production, attended as the Chief Guest, alongside key representatives from JICA, JETRO, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pakistan. Ambassador Akamatsu stated in his remarks as follows: "Japanese automotive companies have created more than 100,000 jobs in Pakistan and have established domestic supply chains to localize automotive com-

ponents. All companies' localization rate for parts by far exceeds 60%. Furthermore, they continue to invest in new technologies to advance industrial upgrading and reduce the negative impacts towards the environment. Indeed, those countries which can manufacture automobiles are quite limited in the world. Their contribution to Pakistan's economy is substantial and will remain so in the future." The event witnessed the presence of distinguished figures including H.E. Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Industries & Production as Chief guest, and representatives from leading Japanese and Pakistani organizations. Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister emphasized his gratitude for Japan's contributions to Pakistan's economy to date and his hope for the continued strengthening of bilateral relations. In first session, panelists from both countries discussed the secrets behind Japan's economic growth to date and the history of business re-

lations between the two nations. One panelist noted that Japan possesses a culture which prioritizes investing in educating people over chasing immediate profits, as this yields significant future benefits. The session featured lively debate on the path Pakistan should take for its own growth, learning from Japan's experience. In second Session, Japanese automotive companies investing and continuing business in Pakistan, along with Pakistani automotive parts suppliers, participated as speakers. Representatives from Japanese companies addressed the key to achieving stable mass production of high-quality, durable products, highlighting Kaizen, 5S, and employee training. Furthermore, there was lively discussion on how Japanese automotive companies have long contributed not only to selling vehicles in Pakistan but also to developing Pakistani automotive industry suppliers. Additionally, there was discussion on future aims for promoting hybrid vehicles, investment in biogas fuel production to reduce petrol consumption, and further improvements in safety.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Roads open
as Murree
records fresh
snowfall:
Police

MURREE: As Murree received about four inches of snow in a fresh spell that began in the early hours of Tuesday, all major roads remained open and traffic continued to flow normally, the District Police Officer (DPO) Murree said. DPO Dr Muhammad Raza Tanveer Sipra said light snowfall, continuing intermittently for the past eight hours, had intensified the cold in the hill resort, with the temperature falling to 3°C. He said the district administration and traffic police swung into action immediately after the snowfall to clear roads, adding that no traffic blockages had been reported anywhere in Murree. "All main highways are open for traffic, vehicles are moving smoothly and there are no reports of tourists being stranded," he said, assuring visitors that they could travel to the hill station without fear or hesitation. Issuing a safety advisory, the DPO warned that visibility could be affected due to fog and changing weather conditions, urging drivers to use fog lights, avoid over-speeding and overtaking, and maintain a safe distance due to slippery roads. He said traffic police, district police and the administration were deployed across the area to facilitate tourists, adding that in case of an emergency, visitors could contact emergency helpline 15 or the traffic police for assistance.—APP

Ashrafi asserts terrorists
have no link to Islam

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Religious Harmony Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Tuesday said terrorists had no connection to Islam and called on the nation to unite against extremism. Speaking at the 'Paigham-e-Pakistan Conference' here, attended by scholars, religious leaders and representatives of various institutions, he condemned attacks on mosques, places of worship, women and children as acts of cowardice. "Those targeting sites associated with Hazrat Khadija al-Kubra (RA), Islam's first believer and supporter, are clearly enemies of Islam,"

Ashrafi, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council and Coordinator of Paigham-e-Pakistan, said. He cited the Quran, emphasising that anyone who unlawfully kills a believer is condemned to hell, adding that "terrorists' actions are incompatible with Islamic teachings". Referring to the wounded victims at PIMS hospital, he said, "We may be weak, but Allah Almighty is not," drawing parallels with historical assaults on the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Ali (RA) during prayers. Ashrafi noted that the recent terror attack on the worshippers at Islamabad's

Taralai mosque had united the nation, with victims showing courage and resilience. He warned that forces in India, Israel and Afghanistan were involved in stirring unrest in Pakistan. "Terrorists are being trained in Afghanistan and supplied with weapons for attacks here," he said, stressing that Pakistan would counter internal threats but not tolerate destabilisation on its soil. He added that investigations into mosque security were ongoing and that police officers had also been martyred or injured during operations against facilitators of terrorism.—APP

IGP review
security,
reforms
and police
welfare

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Tuesday chaired a series of meetings at the Central Police Office to review security arrangements, administrative matters and ongoing police reforms in the federal capital. A police official told APP that the meetings were attended by DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq, DIG Headquarters Malik Jameel Zafar, DIG Security Muhammad Atique Tahir, AIG Logistics Abdul Haque Umrani, AIG Operations Shoaib Masood, along with SSPs, SPs and other senior officers. During the meetings, the IGP reviewed the overall security situation, police performance and administrative affairs, and directed officers to improve discipline, streamline office work and ensure timely performance of duties. The IGP emphasized that public safety and crime prevention must remain the top priority, directing officers to strengthen patrolling, intelligence-based operations and security at sensitive locations, including entry and exit points of the capital. He also issued clear instructions to further improve police welfare, including better residential and medical facilities for officers and personnel. The official said discussions were also held on training reforms, use of modern technology, Safe City surveillance systems and better coordination among institutions to improve monitoring and crime control. IGP Rizvi stressed that policing must be professional, transparent and people-friendly, adding that officers should maintain strong field presence and deal with citizens respectfully.—APP

Efforts afoot to empower
youth, says Muqam

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Ameer Muqam, said here Tuesday that investing in youth is the best and most profitable investment, and that young people need opportunities rather than hollow slogans. "Through the landmark Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, thousands of capable and hardworking students across Pakistan are being aligned with the requirements of the digital age," Engr Amir Muqam said while addressing, as chief guest, a ceremony for the distribution of laptops among students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme at the University of Agriculture Peshawar. In his key note address, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that he felt great happiness and pride to be present among the students and faculty at this great educational institution,

the University of Agriculture Peshawar. He said that the university is a shining center of knowledge, research, and practical training, which is not only aligning the agriculture sector with modern requirements but is also playing an important role in national food security and rural development, leading youth toward a bright future. Today, under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, laptops are being distributed among 635 deserving and talented male and female students. "This is not merely the distribution of laptops rather, it is an investment in Pakistan's future," he said. Engineer Ameer Muqam said that youth are the greatest asset of the nation, adding the government firmly believes that youth are both our present and our future, therefore, the top priority of the government is the development, education, and economic empowerment of youth. Spending on youth, he emphasized, is not an expense but the best and most prof-

itable investment. Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that these laptops are not just devices in students' hands, but keys to opportunities and employment. They will connect students to online education, digital skills, research, modern agriculture, and global markets. Through the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme 2026, thousands of capable and hardworking students across Pakistan, including KP, are being equipped to meet the demands of the digital era. Under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, education, technology, and merit are being turned from mere slogans into practical strength in order to build a strong, capable, and self-reliant Pakistan. The Federal Minister paid tribute to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, whose vision is to connect youth with education, provide them access to technology, and make them an active part of national development.—APP

Approx 700 raids, over 4,000
detentions reported in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), in its Annual Report 2025, has revealed that Indian forces carried out nearly 700 raids and detained more than 4,000 people across Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh (IIOJK) during the year, underscoring the scale of security crackdowns and restrictions imposed on civilian life. The report 2025 titled "Indian Occupied Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh" was launched at a seminar held at the IRS premises on Tuesday, where speakers highlighted the humanitarian, diplomatic, and security dimensions of the Kashmir dispute and renewed calls for a free and impartial plebiscite to ensure lasting peace in South Asia. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson, Peace and Culture Organization, and former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment; Senator Asad Qasim, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON; Professor Dr. Muhammad Khan; Dr. Sundas Mustaqeem; and Dr. Gul-Ayesha from NUST addressed the seminar. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar highlighted the historical and diplomatic dimensions of the Kashmir issue, stating that it has remained on the United Nations agenda for decades and continues to demand a just and lawful resolution. He emphasized the need to re-energize diplomatic outreach and global awareness efforts. Senator Asad Qasim focused on the humanitarian costs of the prolonged conflict, drawing attention to detainees, divided families, and community-level trauma. He stated that regional peace and stability are closely linked to addressing the Kashmir dispute through credible international mechanisms. While speaking at the seminar, Mushaal Hussein Mullick described the situation as a continuing human tragedy affecting everyday life. She warned that the dispute remains a serious nuclear flashpoint and urged the international community to seize the moment to arrange an impartial and free plebiscite. All the panelists acknowledged that the report provides a comprehensive, evidence-based statistical and analytical overview of political developments, security practices, and human rights conditions in IIOJK during the year 2025. The report notes that 2025 witnessed sustained large-scale security operations and extensive restrictions on civilian life across IIOJK. Preventive and mass detentions occurred in successive phases throughout the year. In February, more than 500 individuals were detained in Kulgam, Budgam, and Ganderbal following a security incident. After the Pahalgam incident in April, an estimated 1,500–2,000 detentions were reported across multiple districts.—APP

KUWAIT



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Governor Sindh Mohammad Kamran Tessori, Ambassador Salem Al-Hamdan and others cut a cake at a reception marking the 65th National Day of Kuwait and the 35th Anniversary of the Liberation of the State of Kuwait, held at a local hotel. — DNA

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Briefs

ITP suspends
HMT, LMT and
PSV testing
services

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Tuesday announced the temporary suspension of heavy transport vehicle (HTV), light motor vehicle (LMV) and public service vehicle (PSV) testing services at Police Lines Headquarters, H-11, due to administrative reasons. An ITP official told APP that the testing-related services will remain closed for the current week, advising citizens to plan accordingly to avoid inconvenience. The official added that the suspension is temporary and services will resume once administrative matters are resolved. Citizens seeking further information or updates regarding testing services were advised to contact the ITP helpline 1915, he said.—APP

Seven Afghan
nationals
among 65
held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a grand search and combing operation in the jurisdiction of Sabzi Mandi police station as part of ongoing efforts to curb crime and strengthen security in the federal capital. A police spokesperson told APP on Tuesday that the operation was carried out under the supervision of, with zonal SPs overseeing the exercise in their respective areas. The spokesperson said that women police personnel also participated in the operation to ensure thorough and effective checking. During the search operation, police teams checked 472 individuals, 93 shops, and five hotels, besides inspecting 137 motorcycles and 17 vehicles, he added. He said that for further verification and legal scrutiny, 65 suspicious persons, including seven Afghan nationals, along with 21 motorcycles, were shifted to the concerned police station. The spokesperson said that the operation was aimed at preventing crime, identifying suspicious elements, and ensuring a secure environment for residents. He added that he has directed police to conduct grand search operations across the district to uproot criminal elements and maintain law and order.—APP

‘Awareness,
lifestyle
changes
can keep
‘Diabetes’ in
Check’

ISLAMABAD: Renowned nutritionist on Tuesday warned that poor awareness is driving a surge in diabetes, stressing that healthy eating with balanced portions, regular exercise and walking, routine checkups and stress management are essential to control the disease. Nutritionist Yumna Chattha, while talking to a local news channel, described diabetes as a “silent killer,” warning that it often progresses unnoticed until serious complications emerge. She noted that the disease is both hereditary and lifestyle-driven, making early awareness and prevention critically important. Emphasizing public awareness, she said lack of education about healthy living is a major factor behind the rising number of diabetes cases, adding, people to take the condition seriously, highlighting that timely diagnosis and lifestyle changes can significantly reduce long-term health risks. Yumna Chattha strongly recommended adopting a structured and balanced diet plan, along with regular physical activity, stress management and routine medical checkups, stating that disciplined eating habits and an active lifestyle are key to controlling diabetes and improving overall health. While sharing a special diet plan for Ramadan, nutritionist Yumna Chattha advised using wheat flour without chickpea flour, consuming fruits only in accurate quantities and limiting iftar to one date.—APP

PAF contingent participates
in World Defence Show

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Air Force contingent is participating in the World Defence Show - 2026 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, featuring its cutting-edge JF-17 Thunder Block-III Multi-role fighter jet and the highly acclaimed Super Mushshak basic trainer aircraft. World Defence Show 2026 serves as a premier global platform for defence and security, said an ISPR news release. PAF's participation at WDS-2026 reinforces Pakistan's position as an emerging hub of aerospace innovation, operational competence and reliable defence solutions. The participation underscores PAF's commitment to showcasing Pakistan's rapidly advancing indigenous aerospace capabilities and its proven operational excellence. The JF-17 Block-III, representing the pinnacle of Pakistan's combat aviation technology, features state-of-the-art avionics, an advanced AESA radar, enhanced electronic warfare suite and beyond-visual-range combat capabilities, making it a formidable 4.5 generation fighter jet addressing the operational needs of modern Air Forces. Alongside it, the Super Mushshak trainer aircraft highlights Pakistan's strength in pilot training solutions. Renowned for its reliability, cost-effectiveness and ease of maintenance, the Super Mushshak has been successfully inducted by several friendly countries and continues to serve as a benchmark platform for basic flying training worldwide. PAF's presence



at WDS-2026 reflects its leadership's vision of fostering defence cooperation, promoting defence exports and strengthening strategic

partnerships with friendly nations. The exhibition provides an opportunity for international delegations, defence officials

and military industry leaders to engage with PAF representatives and explore avenues for collaboration, training and technology transfer.

Around 1,100 Pakistani
students return from
Afghanistan: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that around 1,100 Pakistani students have already returned home following the closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Of these, 26 entered Pakistan via land routes, while the remaining students were repatriated by air, he said while responding to a calling attention notice moved by Anjum Aqeel Khan regarding Pakistani students stranded in Afghanistan due to closure of border. The minister said that 947 Pakistani students are currently still in Afghanistan. He added that the Pakistani Embassy remains in constant contact with them and is providing all possible facilitation to ensure their safety and eventual return. He said that most of the students are enrolled in medical colleges in Kabul and Jalalabad and are continuing their studies. He clarified that they are not stranded at border points. The minister said that Pakistan decided to close the border after the Afghan government failed to provide assurances that cross-border infiltration and firing from Afghan soil would be halted. He added that before October 2025, when the border remained open, a large number of Pakistani students regularly travelled via land routes to pursue their education in Afghanistan. However, the border was closed in October, 2025 following repeated cross-border attacks. He further informed the House that Pakistan held several rounds of talks with the Afghan Taliban authorities, including meetings in Doha and later in Türkiye. While Afghan representatives acknowledged that attacks originate from Afghan soil, they did not offer firm assurances to end cross-border terrorism or dismantle militant safe havens. The minister said Pakistan could not allow a situation where cross-border terrorism continues while trade and movement remain open, adding that border crossings with Afghanistan were closed as a security measure. He acknowledged that the closure created difficulties for Pakistani students but said temporary facilitation through land routes earlier allowed around 1,100 students to return. The Pakistani Embassy in Kabul, he added, continues to assist students by resolving visa-related and other issues.—DNA

Gilani meets UAE FNC
Speaker in Abu Dhabi

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani held a productive meeting with Speaker of the UAE Federal National Council (FNC) Saqr Ghobash in Abu Dhabi, during which both sides discussed bilateral relations and explored new

avenues of cooperation. The meeting, followed by a warm and cordial lunch, provided an opportunity for the two leaders to reflect on the long-standing history of Pakistan-UAE relations and identify areas for further collaboration, according to a news re-

lease. During the meeting, the Chairman Senate and the Speaker FNC reaffirmed the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE, rooted in shared values, mutual respect and a long tradition of close engagement. They

expressed satisfaction over the progress made in recent years, particularly in trade, investment and people-to-people ties. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani thanked the Speaker FNC for the warm hospitality and welcomed the UAE's contributions to Pakistan's economic stability, including the \$10 billion investment commitment.

He also extended an invitation to Saqr Ghobash to visit Pakistan, which was graciously accepted.—APP

PDA, DFINITY
partner for
Sovereign Cloud
infrastructure

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA) and the DFINITY Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here at a local hotel on Tuesday, to advance sovereign AI-native digital infrastructure in Pakistan, ensuring sensitive data remains in-country while enabling secure, modern software systems built for the AI era. As part of the partnership, DFINITY will support the creation of a dedicated Pakistan Subnet on its Internet Computer Platform (ICP), a sovereign cloud designed to host tamper-resistant software, national-scale applications, and AI-powered systems that can create and operate independently of foreign cloud infrastructure. The collaboration also includes plans for a National Messenger application enabling private, verifiable communications; expanded access to Caffeine, an AI platform

incubated by DFINITY; 1500 licenses of Caffeine to create applications and capacity-building initiatives across government, education, and entrepreneurship. DFINITY will also establish a local presence in Pakistan, reinforcing long-term collaboration and technical engagement in the country. “This partnership marks an important step in Pakistan's digital evolution,” said Dr. Sohail Munir, Chairperson of the Pakistan Digital Authority. “By investing in sovereign cloud infrastructure and modern AI-ready platforms, we are strengthening national resilience, supporting innovation, and creating new opportunities for our public institutions, students, and entrepreneurs.” Chief Scientist and Founder of DFINITY and Caffeine, Dominic Williams, added, “Pakistan is taking a forward-looking approach to digital infrastructure. By establishing a Pakistan Subnet and investing in sovereign, tamper-proof systems, the country is laying the groundwork for software and AI applications that are secure, verifiable, and built to serve national priorities. This partnership enables Pakistan to build, own, and operate AI and cloud services on its own terms.” Caffeine empowers people to build and deploy production-ready apps and services to the Internet Computer by describing what they want in natural language, removing traditional barriers such as the need for engineering teams and complex development pipelines. Caffeine is used by solo builders, municipalities, banks, and public institutions worldwide.—DNA

Jazz World drives AI-led
transformation

ISLAMABAD: JazzWorld, Pakistan's leading digital services company, has partnered with the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) for Indus AI Week 2026. The partnership will support national AI capacity-building, public-sector pilots, and local language model development. The collaboration places JazzWorld at the forefront of Pakistan's evolving AI ecosystem, convening policymakers, industry leaders, technologists, and innovators to shape a shared vision for AI-driven economic growth, competitiveness, and institutional transformation. Indus AI Week serves as a strategic forum to align national pri-

orities with next-generation technologies capable of delivering measurable impact across sectors. Aamir Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of JazzWorld, during a panel titled “Expert Led Strategic Dialogue: Designing AI Native Government” stated “AI is a multiplier, not a buzzword. Pakistan's opportunity is to move from being an AI taker to an AI maker, and that requires execution, not just rhetoric. At JazzWorld, we are embedding AI into everyday decision-making, productivity, and customer experience, backed by pragmatic business cases, strong governance, and relevant upskilling. With our renewed focus and the appointment

of a Chief AI Officer, we are moving decisively from experimentation to scale and setting the pace for Pakistan's Allied future.” Aamer Ejaz, Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer at JazzWorld, speaking during a fireside chat titled “Building Competitive AI Ecosystems without Losing Sovereignty,” added: “In a globally connected AI economy, sovereignty is about strategic choices, not isolation. You can be sovereign where it matters through the right infrastructure, policy frameworks, and data governance. AI must be driven by real use cases, real customers, and real value. At JazzWorld, our focus

is on building a responsible, commercially viable AI ecosystem that remains open to global innovation while protecting local data, language, and context.” Fatima Akhtar, Vice President Communications and ESG at JazzWorld, underscored the importance of responsible AI deployment and eliminating digital divides. “Language plays a pivotal role in bridging the digital usage gap identified by the GSMA—one in which women are disproportionately represented. Large Language Models can be a powerful enabler in overcoming this barrier, ensuring women's meaningful inclusion in the digital economy.—DNA

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Political talks
better than
confrontation
as PTI narrative
falters: Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture Huzaifa Rehman on Tuesday criticized PTI Chairman Imran Khan, saying the public has rejected PTI's narrative and that political popularity cannot be measured through false comparisons, adding that dialogue remains a better option than politics of anarchy. While speaking to a local news channel, Minister Huzaifa Rehman commented on recent political developments, noting that the recent protest was comparatively more constructive than PTI's past demonstrations, which he described as being rooted in anarchy. He observed, however, that the recent gathering did not attract a significant turnout and emphasized that there were no records indicating comparable public support in previous PTI protests. Huzaifa Rehman further stressed that every political party has its own political standing, influence and popularity, which cannot be directly compared, underscoring the need for dialogue and constructive engagement rather than disruptive politics.—APP

Bhat, Guru
immortal heroes
of freedom
struggle

ISLAMABAD: Senior Vice Chairman Jammu Kashmir National Front Altaf Hussain Wani has described Shaheed Muhammad Maqbool Bhat and Shaheed Muhammad Afzal Guru as immortal heroes of the Kashmir's freedom struggle. In a statement issued here today, Wani while highlighting their supreme sacrifices, said that these martyrs gave a new direction to the freedom struggle and have emerged as heroes for resistance struggle. “February 9 and 11, which mark the martyrdom anniversaries of these martyrs, are being observed by Kashmiris with solemn pledge to fulfill their mission”, he added. Reiterating his party's demand of returning the mortal remains of both martyrs, the Front leader said, “No law in the world justifies harboring enmity toward the slain or depriving victims' heirs of their right to a dignified burial for their loved ones, who were made scapegoats by the Indian state solely to satisfy the so-called conscience of the nation”.—APP

A path to universal prosperity by 2100

MARC CANAL NOGUER

NEW geopolitical and planetary crises seem to dominate news headlines, deepening a sense of pessimism about the state of humanity. But looking back over the past century, a very different picture — one of unprecedented human progress — emerges. A hundred years ago, life was fragile and insecure. The average person could expect to live between 30 and 40 years, with one in three children dying before the age of five. Some 60 percent of the global population lived in extreme poverty, while only about a third could read or write. Now, the global average life expectancy is 73, less than 10 percent of the global population lives in extreme poverty and nearly 90 percent are literate. Living standards have been transformed. After stagnating for centuries, per capita incomes doubled in the 19th century and surged sixfold between 1925 and now. But what if progress is measured by the ability to live securely and with options, as opposed to just subsisting? In that case, there is much more to be done, as about 4.7 billion people still live below what we call the empowerment line. In short, the world has made amazing progress and we need much more of it. Achieving the next economic leap requires putting in place certain nuts and bolts, with energy being the most essential. With that in mind, our new book, “A Century of Plenty: A Story of Progress for Generations to Come,” presents an ambitious vision: by 2100, the world’s poorest can live as well as people in Switzerland do today. With its high incomes, longer lifespans, quality education and robust social support, Switzerland is perhaps the best example of a country with “plenty.” Making Switzerland the floor may sound radical. It isn’t. Global gross domestic product per capita would have to increase by 2.6 percent annually — only slightly faster than the 2.3 percent annual average growth over the past quarter-century. In the world of plenty we envision, the global population has reached 12 billion, as some countries recover from extremely low fertility, and the global economy is 8.5 times bigger than today’s. As artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies advance, and more people are educated, this outcome is eminently feasible. But progress requires more than just innovation. Much of the anticipated growth would come from emerging economies, which can go a long way toward catching up with advanced economies by investing in existing technology and infrastructure. Beyond strategies to boost productivity, achieving the next economic leap requires putting in place certain nuts and bolts, with energy being the most essential. To increase economic opportunity, we need a decarbonized energy system that is significantly larger. According to our calculations, global energy generation would need to be two to three times the current level, while clean electricity production would need to be about 30 times higher than today. This can be done

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by building and deploying existing technologies at scale while continuing to innovate. Of course, such an approach would be challenging. But it is not unheard of. China has increased its combined solar, wind and nuclear output tenfold in the last decade, much faster than the pace required for a world of plenty. In the US, shale barely registered as an energy source two decades ago; now it contributes more to the country’s energy production than conventional oil and gas combined. Going back further, France built a nuclear-powered electricity system in the 1970s. Another important fuel — albeit for people — is food. We show that a population as large as 12 billion can eat a protein-rich diet without using more land and with far more modest increases in agricultural yields than have been achieved since the 1960s. A world of plenty is better positioned to tackle climate change and other environmental issues like air pollution.

Nor is a century of plenty limited by geology. The Earth has enough natural resources to support this expansion. For example, we estimate that delivering a plentiful 2100 would require 134 billion tonnes of steel. Known sources of usable iron content (steel’s main input) total 230 billion tonnes today, with 88 billion — already two-thirds of the required amount — qualifying as economically extractable reserves. And these reserves have grown by about 1 percent per year over 30 years, more than making up the difference.

The same is true for other main materials: none would need to exceed historical growth rates to make our vision a reality. And our estimates are conservative — it is highly likely that new materials and techniques will be developed during this period. Some argue that the planet cannot bear the externalities created by such growth, not least the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. We take a different view. A world of plenty is better positioned to tackle climate change and other environmental issues like air pollution because growth spurs investment in the clean energy transition (such as grids, renewables and batteries), adaptation tools (like air conditioning and irrigation systems) and research and development. So long as the fruits of growth are used to accelerate the process of decoupling emissions from GDP, like most of the world is already doing, global warming could be limited to about 2 degrees Celsius while improving living standards for millions of people. In sum, there are no insurmountable physical barriers to universal prosperity. We are not saying, however, that our vision of plenty will be easy to deliver. The limitations may not be physical but they could be social and political: in hearts and minds. Most notably, many people in advanced economies — which by definition have reaped the benefits of growth — no longer believe in material progress. In a recent survey, only 9 percent of respondents in France said that the next generation will be better off and no advanced economy, other than Singapore, scored above 30 percent. This highlights the need for a new narrative that discards zero-sum thinking. Growth is the solution, not the problem. Over the past century, it has delivered higher incomes and longer lives, while empowering millions of people. Looking ahead, we cannot allow one person’s gain to become another’s loss. Instead, we must dare to imagine a world where everyone thrives. Such a world is within reach, so long as the focus remains on economic progress.

Epstein Files and the Moral Crisis in the US

Qamar Bashir



The Epstein case has also revived speculation regarding intelligence connections. A 2020 FBI report cited a confidential source claiming that Epstein may have been “trained as a spy” and relayed information through intermediaries to Israeli intelligence. Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have publicly rejected any suggestion that Epstein worked for Mossad. Intelligence experts quoted in reporting have emphasized that no evidence has confirmed such claims. Nonetheless, the presence of these allegations in investigative files has intensified curiosity and suspicion

WHEN the U.S. Department of Justice released additional troves of documents connected to Jeffrey Epstein, the reaction was immediate and visceral. The shock was not about Epstein himself. His criminality had already been established in court. What unsettled the public was something else entirely: proximity. From former British royal Prince Andrew to former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and Donald Trump; from tech billionaire Elon Musk to Virgin Group founder Richard Branson; from former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, the newly released files, as summarized by the Associated Press, include correspondence, flight logs and social exchanges linking Epstein to an extraordinary roster of powerful figures.

None of these individuals have been charged with crimes related to Epstein’s trafficking operation, and all have denied wrongdoing. That legal reality is essential. Yet the appearance of such names within official investigative materials has triggered a deeper moral discomfort, one that extends beyond courtroom proceedings. The Associated Press described the files as a “who’s who of powerful men” appearing in emails, invitations, photographs or scheduling records tied to Epstein. Prince Andrew, long scrutinized over his relationship with Epstein, settled a civil lawsuit brought by Virginia Giuffre while continuing to deny any wrongdoing. Bill Clinton acknowledged flying on Epstein’s plane years before the financier’s final arrest but has denied knowledge of criminal behavior. Donald Trump has similarly acknowledged a past social relationship while denying awareness of abuse. Elon Musk has publicly stated that he declined invitations to Epstein’s island. Richard Branson’s company emphasized that interactions were limited to business or group settings. Ehud Barak admitted visiting Epstein’s New York residence and flying on his plane, later expressing regret for the association. Larry Summers called his connection “a major error of judgment.” Sergey Brin, Steve Bannon, Steven Tisch, Howard Lutnick, Casey Wasserman and others appear in various correspondences but have not been accused of criminal conduct. Association, in legal terms, is not guilt. Yet the psychological impact of proximity is harder to dismiss. When a convicted trafficker of minors successfully embedded himself within elite political, financial

and academic networks, it forces uncomfortable questions. How did someone with known red flags retain access to such circles even after his 2008 plea agreement in Florida? Why did social contact continue after serious allegations were already public knowledge? The outrage many feel is not about bypassing due process. It is about moral symmetry. In ordinary life, association with a convicted sex offender can destroy reputations overnight. Within elite spaces, however, such association appears cushioned by status and influence. That perceived asymmetry fuels distrust.

The Epstein case has also revived speculation regarding intelligence connections. A 2020 FBI report cited a confidential source claiming that Epstein may have been “trained as a spy” and relayed information through intermediaries to Israeli intelligence. Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have publicly rejected any suggestion that Epstein worked for Mossad. Intelligence experts quoted in reporting have emphasized that no evidence has confirmed such claims. Nonetheless, the presence of these allegations in investigative files has intensified curiosity and suspicion. Epstein’s financial origins remain opaque. His international reach was vast. His access to elite networks was unusual. Opacity invites speculation, but speculation is not proof. The responsible position is neither blind dismissal nor reckless accusation. It is rigorous transparency. The deeper issue is structural. Epstein’s crimes were not committed in isolation. Trafficking networks require recruitment, logistics, financial channels and silence. The public now asks whether every dimension of that network has been fully exposed and dismantled.

The Associated Press made an essential point: none of the individuals named have been charged in connection with Epstein’s crimes. That fact must anchor any serious discussion. Yet it is legitimate for citizens to ask whether investigations were comprehensive, whether institutional blind spots existed and whether systemic safeguards have been strengthened to prevent future exploitation. Trust in institutions depends on visible equality before the law. If powerful individuals were investigated and cleared, clarity strengthens legitimacy. If investigative gaps remain, transparency must close them. Silence feeds suspicion.

The Epstein scandal represents more than person-

al depravity. It represents a stress test for institutional credibility. When elites circulate within the orbit of a trafficker, even without criminal liability, the public demands explanation. The United States often positions itself as a defender of human rights globally. That moral posture requires internal consistency. Accountability cannot appear selective.

The solution is neither mob condemnation nor complacency. It is disciplined scrutiny. Congress retains oversight authority. The Department of Justice retains prosecutorial authority. Independent journalism retains investigative authority. Survivors retain the right to justice and protection. If additional wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be prosecuted without regard to status. If no additional crimes are established, the public deserves clear communication explaining investigative findings. Democracies can survive scandal. They struggle to survive sustained distrust. The Epstein files have reopened old wounds not because they deliver new convictions but because they highlight enduring ambiguity. The presence of global elites in a trafficker’s social universe is enough to unsettle confidence. What follows now will determine whether that unease hardens into cynicism or evolves into reform.

The moral shock many feel reflects a basic human instinct: children must be protected, and power must never shield exploitation. That instinct is not partisan and not ideological. It is foundational. Institutions must demonstrate that the instinct aligns with enforcement. The names that appear in investigative documents may ultimately reflect poor judgment rather than criminal complicity, and that distinction matters. But it does not eliminate the need for vigilance.

The Epstein case has become a symbol of elite access, institutional failure and the fragility of trust. Rebuilding that trust requires sunlight, consistency and courage. Anything less will leave the convulsion unresolved, and a society that cannot resolve its convulsions risks allowing suspicion to replace confidence in the very structures meant to uphold justice.

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Macomb, Michigan

Authority, Celebration and Moral Challenge of Ramadan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Yet, even before the sacred month arrives, a familiar and troubling pattern has already begun to surface. Prices of vegetables, fruits, and essential food items have started climbing, shifting smoothly into the first gear of inflation, with higher gears expected as Ramadan begins. Quality goods quietly disappear from the market, while inferior substitutes reappear at inflated prices

THE state, in its ideal moral conception, resembles a mother—protective yet firm, generous yet disciplined. It provides security, creates opportunities, sets boundaries, and, when required, reprimands those who defy collective order. Authority, when exercised with purpose and balance, is not an intrusion into daily life but a fulfilment of responsibility. Recent developments of celebrating Basant in Lahore offered a timely reminder of this principle, demonstrating that when the state asserts its writ with seriousness and resolve, even long-suspending traditions can be revived without compromising public safety or social harmony. Lahore—the heart of Pakistan and the city of living hearts—welcomed spring this year with a massive jubilation that had long been confined to memory. After nearly twenty-four years, Basant returned, not as a reckless indulgence but as a regulated cultural expression shaped by law, vigilance, and administrative presence. In the past, the festival had degenerated into chaos, with unskilled practices, criminal negligence, and weak enforcement turning joy into tragedy. This time, however, the state chose not withdrawal but engagement with watchfulness. Rules were framed and enforced, the administration remained visible, and the writ of the government was neither symbolic nor selective. Apart from a few occurrences, the city passed through the season without hefty heartbreaking incidents—a success that deserves acknowledgement. The colours of Basant, the fluttering kites against a mild sky, the rooftops filled with cautious celebration, and the revival of traditional foods and shared laughter carried a deeper message. Joy, when guided and tailored by responsibility, becomes constructive rather than destructive. The presence of officials on the ground—alert, accountable, and prepared—demonstrated that celebration does not require the absence of law. On the contrary, it flourishes when boundaries are clear.

As the echoes of Basant fade, the nation now stands at the threshold of Ramadan, a month defined not by festivity but by restraint, reflection, compassion, and moral discipline. Ramadan reshapes daily life across the country: from pre-dawn meals and fasting hours to crowded bazaars before iftar and collective worship at night. Unlike Basant, which was confined largely to one city, Ramadan embraces the entire nation for a full month, touching every household regardless of class or geography. Yet, even before the sacred month arrives, a familiar and troubling pattern has already begun to surface. Prices of vegetables, fruits, and essential food items have started climbing, shifting smoothly into the first gear of inflation, with higher gears expected as Ramadan begins. Quality goods quietly disappear from the market, while inferior substitutes reappear at inflated prices. This phenomenon, repeated annually, stands in stark contradiction to the spirit of Ramadan, which calls for ease, generosity, and sensitivity towards those who struggle. Over the years, a peculiar and deeply flawed argument has often been offered in response to this problem. It is said that if fruit or other food items become expensive during Ramadan, people should simply stop consuming them and prices will fall on their own. This explanation, frequently presented as economic wisdom, raises a fundamental question: is it the responsibility of citizens to correct market distortions, or the duty of the state to prevent them? Expecting fasting families to abandon basic nutritional needs during a month of spiritual exertion is neither realistic nor just. Such reasoning, rather than reflecting policy insight, exposes administrative helplessness. In many Western and Gulf countries, Ramadan is marked by special discounts, subsidised essentials, and strict monitoring to ensure affordability for all segments of society. The objective is not merely market stability but social solidarity. In contrast, when

prices surge unchecked and the administration responds with advice rather than action, the burden of governance is unfairly shifted onto the public. Here, the lesson of Basant becomes especially relevant. If the administration could demonstrate coordination, resolve, and presence for a cultural festival, it can and must do the same for a religious obligation that defines the nation’s moral rhythm. Officials who were visibly active during Basant should be equally present in markets and bazaars during Ramadan—monitoring prices, ensuring availability, and preventing exploitation. Authority must not retreat into silence at a time when vigilance is most required.

Accountability, too, must be clearly defined. Local administrations should be bound to their jurisdictions, with responsibility fixed and consequences enforced. If price manipulation occurs in a particular area, those entrusted with oversight must be questioned for their failure. Experience repeatedly shows that when the state intervenes decisively, markets respond. It is also telling that prices often return to pre-Ramadan levels once the month ends, revealing that much of the inflation is artificial rather than inevitable.

Ramadan is not only a spiritual test for individuals; it is also a test of governance. It examines whether leadership can rise above routine indifference and act in harmony with the ethical demands of the moment. Provincial leaderships must play their role, translating intent into visible action.

Between the disciplined joy of Basant and the solemn restraint of Ramadan lies a shared lesson: society flourishes when authority is exercised with sincerity and care. A state that can protect celebration can also protect devotion. A state that safeguarded lives amid flying kites can surely safeguard dignity at the fasting table. The nation now waits to see whether the resolve displayed in spring will endure through the sacred month—strengthening not only markets, but trust itself.

Briefs

Non-bailable
arrest
warrant...

FROM PAGE 01
Separately, CM Afridi, while addressing a convocation ceremony at the University of Engineering Technology (UET) Peshawar today, said that when it came to the interests of the province he was ready to speak to everyone. He added that he would not allow Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to be turned once again into a testing ground. He stressed that he would not go to anyone's door for personal interests, but made it clear that no matter how much he might dislike someone, he would sit with them for the sake of the province. Referring to the law and order situation, Afridi said he had held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and that a session of the Apex Committee had also been convened.

Junaid Akbar
announces..

FROM PAGE 01
parliamentary leader or the chief whip, questioning what he described as an unfair system in which the same individuals were allowed to speak daily while others were reduced to desk-thumping. "Is there no method, no humanity left?" he asked, lamenting that the party's decency was being misconstrued as weakness. He alleged that voices raising serious issues, including questions on terrorism and the absence of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi from the House, were deliberately sidelined. "There isn't enough courage to speak the truth, yet the same faces appear every day," he said, accusing his colleagues of behaving like courtiers and silencing dissent within the party. Akbar said he had been given the floor only once since last Ramadan, including during the budget session, and believed that even his own people were preventing him from speaking because of his blunt stance.

CDF Asim Munir calls
for multi...

FROM PAGE 01
Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand attended the exercise as observers. 16 domestic teams from the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Navy, along with observers from the Pakistan Air Force also participated in the event. Addressing the closing ceremony, the COAS & CDF commended all participating teams for their exceptional professionalism, physical and mental endurance, operational competence and high morale displayed during the exercise. He emphasized the importance of such multinational engagements in enhancing collective preparedness and adapting to the evolving character of modern warfare.

Raqami Islamic Bank...

FROM PAGE 01
the institution would contribute to financial inclusion, innovation, and Shariah-compliant banking in the country. He said digital Islamic banking would play a key role in modernising Pakistan's financial ecosystem while remaining aligned with Islamic principles. Speaking on the occasion, the Kuwaiti ambassador congratulated the Raqami team and described the licensing of the digital bank as a practical manifestation of the deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kuwait. He said Kuwait's leadership had consistently supported Pakistan and was keen to further expand cooperation in trade, investment, and financial services. Chairman of the Board of Directors of Raqami Islamic Digital Bank, Abdullah Al-Mutari, thanked the Government of Pakistan and the State Bank for their support and presented a commemorative memento to PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to mark the occasion.

BCCI VP 'delighted' after
Pakistan decides to face India
at T20 World Cup 2026

"Scheduling of the match on February 15 is good news," says BCCI Vice President Rajeev Shukla

BOARD of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) Vice President Rajeev Shukla has hailed the outcome of the talks between the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), International Cricket Council (ICC) and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) over the T20 World Cup 2026. "I am delighted to see the outcome of the deliberations [in Lahore]," Shukla said while speaking to the Indian media on Tuesday. His remarks refer to Islamabad's announcement of allowing the Green Shirts to play their scheduled ICC Men's T20 World Cup match against India on February 15 in Colombo. Pakistan had earlier decided not to play against arch-rival India in solidarity with Bangladesh, who were kicked out of the tournament after it refused to travel to India, citing security concerns. After Pakistan's announcement, the ICC's deputy chairman travelled to Lahore on Sunday to discuss the situation with the PCB chief in a meeting attended by the BCB president. However, in a statement on Monday, the government said that the decision to field the national side against India in the tournament was made by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after being briefed by PCB Chair-



man Mohsin Naqvi regarding the outcomes of high-level deliberations held between the PCB, the ICC and the BCB. The decision, Islamabad has stressed, was taken to protect the spirit of cricket and support the continuity of this global sport in all participating nations. Expanding on the development, BCCI VP Shukla termed it a "win-win situation for everybody" and thanked the ICC for its collaborative efforts to bring all the parties together. "The ICC took steps to resolve the issue, and cricket has returned to the forefront. As far as the ICC is concerned, this is a major success." "The scheduling of the match on 15 February is good news," he remarked. The BCCI official underscored the positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, and expressed optimism for a successful World Cup. "Pakistan will play, and this World Cup will become an example of success. It is also good for Bangladesh, as their board was also given relief during the negotiations. The BCB is happy [...] The match will take place, and the World Cup will be a successful event," Shukla added. – DNA

Bas de Leede guides Netherlands
to maiden T20 World Cup victory

De Leede's unbeaten 72 powers Netherlands to seven-wicket win over Namibia, opening ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign at Arun Jaitley Stadium with commanding chase and disciplined bowling display

DELHI: Bas de Leede led the way with an unbeaten half-century as the Netherlands cruised to a seven-wicket victory over Namibia, registering their opening triumph in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday. Chasing Namibia's target of 157, the Netherlands finished at 159-3 in 18 overs. De Leede top-scored with a brilliant 72 off 48 balls, including five fours and four sixes. Opener Michael Levitt played a crucial knock of 28 off 15 balls, featuring one

four and three sixes. Colin Ackermann added a valuable 32 off 28 deliveries, while skipper Scott Edwards remained unbeaten on 18 from nine balls, hitting a four and a six. Batting first, Namibia got off to a shaky start as spinner Aryan Dutt claimed the prized wicket of Louren Steenkamp, who managed just six runs off as many balls, including one boundary. Jan Frylinck and Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton steadied the innings, building a 50-run stand for the second wicket. The partnership

was broken when Frylinck fell to Logan van Beek for a crucial 30 off 26 deliveries, which included three fours and one six, leaving Namibia at 60-2 in 9.1 overs. Loftie-Eaton continued to anchor the innings, receiving support from skipper Gerhard Erasmus. The pair added 35 runs before Erasmus was dismissed by Bas de Leede in his first over, scoring 18 off nine balls, including two fours and one six. Loftie-Eaton remained in good form but fell short of a T20I fifty, finishing on 42 off 38 deliveries with

one four and two sixes, as Namibia slipped to 107-4 in 14.3 overs. Later, JJ Smit contributed a quickfire 22 off 15 balls, including one boundary and two sixes, before falling to Bas de Leede, who claimed his second wicket of the match. Fred Klaassen also fell for nine off 10 deliveries to leave Namibia struggling at 137-6 in the 18th over. Ruben Trimpelmann briefly lifted the score with a six off his first delivery but was eventually run out after a mix-up, finishing with nine off eight balls. – APP

Al-Nassr hopeful Ronaldo
will return for Asian
Champions League Two

RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo is yet to win a major trophy since arriving in Saudi Arabia, and Al-Nassr will be hoping the 41-year-old Portuguese star returns to action on Wednesday to help the Riyadh club move closer to silverware. Al-Nassr takes on Arkadag of Turkmenistan with a place in the quarterfinals of the Asian Champions League Two on the line. Ronaldo hasn't played any part in Al-Nassr's most recent two games in the Saudi Pro League amid reports he was unhappy with the way the club is being funded, particularly after watching rival Al-Hilal sign Karim Benzema in last month's transfer window. Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal, Al-Ittihad and Al-Ahli are all majority owned by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. According to reports in ESPN, the Portuguese superstar agreed to return to the pitch after seeing his main demands met by the PIF, including the payment of overdue salaries and restoration of management autonomy to the club's top executives. In a statement, the SPL outlined that no player is bigger than the club or the league. "The Saudi Pro League is structured around a simple principle: every club operates independently under the same rules," the league said. "Cristiano has been fully engaged with Al-Nassr since his arrival and has played an important role in the club's growth and ambition. But no individual – however significant – determines decisions beyond their own club." – APP

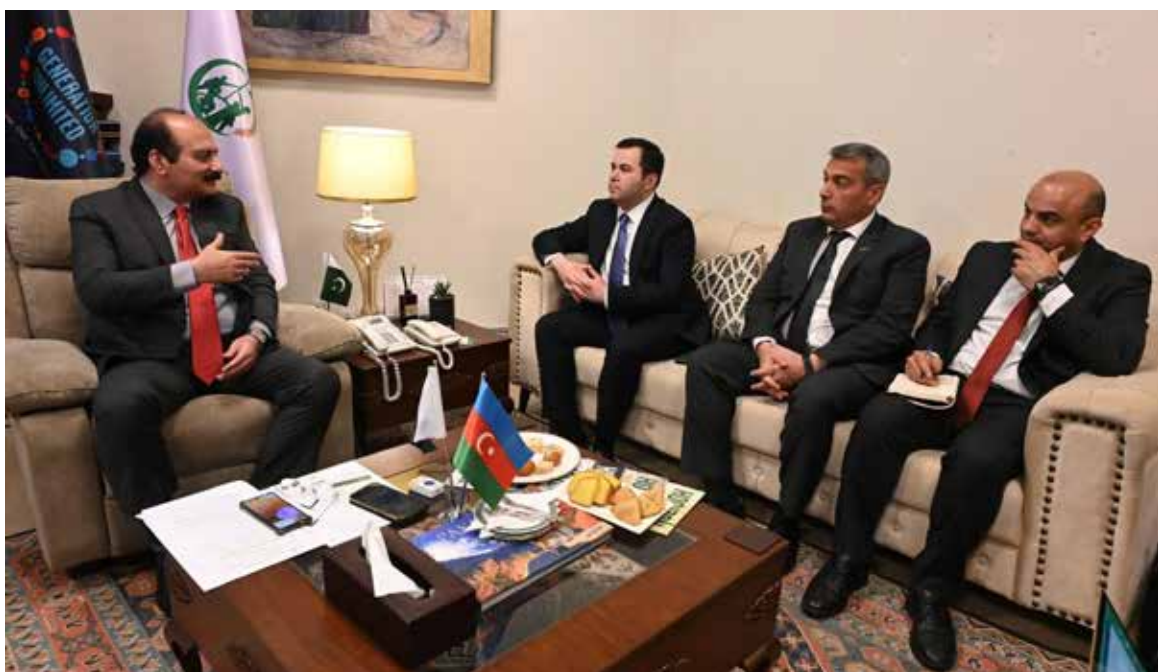
Pro League: Australia
beat Pakistan 3-2

HOBART: In a thrilling opening match of the second round in the Pro Hockey League in Hobart, Australia, Australia, the world's 5th-ranked team, narrowly defeated Pakistan 3-2. Pakistan Travel Guide The first half saw Australia take control, with both their goals scored by Tim Brand. However, Pakistan fought back fiercely in the second half, scoring two consecutive goals to level the match. The game was decided in the final moments, when Australia's Blake Govers scored from a penalty corner, securing the victory for his team. For Pakistan, the first goal was a field goal by Nadeem Ahmed, while the second was a penalty corner converted by Mohammad Sufyan Khan. Pakistan's next matches are as follows:
February 11: vs Germany
February 13: vs Australia
February 14: vs Germany

Real beat Valencia to stay on Barcelona's heels

VALENCIA: Real Madrid stayed within one point of La Liga leaders Barcelona with a 2-0 win at Valencia on Sunday as second-half goals by Alvaro Carreras and Kylian Mbappe settled a largely uneventful contest. Real dominated possession but found chances hard to come by, with Valencia keeper Stole Dimitrievski rarely called into action as the visitors struggled to turn control into threat. It took them until the 65th minute to break the deadlock through Carreras before Mbappe wrapped up the points in stoppage time. Barcelona lead the table on 58 points, with Real second on 57. Valencia are 17th, a point above the drop zone. Mbappe offered the main outlet with sporadic runs down the left but clear openings were limited. Real coach Alvaro Arbeloa was forced to improvise, missing suspended winger Vinicius Jr and injured trio Jude Bellingham, Rodrygo and Eder Militao. The absences opened the door for academy players Raul Asensio, David Jimenez and Gonzalo Garcia to start, with Mbappe providing the lone spark for an uninspir-

ing Real side. "Playing at Valencia is always like going to the dentist," Arbeloa told reporters. "We knew how difficult the match would be, how demanding they would be. It was a very serious and committed match. I'm happy." Arbeloa further added that Mbappe is the best player in the world at the moment, and reiterated that the Frenchman could live up to his boyhood idol Cristiano Ronaldo's legacy at Madrid. Valencia's fans, some of whom had waved white handkerchieves during the match in protest at the club's situation, headed for the exits with Los Che 17th, one point above the drop zone. Earlier, Atletico Madrid slipped further adrift in the title race after a 1-0 home loss to Real Betis. Antony struck in the 28th minute with a fierce effort from the edge of the box, earning Manuel Pellegrini's side a valuable win. Atletico are a distant third in the table on 45 points, three points ahead of fourth-placed Villarreal, who have two games in hand. Betis sit fifth on 38 points. – Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan met with Hon. Farhad Hajiye, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 10th February 2026. – DNA

Pakistan greatly
values ties with...

FROM PAGE 01
"Pakistan values its relations with Japan and looks forward to expanding cooperation in diverse fields," the President remarked, assuring that Pakistan remains committed to fostering stronger diplomatic, economic, and cultural exchanges. Ambassador AKAMATSU, in his address, welcomed the distinguished guests and expressed appreciation for celebrating the Emperor's birthday in Islamabad alongside President Zardari. He highlighted Japan's recent political developments, including the successful general election and the strong mandate received by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party under Prime Minister Takaichi. He reaffirmed Japan's commitment to the rule of law, multilateralism, and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), while acknowledging Pakistan's important role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. On bilateral relations, the Ambassador praised Pakistan's participation in the Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025, where the Pakistan Pavilion won two awards – the Bronze Prize in the Exhibition category and the Editors' Choice Award. He noted that the Expo sparked renewed interest in Pakistan among Japanese people and marked the revival of high-level exchanges, including visits by Pakistani ministers and officials.

President
welcomes
Uzbek...

FROM PAGE 01
talking to Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr and handed over a letter from President Mirziyoyev. In his letter, the Uzbek President thanked President Zardari, the government and the people of Pakistan for the extraordinary hospitality and warm welcome extended to him during his visit. He also expressed gratitude for being conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan, Pakistan's highest civil award, as well as the honorary professorship and doctorate. President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Uzbekistan in key sectors, including food and agriculture, mining, information technology, tourism, health and banking. He welcomed Uzbekistan's interest in importing halal meat, fruits and potatoes from Pakistan as a positive step towards enhancing bilateral trade. President Mirziyoyev reiterated his invitation to President Zardari, earlier conveyed during their t t e - t e. The president accepted the invitation and directed the authorities concerned from the Pakistani side to co-ordinate with their Uzbek counterparts to finalise the visit later this year. He also conveyed his gratitude to President Mirziyoyev for his message of solidarity and support following the recent terrorist attack in Islamabad, and reaffirmed the shared resolve of Pakistan and Uzbekistan to continue their joint journey of peace, stability and development. Alisher Tukhtaev informed President Zardari of Uzbekistan's desire to develop Babur Park in the F-7 sector of Islamabad and said that a relevant Uzbek minister would visit Islamabad next week to hold discussions with Pakistani authorities regarding the project.

PM Shehbaz
'to attend'
Board of...

FROM PAGE 01
The meeting would be held at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, DC. "We can confirm the Board of Peace meeting is scheduled on February 19th," the official said in a statement to Reuters. Last month, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said that Pakistan would continue to engage with international efforts aimed at peace and security in Gaza. "Pakistan will remain engaged with international efforts for peace and security in Gaza, leading to a lasting solution to the Palestine issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions," he said. Pakistan has reiterated at international forums its readiness to play a "constructive role" in the US peace plan for Palestine. US President Donald Trump launched his new board at World Economic Forum in Davos in late January, with world leaders, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, signing on to pursue a lasting agreement for Gaza.

Indonesian
Minister,
Dar discuss
economy

FROM PAGE 01
partnership in the domain of trade and investment. Both sides reviewed potential collaboration opportunities and mutually beneficial projects, including the exchange of best practices and cooperation in priority sectors such as health. Presentations were made by the Ministry of Finance, Special Investment Facilitation Council, and Board of Investment outlining Pakistan's investment landscape, priority sectors and facilitation mechanisms, while also seeking Indonesia's experience and expertise, including in sovereign wealth fund structures and downstream investment. The deputy prime minister reaffirmed the shared commitment to longstanding bilateral relations based on mutual respect and cooperation, with mutual investment being a catalyst of Pakistan-Indonesia partnership. The meeting was attended by the Minister for Health, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Chairman of Board of Investment, National Coordinator SIFT, Secretary Finance, Acting Foreign Secretary, and other senior officials.

Pakistan's decision to play India in
T20 World Cup 'saves ICC \$174m'

Indian media also reported that the revival of the match had an immediate impact on travel and tourism. Airfares for flights between Mumbai and Colombo surged, with ticket prices rising from INR10,000 to INR60,000

DUBAI: Pakistan's decision to play the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 match against arch-rival India reportedly saved \$174 million for the International Cricket Council (ICC), according to Indian media. The estimated savings cover broadcasters' revenues, gate receipts, and various sponsorship deals that would have been lost if the match had been cancelled. Indian media also reported that the revival of the match had an immediate impact on travel and tourism. Airfares for flights between Mumbai and Colombo surged, with ticket prices rising from INR10,000

to INR60,000. The development followed the federal government's announcement on Monday, confirming that Pakistan will play its scheduled match against India on February 15 in Colombo. "The government of Pakistan has reviewed the formal requests extended to the PCB by the BCB, as well as the supporting communications from Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, and other member nations," read a statement issued by the government. The hotel industry in Colombo welcomed the decision, anticipating increased bookings and business from visiting cricket fans.

However, the announcement also prompted confusion among some fans who had previously cancelled hotel reservations or boycotted the Pakistan match. Many are now contacting hotels to rebook or inquire about refund policies, while others seek clarification on ticket refunds for the Pakistan-India encounter. For the unversed, Pakistan had initially boycotted the India clash following the BCCI-BCB saga as the tensions flared between the cricket boards of Bangladesh and India after Mustafizur Rahman was dropped from the Indian

Premier League (IPL) at the direction of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), sparking outrage in Dhaka. Later, the BCB requested the ICC to shift its matches outside India, but the international cricket body rejected the plea. Following the BCB's firm stance, the ICC replaced Bangladesh with Scotland in the tournament, saying it was not feasible to change the schedule so close to the February 7 start of the event. The PCB, however, reacted strongly to the ICC's decision and instead decided to boycott its India match over bias against Bangladesh. – APP

Briefs

Rupee gains
03 paise
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs279.67 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs279.70.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs280.60 and Rs282.3, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.27 to close at Rs333.02 from the previous day's close of Rs331.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.79, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs1.63 and closed at Rs382.31 compared to the previous day's Rs380.68. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged at Rs76.14 and Rs74.57, respectively.—APP

Gold price
rises by
Rs1,500 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed an increase in the local market on Tuesday, as the price of 24-karat gold per tola rose by Rs1,500 to settle at Rs526,262, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Likewise, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs1,286 to Rs451,184, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up by Rs1,179 to Rs413,600. In the international market, the price of gold increased by \$15 to \$5,035 per ounce. Meanwhile, silver prices remained unchanged in the local market, with the price of 24-karat silver per tola standing at Rs8,615, while the price of 10 grams of silver stayed stable at Rs 7,385. The price of silver in the international market also remained unchanged at \$81.40 per ounce.—APP

GLIDE
announces
14 winners of
Falcon awards
for disease
elimination

ABU DHABI : The Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE) on Tuesday announced the winners of its Falcon Awards for Disease Elimination Integration Edit, recognising 14 organisations advancing innovative research and advocacy to accelerate progress toward infectious disease elimination through integrated approaches.

Selected from a highly competitive global pool, the 14 winning projects form a single, yet diverse cohort spanning Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. Together, they represent a collective commitment to breaking down siloes across disease programmes and strengthening how research, policy, advocacy, and implementation intersect to accelerate disease elimination. The Falcon Awards are designed to catalyse innovation and collaboration in disease elimination by supporting projects that demonstrate how integrated approaches across diseases, sectors, and systems can deliver greater impact, sustainability, and resilience. The Integration Edit places a deliberate emphasis on bridging research and advocacy, strengthening surveillance and diagnostics, advancing vector control, and embedding elimination efforts within national health systems. "The Falcon Awards catalyse evidence-driven action to advance disease elimination through integrated, real-world solutions," said Dr Farida Al Hosani, CEO of GLIDE. "This cohort reflects the power of collaboration across borders and disease areas, and the critical role of locally-grounded leadership in driving sustainable progress." Throughout the duration of the projects, GLIDE will work closely with each awardee to support project design.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Motorists are on their way at Jinnah Avenue during rain fall as after the rainy weather, coldness increase once again in Federal Capital.

Lebanon PM calls for pressure on
Israel to prevent int'l law violations

Bassam Hammoud, deputy head of the political bureau of the Islamic Group in Lebanon, said that the group was "committed to the decisions of the Lebanese state and to what has been approved under the cessation of hostilities agreement

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to act with the UN to put pressure on Israel to disclose the fate of a Lebanese citizen abducted by the Israeli army early on Monday.

Israelis reportedly crossed into Lebanese territory, entering the town of Habbariyeh in the Hasbaya District, and abducted the citizen from his home. This incursion and abduction is the first of its kind since the cessation of hostilities between the countries. Meanwhile, Israel continued its airstrikes on Monday, killing three people, including a 4-year-old child, when a civilian vehicle was targeted. A sniper also shot another person in the border town of Ayta ash Shab, who reportedly later died. Atwi Atwi was the man added to the list of Lebanese prisoners in Israel, bringing the total to 24. Three of the prisoners were captured before the last Israeli war on Lebanon. An Israeli force from the 210th Brigade in the Mount Dov area reportedly

infiltrated from the Ruwaisat Al-Alam outpost toward Sadanah Hill, traveling on foot for about an hour before reaching a house on the outskirts of Habbariyeh. The soldiers stormed the house and handcuffed Atwi's wife. Atwi, 65, attempted to resist but was captured and taken toward Israeli border positions. The abducted official was the former mayor of Habbariyeh and the head of the Islamic Group in Hasbaya and Marjeyoun, an ally of Iran-backed Hezbollah in its recent war. He works in social and humanitarian affairs in the area, according to several residents. An Israeli army statement confirmed Atwi's abduction in a "nighttime operation" which had been formulated on intelligence information gathered in recent weeks. The statement added that he was transferred to Israel for interrogation and that weapons were found inside the building. The statement also affirmed that the Israeli army would continue its operations to eliminate "threats on the northern front." The Israeli

escalation came a day after Salam's visit to the border region, which left residents in the south with the impression that "the state stands with them." In a statement issued on Monday, Salam said that "the incident constitutes a blatant assault on Lebanon's sovereignty, a violation of the declaration of cessation of hostilities, and a flagrant breach of international law." He stressed that "it will remain a national priority, and the state will follow up on it through all diplomatic and legal channels in place." The local municipality convened meeting with a delegation from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon to brief it on the incident, and residents of the area of the abduction organized a protest expressing their fear that "Israeli practices prevalent in the 1970s could return, when Israeli soldiers used to infiltrate deep into populated areas." Bassam Hammoud, deputy head of the political bureau of the Islamic Group in Lebanon, said that the group was "committed to the decisions of the Lebanese state and to what has been

approved under the cessation of hostilities agreement. Hammoud added: "We have taken no actions outside the framework of this agreement, whether military, field-based, or otherwise. And even if they found a rifle inside the house (belonging to Atwi), so what? Is there any Lebanese home that does not have a rifle inside?" The Islamic Group issued a statement which held "the Israeli occupation fully responsible for any harm that may befall the abducted individual." Meanwhile, the Israeli army said that it had targeted a civilian vehicle near the town of Yanouh, describing the attack as "an airstrike to assassinate Hezbollah's Head of Artillery Ahmad Ali Salami, in (the) Yanouh area." The Israeli army said in a statement: "Ahmad carried out numerous terror attacks throughout the war against IDF troops and Israel, and recently operated to rehabilitate Hezbollah's artillery capabilities from within the civilian population in Lebanon, in violation of the ceasefire understandings." The airstrike killed Salami, 4-year-

old Ali Hassan Jaber and his father Hassan. Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad Al-Hajjar condemned the attack, noting that Hassan Jaber was "a member of the Internal Security Forces who was killed while passing by with his son near the site targeted by the Israeli airstrike in the town of Yanouh." Al-Hajjar also condemned the abduction of Atwi from his home, describing the act as "an unacceptable transgression and a flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and security." The Israeli army claimed that it was "aware of allegations indicating that uninvolved civilians had fallen as a result of the strike," explaining that, prior to carrying it out, "measures were taken aimed at limiting subsequent harm to civilians, including the use of precision munitions and the conduct of aerial surveillance, and it regrets any harm that befell uninvolved civilians." It added: "The Israeli army is working to reduce damage as much as possible, and the incident is under review."—Agencies

HHGTL, HBP
complete
Dakhni
Front End
Compression
Project for
OGDCL

ISLAMABAD: Hong Kong HuiHua Global Corporation Ltd (HHGTL), a wholly owned subsidiary of China Oil HBP Science and Technology Ltd (HBP), has successfully completed the Dakhni Front End Compression Project for Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's upstream energy sector. Executed in collaboration with MHAA Corporation and in joint venture with Etimaad Engineering (Pvt.) Ltd., with ILF serving as the engineering consultant, the EPCC project was delivered within the stipulated timeframe and in full compliance with OGDCL's technical and contractual requirements, said a press release on Tuesday.

The project represents a strategic upgrade to production infrastructure at one of Pakistan's key natural gas fields. The newly installed state-of-the-art compression facilities are designed to optimize reservoir performance of up to 28 MMSCFD, mitigate natural production decline, and significantly enhance gas recovery efficiency. By strengthening field deliverability and ensuring sustained output, the project directly contributes to improved production capacity and long-term operational reliability. The successful completion of the Dakhni project underscores HHGTL's proven capability to execute complex front-end compression projects with precision, speed, and uncompromising quality. Seamless integration of engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning activities ensured strict adherence to international HSE standards, technical excellence, and operational integrity.—APP

Maritime
Security
Exercise SEA
GUARD-26
culminated

ISLAMABAD: Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-26 culminated at Karachi with a debrief session Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz, Chief of Staff, Pakistan Navy, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, said a news release issued by the Director General Public Relations (Navy). During the debrief, representatives of participating organizations were presented with an analytical review of the conduct of the exercise, encompassing various scenarios executed to validate information-sharing and response mechanisms among stakeholders against maritime sector contingencies. The Chief Guest appreciated the effective conduct of the exercise and lauded the role of the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) in synergizing the efforts of all maritime stakeholders. He emphasized the importance of sustained engagement and collaboration, while reaffirming Pakistan Navy's proactive commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests.—APP

Bangladesh,
US sign
reciprocal
trade deal to
reduce tariffs

DHAKA: Bangladesh and the United States have formally signed a comprehensive reciprocal trade agreement designed to reduce tariffs and broaden preferential market access for goods between the two nations, following nine months of negotiations that began in April 2025. Under the newly concluded pact, the United States will cut its reciprocal tariff rate on Bangladeshi exports to 19%, down from previously higher levels, while establishing a mechanism that allows certain textile and apparel products manufactured in Bangladesh using US-produced cotton and synthetic fibers to enter the US market with zero tariffs. This significant tariff relief is expected to benefit Bangladesh's vital garment sector, which accounts for more than 80% of the country's export earnings and employs millions of workers.—APP

Iran offers clemency
to over 2,000
convicts, excludes
protest-related cases

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei granted pardons or reduced sentences on Tuesday to more than 2,000 people, the judiciary said, adding that none of those involved in recent protests were on the list. The decision comes ahead of the anniversary of the Islamic revolution, which along with other important occasions in Iran has traditionally seen the supreme leader sign off on similar pardons over the years. "The leader of the Islamic revolution agreed to the request by the head of the judiciary to pardon or reduce or commute the sentences of 2,108 convicts," the judiciary's Mizan Online website said. The list however does not include "the defendants and convicts from the recent riots," it said, quoting the judiciary's deputy chief Ali Mozaaffari. Protests against the rising cost of living broke out in Iran in late December before morphing into nationwide anti-government demonstrations that peaked on January 8 and 9. Tehran has acknowledged that more than 3,000 people died during the unrest, including members of the security forces and innocent bystanders, and attributed the violence to "terrorist acts." Iranian authorities said the protests began as peaceful demonstrations before turning into "foreign-instigated riots" involving killings and vandalism. International organizations have put the toll far higher. The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) says it has verified 6,964 deaths, mostly protesters.—APP

Ethiopia builds secret camp to
train Sudan RSF fighters

NAIROBI/LONDON: Ethiopia is hosting a secret camp to train thousands of fighters for the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group in neighboring Sudan, Reuters reporting has found, in the latest sign that one of the world's deadliest conflicts is sucking in regional powers from Africa and the Middle East. The camp constitutes the first direct evidence of Ethiopia's involvement in Sudan's civil war, marking a potentially dangerous development that provides the RSF a substantial supply of fresh soldiers as fighting escalates in Sudan's south. Eight sources, including a senior Ethiopian government official, said the United Arab Emirates financed the camp's construction and provided military trainers and logistical support to the site, a view also shared in an internal note by Ethiopia's security services and in a diplomatic cable, reviewed by Reuters. The news agency could not independently verify UAE involvement in the project or the purpose of the camp. In response to a request for comment, the UAE foreign ministry said it was not a party to the conflict or "in any way" involved in the hostilities. Sudan's civil war erupted in 2023 after a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule. It has spread famine and been marked by racially-charged atrocities. Millions of refugees have fled to Egypt, Chad, Libya and South Sudan. Both sides draw strength from international backers, fueling the war and increasing the risk that the fighting spills over into neighboring countries. The news agency spoke to 15 sources familiar with the camp's construction and operations, including Ethiopian officials and diplomats, and analyzed satellite imagery of the area. Two Ethiopian intelligence officials and the satellite images provided information that corroborated details contained in the security memo and cable. The location and scale of the camp and the detailed allegations of the UAE's involvement have not been previously reported. The images show the extent of the new development, as recently as in the past few weeks, along with construction for a drone ground control station at a nearby airport. Activity picked up in October at the camp, which is located in the remote western region of Benishangul-Gumuz, near the border with Sudan, satellite images show. Ethiopia's government spokesperson, its army and the RSF did not respond to detailed requests for comment about the findings of this story. On January 6, UAE and Ethiopia issued a joint statement that included a call for a ceasefire in Sudan, as well as celebrating ties they said served the defense of each other's security. The Sudanese Armed Forces did not respond to a request for comment. As of early January, 4,300 RSF fighters were undergoing military training at the site and "their logistical and military supplies are being provided by the UAE," the note by Ethiopia's security services seen by Reuters read. Sudan's army has previously accused the UAE of supplying the RSF with weapons, a claim UN experts and US lawmakers have found credible. Abu Dhabi has been a strong supporter of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government from his early days in office in 2018, and the two countries have built a military alliance in recent years. The camp's recruits are mainly Ethiopians, but citizens from South Sudan and Sudan, including from the SPLM-N, a Sudanese rebel group that controls territory in Sudan's neighboring Blue Nile state, are also present, six officials said. Reuters was unable to independently establish who was at the camp or the terms or conditions of recruitment. A senior leader of the SPLM-N, who declined to be named, denied his forces had a presence in Ethiopia.—DNA

China's wholesale commodities hub
warms up for World Cup frenzy

HANGZHOU: With just four months to go before the 2026 FIFA World Cup opens in North America, China's wholesale commodities hub of Yiwu — often dubbed the "world's supermarket" — is in the midst of a production and sales frenzy to meet global demand for tournament merchandise. At the Yiwu International Trade Market in the city in east China's Zhejiang Province, stores in its sporting goods section are now packed with international buyers inspecting sample products, negotiating prices and placing orders. A Brazilian buyer, who gave his name as Matheus, told Xinhua that he was on a two-month sourcing trip in Yiwu for the World Cup. "We're looking to order 5,000 to 10,000 jerseys for the World Cup, with purchases usually finalized in January or February," he said. In the market, vast arrays of World Cup-themed products fill the shelves. Local vendor Luo Tianle said his stall had launched 50 to 60 new World Cup items, including plush toys, daily necessities and souvenirs. "The new products have secured orders exceeding 1 million yuan (about 144,000 U.S. dollars) within just one week of their launch," Luo said. Renowned for their quality and affordability, "Made in Yiwu" prod-

ucts consistently capture market attention during major sporting events. Many businesses began their preparations for the North American tournament as early as May 2025. Vendor Wen Congjian, who sold over 2 million of his original-design jerseys for the 2022 Qatar World Cup, is now expanding his product range. For 2026, he has introduced jerseys for women, children, and even pets. "We aim to diversify our products, giving fans more choices," he explained. Beyond their new designs, vendors are now securing intellectual property rights. Chen Shaomei's self-designed commemorative footballs have attracted substantial numbers of overseas orders. Protected by design patents, these footballs yield roughly 15 percent higher profit margins than generic ones. Despite the approaching Chinese New Year holiday, Chen's factory is operating at full capacity. "Workers are staying later this year. Our order volume is about 30 percent higher than previous years," he noted. Similar scenes are unfolding at a similar facility operated by another sporting goods company, where production lines are running nonstop. "Orders related to the World Cup are picking up as the event draws nearer," said Wu

Xiaoming, the company's manager and head of the Yiwu sporting goods association. Wu, who gained online fame during the last World Cup for producing 100,000 footballs in just 50 days, has experienced six World Cups over his two-decade career. Facing fierce competition, Wu is shifting his focus from low prices to diversified branding and premium product upgrades. His company now participates in setting industry standards, supplies the official balls for provincial tournaments and partners with foreign football clubs. Wu believes the era of competing solely on price is over. "The focus now is on high-quality development. I hope all businesses can find their direction amid this boom," he said. According to Yiwu Customs, the city's exports of sports equipment and goods grew 20.3 percent year on year to a total of 11.65 billion yuan in 2025, with major destination markets including the United States, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. Regardless of the host nation in each tournament, Yiwu has remained a constant supplier of World Cup merchandise. Wu attributes this to the city's unique strengths in product variety, rapid market response and competitive logistics costs. "To stand out, you must specialize, becoming irreplaceable to justify your quality and price," Wu said.—DNA

Briefs

Pakistan, KSA
vow to boost
security
coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Minister of State for Interior, Talal Chaudhry, undertook an important visit to Saudi Arabia, where he held a key meeting with Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Prince Dr. Abdulaziz bin Mohammed bin Ayaf. During the meeting, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in security and counterterrorism, reaffirming their commitment to closer coordination. Talal Chaudhry emphasized that continuous engagement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is essential for peace and stability in the region. The Minister of State also represented Pakistan at the World Defense Show 2026 held in Riyadh, highlighting Pakistan's strategic interest in global defense collaboration. Talal Chaudhry conveyed Ramadan greetings from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to the Saudi leadership, expressing hopes for stronger bilateral ties in the months ahead. — APP

Maryam
assures
CM of full
support

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday paid a visit to Quetta, where she met with her Balochistan counterpart CM Sarfraz Bugti and assured him of her full support. CM Maryam's visit comes in the wake of a spate of attacks across Balochistan on January 31, which brought parts of the restive province to a standstill for several days. Security forces had responded by killing a total of 216 terrorists during "Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1" in the province. "As the chief minister of Punjab, as a Pakistani and as your sister, all services and resources of Punjab, whatever cooperation or support you need — whether in operations against khawarij here or any kind of challenges in the government — we are with you," Maryam said. She further assured Bugti, "Whatever kind of support you need, I am just a call away. I will be very glad if I can assist you or do something for the people of Balochistan." Noting that this was her first visit to another province after assuming the office of Punjab CM in February 2024, Maryam said she was glad it was to Quetta. "You have rightly said that you do not have fitna, but you have Fitna al Khawarij, which is your own unique set of challenges that Balochistan is facing," she further remarked, referring to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Police officer
suspended

DNA

LAHORE: The head of a police checkpoint was suspended on Tuesday for illegally detaining a suspect in Kahna area, according to officials. The development came as a video clip of the suspect in chains went viral on social media, prompting Lahore Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Faisal Kamran to take notice. The suspect, identified as Mukhtar, was reportedly being kept at the police checkpoint for the last four days. Lahore Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohammad Tauqir told Dawn that the suspect was found in chains, and the Lakhoki checkpoint In-charge subinspector Adnan Virk was found guilty of keeping him in illegal custody. The SSP said that, as per the initial police record, no first information report had been lodged against the suspect. However, local residents claimed that the suspect was involved in criminal activities and they had complained to the police to arrest and investigate him. Meanwhile, DIG Kamran said that the official was not authorised to detain the suspect at the checkpoint even after the registration of a case.

Greek language, culture celebrated
at Roots International Schools

The ambassador of Greece praised the students for their research and creativity showcased during the event; The event also featured remarks by Mr. Walid Mushtaq, CEO of Roots International Schools, who commended the initiative



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Roots International Schools Wellington Campus hosted a vibrant celebration of World Greek Language Day, marked by a special event highlighting the historical and cultural significance of the Greek language. The occasion was graced by the Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan, Ms. Eleni Porichi, who delivered an inspiring speech to students and faculty. Ms. Porichi emphasized that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has proclaimed February 9 as World Greek Language Day, recognizing the language's immense contribution to global civilization. She noted that the day coincides with the commemora-

tion of Greece's national poet, Dionysios Solomos, whose works symbolize the spirit of Greek identity and culture. The ambassador praised the students for their research and creativity showcased during the event. She highlighted that Greek is one of the oldest recorded living languages, with a continuous documented history spanning over 3,000 years. "From Homer's epic poems to the philosophical works of Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato, the Greek language has shaped the intellectual foundations of humanity," she remarked. Ms. Porichi also underscored the influence of Greek terminology in modern science and academia. "Greek is the foundational language in disciplines such as astronomy, mathematics, logic, and philosophy. Words like democracy, dialogue, logos, and ethos enrich countless langua-

ges, including here in Pakistan, a country with deep-rooted historical exchanges with the Hellenistic world," she said. Encouraging students to further explore Greek culture, she expressed hope that many would take advantage of educational opportunities offered by Greek universities. As a gesture of appreciation, she distributed tablets sponsored by Airlink to the participants, acknowledging their enthusiasm and dedication. The event also featured remarks by Mr. Walid Mushtaq, CEO of Roots International Schools, who commended the initiative. He described the celebration as a meaningful opportunity for students to connect with global heritage and broaden their academic horizons. Mr. Mushtaq appreciated the ambassador's support in encouraging the Greek language quiz competition and

assured that his students would be eager to utilize educational opportunities in Greece. He further emphasized the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening ties between Pakistan and Greece, noting that such events foster mutual understanding and respect. The school's administration, including Walid Mushtaq and Ms. Sadia Batool, were acknowledged for their efforts in organizing the event. Ms. Porichi expressed her hope that the collaboration would continue and expand in the future, allowing more students to benefit from exposure to Greek language and culture. The celebration concluded with a strong message of unity through language and culture, leaving students inspired to explore the beauty of Greek heritage and its lasting impact on world civilization.

Corruption Perception Index:
Pakistan's ranking improves,
overall score rises to 28

Pakistan ranks 136 out of 182 countries, improving by one place from last year

ISLAMABAD: Transparency International has released the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2025, ranking Pakistan 136 out of 182 countries, with one place improvement compared to the previous year. Pakistan was ranked 135th out of 180 countries surveyed last year. As per CPI 2025, the country's overall score improved to 28, up one point from 2024. Transparency International used the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, using a scale from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Chair of Transparency International Pakistan Justice (ret'd) Zia Perwez said: "While Pakistan is undertaking commendable efforts in [the] form of governance and institutional reforms, it is imperative that the recommendations in the IMF Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment are implemented effectively to sustain Pakistan's upward momentum on CPI in [the] coming years." According to CPI 2025, corruption is worsening globally, with even established democracies experiencing rising corruption amid a decline in leadership. The CPI ranks 182 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The global average

score stands at 42 out of 100, its lowest level in more than a decade, pointing to a concerning downward trend that will need to be monitored over time. The vast majority of countries are failing to keep corruption under control: more than two-thirds — 122 out of 180 — score under 50. For the eighth year in a row, Denmark obtains the highest score on the index (89) and is closely followed by Finland (88) and Singapore (84). Countries with the lowest scores overwhelmingly have severely repressed civil societies and high levels of instability, like South Sudan (9), Somalia (9), and Venezuela (10). Corruption is worsening globally, with even established democracies experiencing rising corruption amid a decline in leadership, according to Transparency International. "Typically stronger on anti-corruption than autocracies or flawed democracies, they are experiencing a worrying decline in performance," the report read. As per the CPI 2025, the trend spans countries such as the United States (64), Canada (75), and New Zealand (81), to various parts of Europe, like the United Kingdom (70), France (66), and Sweden (80). Another concerning pattern is increasing restrictions by many states on freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. Since 2012, 36 of the 50 countries with significant declines in CPI scores have also experienced a reduction in civic space. Transparency International warned that the "absence of bold leadership in the global fight against corruption" is weakening international anti-corruption action and risks reducing pressure for reform in countries throughout the world. — APP

Pakistani workers' remittances
surge to \$3.5bn in January

Remittances reach \$23.2bn during first seven months of ongoing fiscal year, reflecting 11.3% rise

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani workers' remittances climbed sharply to \$3.5 billion in January 2026, marking a 15.4% year-on-year increase, according to figures released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). On a cumulative basis, remittances reached \$23.2 billion during the first seven months of the ongoing fiscal year (July-January FY26), reflecting an 11.3% rise compared with \$20.9 billion received in the corresponding period of last year. The central bank, in the press release, said inflows in January were primarily sourced from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which contributed \$739.6 million, followed by the United Arab Emirates with \$694.2 million, the United Kingdom with \$572.1 million and the United States with \$294.7 million. Sana Tawfik, Head of Research at Arif Habib Limited, said remittances had never reached this level in any previous January. Speaking to Geo.tv, she attributed the sustained strength

in inflows mainly to a larger number of Pakistanis working overseas, improved stability of the rupee and a narrowing gap between formal and informal exchange markets, which has encouraged senders to route funds through banking channels. She added that periods of geopolitical uncertainty can also trigger higher remittance flows, though this factor was currently less pronounced than the structural drivers supporting inflows. Referring to guidance shared by the SBP governor in the most recent monetary policy briefing, Tawfik said remittances were expected to exceed \$41 billion and could approach \$42 billion in FY26 if the present trend continues. "Achieving this level would be the highest on record for any fiscal year and would play a key role in supporting Pakistan's external account, while also helping keep the current account deficit within the central bank's projected range of 0% to -1% of GDP," she added. Separately, Topline Securities, in its Economy Alert dated February 10, 2026, said Pakistan's remittances stood at \$3.5 billion in January, rising 15% on a year-on-year basis but declining 4% compared to December. The brokerage noted that total remittances for the first seven months of FY26 amounted to \$23.2 billion, up 11% from the same period last year. — APP

Iran warns of 'destructive' influence on
diplomacy ahead of Netanyahu's US trip

"Our negotiating party is America. It is up to America to decide to act independently," says Iranian foreign ministry

TEHRAN: Iran warned Tuesday of "destructive" influence on diplomacy ahead of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington for talks expected to focus on US negotiations with Tehran. "Our negotiating party is America. It is up to America to decide to act independently of the pressures and destructive influences that are detrimental to the region," said Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei in a weekly press briefing. "The Zionist regime has repeatedly, as a saboteur, shown that it opposes any diplomatic process in our region that leads to peace." Tehran and Washington resumed talks in Muscat on Friday, months after earlier negotiations collapsed following Israel's unprecedented bombing campaign against Iran last June, which triggered a 12-day war. During the conflict, Israel targeted senior Iranian military officials, nuclear scientists, and nuclear sites, as well as res-

idential areas. The United States later joined the campaign, launching its own strikes on key Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran responded with drone and missile attacks on Israel and by targeting the largest US military base in the Middle East, located in Qatar. "The June experience was a very bad experience. Therefore, taking these experiences into account, we are determined to secure Iran's national interests through diplomacy," Baqaei said. He insisted that Iran's focus would remain strictly on the nuclear file in return for sanctions relief. Tehran has repeatedly said it rejects any negotiations that extend beyond that issue. On Saturday, Netanyahu's office said in a statement that the Israeli premier "believes any negotiations must include limitations on ballistic missiles." The talks followed threats from Washington and the deployment of a US aircraft carrier group to the region after anti-government protests in Iran last month. — APP

Pakistan beat
USA; take on
India on Sunday

SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: A combined effort from batters and bowlers powered Pakistan to a 32-run victory over the United States of America (USA) in the 12th match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at Colombo's SSC Ground on Tuesday. Set to chase a daunting 191-run target, USA could muster 158/8 in their 20 overs. The associate nation got off to a decent start to the pursuit as their opening pair of Andries Gous and Shayan put together 42 runs at a brisk pace before Mohammad Nawaz struck, dismissing the former, who made a run-a-ball 13 with the help of two fours. Gous's dismissal halted the flow of runs for USA as captain Monank Patel attempted to anchor the run chase but fell victim to Shadab Khan in the ninth over and walked back after scoring a scratchy three off 10 deliveries. Shadab struck again in the next over to dismiss set batter Shayan, who made 49 off 34 deliveries with the help of five fours and two sixes. Following the consecutive dismissals, Shubham Ranjane and Milind Kumar (29) attempted to launch a recovery by knitting a 54-run stand for the fourth wicket, which was broken by Usman Tariq in the 16th over with the latter's scalp.

SC appoints
amicus curiae

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday appointed Advocate Salman Safdar as amicus curiae (friend of the court) to assess the current condition, health status, and facilities available to the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in jail during the hearing of the Toshakhana criminal case. A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan heard the case. The Court directed Salman Safdar to visit the jail, meet the PTI founder, and submit a comprehensive written report detailing his physical condition, health, available facilities, and overall circumstances of detention. Chief Justice Afridi issued clear instructions that no obstruction should be created in arranging the meeting. The Court also sought a separate report from the Superintendent Jail regarding detainee's current situation. — APP

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